

DOMOBAAL

Thin Place

Jonathan Anderson, Adam Buick, Ailbhe Ní Bhriain, Christine Mackey, Flora Parrott

Curated by Ciara Healy

Oriel Myrddin, Carmarthen, Wales

10 January – 28 February 2015

Review by Rowan Lear

A thin place is a landscape's anomaly, sometimes signified by burial mounds or standing stones. It is believed - in Celtic folklore, primarily - to be a site of transcendence, where the division between this world and another is particularly thin. In an intriguing move, Ciara Healy has deployed thinness as a curatorial strategy, promoting a reinstatement of "conjecture" over "rationalism".

[...]

Ailbhe Ní Bhriain's video works are the most bewitching element in 'Thin Place'. They're somewhere between a high-definition hallucinatory dream and an interminable loading screen for an uncanny computer game. Displayed on screens in crisp black and white with an eerie soundtrack, *Great Good Places IV & V* (2011-2014) depict seascapes and landscapes, subtly overlaid in segments with the deserted interiors of houses, museums and offices. Birds, a dead fox and floating detritus behave as visual cues, animating the still spaces. Ní Bhriain invites a slippage between screens and spaces, inside and outside; she shows us things half forgotten and a place that is thinner than pixels.

[...]

On encountering a thin place, rarely does a visual sign alert its presence. Instead there's a peculiar, instinctual, bodily sense: a prickling awareness that cannot be described but is there nonetheless. It might happen on a Hebridean island, in a church built on ancient ground or an unexpected corner of a city. The most powerful artworks here are the ones that don't require a cerebral response, but incite a similar 'gut' reaction: Anderson's dark material and Ní Bhriain's otherworldly films.

In the catalogue, Irish poet Cherry Smyth recalls a surprising, interrupting memory that does "insist / like a film I can't walk out of". That's another thing about thin places. Leaving the exhibition, and on the journey home, that odd feeling stayed with me, long after I left.

An Extract from the review of 'Thin Place' published in *This is Tomorrow Contemporary Art Magazine*, 12 February 2015