

DOMOBAAL

a body of work

Maud Cotter

There is no absolute measure applied to the making of a body of work. Such an undertaking starts as a raggy form of gather and ends with its arms wide open to future possibility. But in the stream of such a flow are points of arrival and departure, a consistency of focus and deviations. I hold all these as necessary, and I have learnt to cherish and respect the deviations, those ramblings of the mind, away from the matter at hand. Sometimes those tributaries glimmer for a time and dissipate, and sometimes in a flash, they show a glimmer of something real. To gather the work in a generous and unrestricted way was important. I needed a title or word to act as canopy, a shelter under which the bits and pieces could be stored, one that was capable of being in the public realm while the other companion titles remained private.

The word *consequence* survived my thinking about it. I liked the pre-existent condition within the word, an established something that sat there waiting for the inevitability of a rogue action which induced consequence. Typically, 'consequence' is understood as something inconvenient, opening a feeling of dislocation, an awkwardness that comes with change. This hybrid space suited me. I lifted the word up to a lighter feeling with an indefinite article 'a', and finally, I added 'of', which seemed to me like adding a piece of air, for no reason.

This title has turned and twisted its way forward with the work which now sits in an accelerated space of consequence – an enactment of will within the indifferent agencies shifting the minutiae of consequence in all our lives. I seek to comprehend the world I see in my head, bring that very private space into physical existence.

The world as I see it is multi-dimensional, hard to grasp.

Description is a tricky business; it may destroy the work, so I will try to avoid that. However, I will say, every time I am drawn into an over-resolved solution to a work, I withdraw, knowing that I have lost something important to the task in hand. I return to a simpler condition, an earlier place along my path. I draw out territories that are being left behind, solutions that are not perfect enough to be counted as esteemed values of commodity.

In this flotsam, jetsam, inside-out world, cut through with different timescales and variant forms, I exist and think.

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I like to keep away from the over-finish of material, the vividness of consumerist culture. I do not want to be super-efficient or seek perfection. I like to work slowly, to find an invisible entity and nurture it into being something else. Having done that, I can make a piece and let it be, relaxed, unmade, just found ... just itself.

I find that contrary behaviours suit my purpose.

My companion ghosts line up as vague and elusive creatures: the live evolution of form, the falling away and emergence of new coherences, the nature of our coexistence within matter, the indifferent agencies within which we act, the wit of human interaction within all of this. I lift the work away from being too grounded physically; it seeks lightness and conceptual rootedness at the same time. The manner of its attempted escape from gravity, the fineness of connection with which it is tethered, speaks to an intrigue between mind and matter.

Bringing the location of the work into my field of vision was important in each venue, to express it through the physical and spatial character of each place. The opportunity of developing these relationships has allowed the work to flourish. I accept these spaces as gifts.

a consequence of – without stilling

The first exhibition in the trio of exhibitions was held at Limerick City Gallery of Art in 2018. I responded to the topography of the ground floor galleries as a landscape on which I could set the work in play. I can still see *without stilling* as it sat un-enhanced by artificial light, darkening as the evening crept into the Gallery, the insistence of its many parts acting together. It enfolded and released itself. It stood in its own presence as an attribute of physical reality – in my recollection, the other works gather round.

a consequence of – a breather of air

In my second exhibition at The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon, the sensation was one of breathing. Historically a place of detention and judgement, its flinty limestone exterior skin tenderised my responses to the interior, naming it as lung. I worked to activate a respiratory engagement of one room to the next – *a breather of air* brought human consciousness to play in the persuasion of matter to a new intensity. Part of the respiratory solution of the space was to let it be itself, open to its own proportions and relationships. I then allowed the works to intensify that condition.

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a consequence of – a dappled world

My third and final exhibition, will be held at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin. The exhibition is conceptually centred in the lightly assembled seam that is the hall and stairway which serves the galleries on either side. This seam provides me with an almost geological construct to work with, not unlike that found in the rift valley Thingvellir in Iceland which marks the crest of the Mid-Atlantic ridge. Formally the island of Iceland is ingesting itself, continually being corroded at its edges and opening along this unfathomably deep fault line running through the centre of the island. This geological continuum serves me well. A seam of ideas will be located here in the hall. Their opportunism and hybridity will aerate the work, dividing the plateaus of the exhibition on either side.

a dappled world, the third showing of the emergent work in flow, holds both the exteriority of the physical world, and the 'inscape' of Gerard Manley Hopkins' invention, in unison. In this generative field, the work exists. I hope that its interwoven concerns reach coherence in this consequential field of endeavour. I await the installation.

Maud Cotter

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written for the monograph and exhibition '*a consequence of – a dappled world*' at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin in 2021.