

SWALLOWING GEOGRAPHY

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Swallowing Geography invites us to consider the complexity of this place. While we might have a monolithic idea of what Donegal is or should be, through these artworks we can understand that beyond the hills and the dry stone walls there are people: washing dishes, reading books, making art. As Sibyl Montague has said in an interview “people are assemblages, in a sense”. What individuals are made of might be arranged differently in a rural context, but they are no less complex, rich or contradictory.

In *That They May Face the Rising Sun*, John McGahern writes that people who leave might do so because it “renews and restores a sense of their own places”. The idea of home is appealing, but in the context of these works, going away and coming back is not always an option. Some are forced to leave their homes because of war and strife. Others, like nomads, move around all their lives, never truly finding a place they belong. Some of us never leave, duty bound to the land, to our ancestors.

This is a place that is easy to stake a claim to: low population and high scenic amenity. People come to Donegal and think of their ancestors, real or imagined, making butter or weaving cloth in the hills. But who gets to decide who truly belongs? This is a living place. The problems faced by people living in urban areas, in Ireland and further away, are the problems of the people of Donegal. Here there are still domestic, financial, technological, and ideological difficulties to confront.

While visiting this exhibition, many of you will interpret the artworks through the lens of your own lives, through the prism of what you consider home. You may be a Donegal native with the family history to prove it, or you may just be a blow-in. You may have come here seeking the perfect landscape once gleaned from a Tourist Board postcard; you might have come seeking cheaper rent or a house you could actually buy. You may just be on your holidays. Whoever you are and however you’ve come, here you will find both Donegal and the world.

The commissioned exhibition text is written by Emily Cooper and Dean Fee, editors of *The Pig’s Back* journal.

CURATOR NOTE



Swallowing Geography is a dual-venue exhibition and public programme at the Regional Cultural Centre and Glebe House & Gallery in Donegal. The intent of this exhibition is to observe the dynamics between belonging and exclusion in response to the Donegal context. It presents the lived and imagined experiences of inhabiting space, while exploring our engagement with geographical, domestic and digital worlds.

The title *Swallowing Geography* is borrowed from Deborah Levy’s novella which questions the idea of home – “Is home a good place? Or just somewhere to return to?” – and expands on our perception of belonging. The exhibition attempts to share the complex narratives about securing a place in the world, where belonging is measured alongside exclusion and shares experiences of migration, displacement and marginalisation.

The exhibition includes a broad selection of artworks from the Arts Council Collection by Bassam Al-Sabah, Carmel Benson, Deirdre Carr, Francis Carty, James Dixon, Anita Groener, Patrick Hall, Eithne Jordan, Ruth E Lyons, Marielle MacLeman, Mairead O’heocha, Nano Reid, Constance Short, Maria Simonds-Gooding and Rajinder Singh; Caroline McCarthy from the Irish Museum Modern Art Collection. New commissioned artwork by Donegal artists Cara Donaghey, Laura McCafferty, Eoghan McIntyre and Jill Quigley.

Swallowing Geography is produced and presented by the Regional Cultural Centre and Glebe House & Gallery, curated by the Early Career Curator in residence Rachel Botha.

Kindly supported by the Arts Council Ireland, OPW – Office of Public Works and Donegal County Council, Creative Ireland and Donegal Film Office.

PUBLIC PROGRAMME



Saturday 15 October to Saturday 17 December
Donegal Leaving Certificate students were invited to a two day intensive workshop to engage with contemporary art, develop an understanding of exhibition-making and deepen their appreciation. They curated their own exhibition *Everyday Blues* in Gallery 2 at the Regional Cultural Centre.

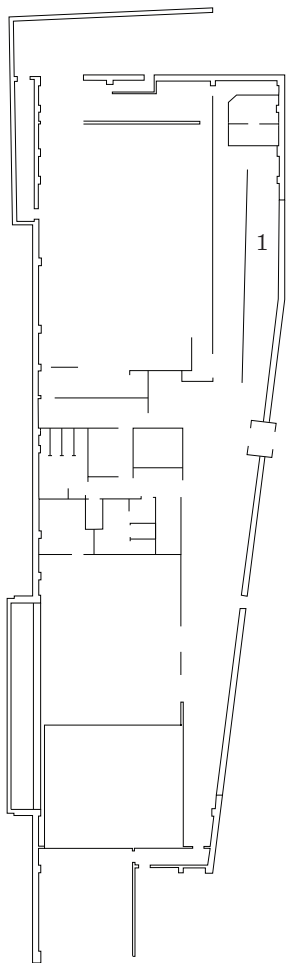
Thursday 3 November, 7–8pm
Screening *The Land Question: Where the fuck am I supposed to have sex?*, discussion with Eimear Walshe and Áine McBride/Mac Giolla Bhríde, at the Regional Cultural Centre.

Saturday 12 November, 2pm
Curator Tour, Regional Cultural Centre.

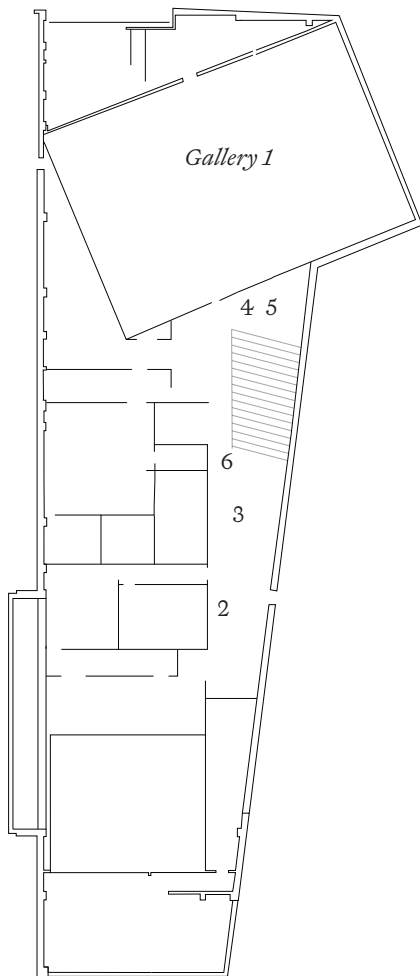
Thursday 24 November, 7–8.30pm
Screening *Masquerades of Research: Part I & II*, discussion with Pdraig Robinson and Ruth McCarthy (Artistic Director of Outburst Arts and Outburst Queer Arts Festival), at the Regional Cultural Centre.

Curator Rachel Botha would like to express a special thanks to Jeremy Fitz Howard, Cathal McGinley, Paul Rooney, Martin McIntyre, Seán Feeny, Bríd Uí Bhaoill at the Regional Cultural Centre; Adrian Kelly and Jean Kearney at Glebe House & Gallery; Emily Cooper and Dean Fee; Grace O’Boyle, Ben Mulligan, Eamonn Maxwell and Megan McNerney at the Arts Council of Ireland; artist and curator Leah Corbett; Josephine Göppert; Rónán Ó Raghallaigh, Jennifer Fitzgibbon and Donna Romano at The National Irish Visual Arts Library; Adam Carr and Jamie Smyth at Models & Constructs; Johanne Mullan at IMMA; and Mary Cremin at Void Gallery.

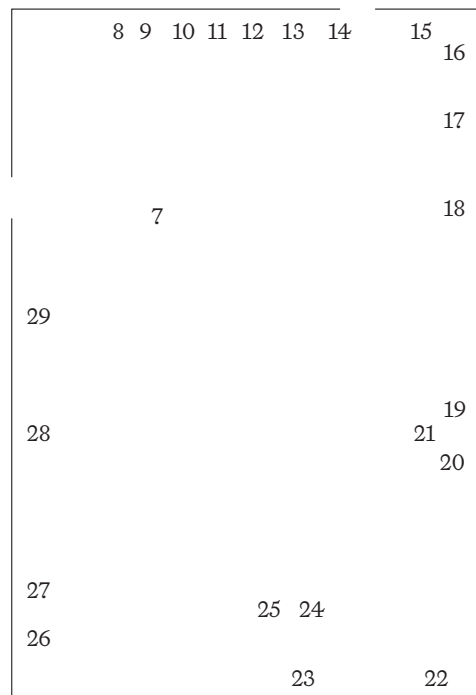
Ground floor



Upper floor



Gallery 1



1. Jill Quigley, *Rathmullan Beach*, 2022, pigment print, decoupage frame, acrylic gouache on glass.
2. Eoghan McIntyre, *Things to do*, 2022, video, 10.04 mins, calico, acrylic marker. Edited audio from *Things to do in County Donegal*, Ireland by europealacarte, 2011, and *Exchange Place*, by Marc DeRossi, Gary Gasgarth, 1975, short film, soundtrack by Terrill Jory. Edited video from *Dances of Scotland*, by Nadia C. Nahunck, 1981, *About Fallout*, by the U.S. Department of Defense / Office of Civil Defense, 1963, *Document Examination*, by National Archives and Records Administration, 1969.
3. Caroline McCarthy, *Greetings*, 1996, two-channel video, Collection IMMA, purchase.
4. Eoghan McIntyre, *Various representations of the Past*, 2022, calico, acrylic marker.
5. Eoghan McIntyre, *Lessons from books I haven't finished*, 2022, headphones, tape cassette, Telex Narrator Cassette Talking Book Player. Edited audio from *Life in DONEGAL | Tonight | Voice of the People | BBC Archive*, from *Tonight*, 1964. [Please rewind the tape.]
6. Patrick Hall, *Mountain 1995*, 1995, ink and acrylic on paper.
7. Marielle MacLeman, *The streets, our brushes*, 2019, MDF, ply, wood, brass, varnish, Irish wool, oak and birch dye, mordants.
8. Laura McCafferty, *1 and 2 of thirteen*, 2022, textile and wood.
9. Laura McCafferty, *5 and 5 of eighteen*, 2022, textile and wood.
10. Laura McCafferty, *1 and 3 of twenty-three*, 2022, textile and wood.
11. Laura McCafferty, *5 and 6 of nine*, 2022, textile and wood.
12. Laura McCafferty, *6 and 2 of four*, 2022, textile and wood.
13. Mairead O'hEocha, *Fir Tree and Dump*, 2010, oil on board.
14. Eithne Jordan, *Winter XVI*, 2018, oil on linen.
15. Cara Donaghey, *Site*, 2022, etching.
16. Cara Donaghey, *Riverview*, 2022, etching.
17. Deirdre Carr, *You should kitchen up your belly with a kiss*, 1990, oil on paper.
18. Constance Short, *Still Life II 5/10*, 1977, linocut on wood.
19. Eoghan McIntyre, *This image is intended to teach perspective to architects*, 2022, calico, pen, wood frame. The drawing in reference to plate XXV in *Modern Cabinetwork: Furniture and Fittings*, by John Hooper, 1952.
20. Anita Groener, *And Leaves You Not*, 1998, oil on canvas.
21. Ruth E Lyons, *Salarium*, 230 million BCE, ongoing, german rock salt.
22. Rajinder Singh, *Point at a passing migrant bird with a raised locked arm and an open palm*, 2020, scavenged wood, metal clamps, jesmonite birds, vinyl tape.
23. Bassam Al-Sabah, *Wandering, Wandering with a Sun on my Back*, 2018, HD video, 16.19mins.
24. Francis Carty, *Plato's Cave*, 1998, acrylic on canvas.
25. Nano Reid, *Cave of the Firbolg*, 1962, oil on board.
26. Carmel Benson, *Untitled 28/50*, 1996, etching.
27. James Dixon, *Mary driving the cattle home, the tide came in too soon and the poor girl got drowned*, 1967, oil on board.
28. Maria Simonds-Gooding, *Store Place*, 1980, fresco pigment on plaster.
29. Cara Donaghey, *The Pit*, 2019, etching.

Listen to the Curator
Audio Tour here
<https://tinyurl.com/k9hkeptj>

