

Now Wakes the Sea

Contemporary art and the ocean

4 August – 5 November 2017

The Glucksman
University College Cork

www.glucksman.org

Artists: Tacita Dean, Marcel Dinahet, Sean Lynch, Maria McKinney, Conrad Shawcross, Lucy Skaer, Janaina Tschäpe, Andreas Kindler von Knobloch, Anna Zacharoff

Curated by Chris Clarke and Kirstie North

Artists have long been drawn to the sea. From naturalistic seascapes to vivid depictions of aquatic life, its vastness, timelessness and mutability has fascinated poets, writers and artists for centuries. Titled after the 1963 short story by J.G. Ballard, *Now Wakes the Sea* considers a resurgence of interest in the sea in contemporary art practices, presenting Irish and international artists whose work explores ideas of submersion and salvaging, the lure of the ocean for seafarers, and the secrets hidden in its unseen depths.

In Ballard's story, a man experiences nighttime visions of crashing waves encroaching upon his landlocked, suburban neighbourhood. His obsessive hallucinations reveal a latent desire to sacrifice his humdrum existence and to return to these ancient waters. This idea of the seductive but deadly lure of the sea resonates with the artworks in the exhibition which explore the ocean's attraction, the sense of adventure which comes with taking to the open waves, and the primordial nature of the sea as a repository from which narratives and objects can be reclaimed.

In **Tacita Dean's** work, the impulse to set sail is portrayed in a triptych of photographs based on the doomed voyage of Donald Crowhurst, an amateur sailor who was lost at sea while

competing in a solo yacht race round the world. This navigational loss of his bearings and sense of time, recorded in his logbook, eventually overwhelmed Crowhurst and led him to throw himself overboard. Dean combines a poignant image of the sailor shortly before he set sail in the home port chosen for his triumphant return, with images of Berwick Lighthouse, its fruitlessly searching beacon evoking the unanswered questions surrounding this narrative. **Andreas Kindler von Knobloch's** *Ultima Thule* records a more auspicious journey, presenting documentation and materials relating to the artist's sailing expeditions into the waters of Dublin Bay. Inspired by the writings of Rene Daumal (whose novel *Mount Analogue* imagines a waterborne trek to a holy mountain) and the final project of the Dutch conceptual artist Bas Jan Ader (in which he disappeared at sea), Kindler von Knobloch's work reflects upon the romanticised desire that inspires such legendary, yet ultimately tragic, journeys. A different approach to the sea voyage is captured in **Lucy Skaer's** *The Good Ship Blank and Ballast (Force Justified)*. Her sculpture of patterned sails and aluminium blocks is based on the notion of the Ship of Fools, a Platonic allegory popularised in the mid-16th century by Sebastian Bandt's book, *Das Narrenschiff*. Skaer's project keeps changing in form, accruing new elements and objects, as she takes it from one place to another, like a ship in constant movement, without any fixed direction.

The unknowability of the sea is not only in its breadth but in its depth. Unfathomable mysteries lie submerged, impenetrable to sight or sound. In the work of **Janaina Tschäpe**, the inscrutability of the ocean is realised through densely layered paintings that evoke aquatic flora, shimmering surfaces, and opaque depths. In her film, *He drowned in her eyes as she called him to follow*, Tschäpe re-imagines the fairy tale of a mermaid's love for a sailor. The protagonist wanders through unfamiliar settings of city streets, funfairs and karaoke pubs, before eventually returning home to the sea. **Anna Zacharoff** portrays a variety of marine life in her paintings: oysters, fish, shells and snails. These specimens are sparsely delineated, their outlines suggested through calligraphic brushstrokes and pools of pigment, against a blank canvas reminiscent of the empty, expansive sea. **Maria McKinney's** sculptural *Abyssals* appear as if literally dredged from the ocean floor, encrusted with barnacles, shells, coral, and netting. Referring to the deepest, coldest underwater layers, these pillar-like assemblages seem to have attracted and absorbed bits of floating detritus and debris into their forms.

The salvaging of materials that have been left to rust on the seabed or to bob amongst the waves is explored in several artistic practices. **Sean Lynch**'s photographs take as a starting point the bankruptcy of the DeLorean car factory in Belfast. The artist tracked the outmoded metal casts to their re-use as anchors, located at the bottom of Galway Bay, where crabs and lobsters now live in the coral around the nooks and shapes that once pressed out stainless steel panels of the car's exterior. **Conrad Shawcross** recorded the 360-degree view from a rowing boat on the River Lea in 2003. His installation presents the footage and flotsam of this trip, his camcorder replaced by a projector, showing the film of the journey in real time. Panning around, tennis balls and footballs are mounted on the walls like buoys bobbing along a horizon line; they escaped from sports grounds along the river and miraculously survived the toxic water. For **Marcel Dinahet**, the sea is both the site of his work and the source of inspiration. He began submerging his sculptures in the early 1990s before stopping making three-dimensional work altogether. His films here mark this point of transition, capturing these inert, underwater objects in their final resting places, abandoned to the test of time.

Now Wakes the Sea: Contemporary art and the ocean is supported by University College Cork, The Arts Council Ireland, and private philanthropy through Cork University Foundation.



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It is possible to arrange for press interviews with some of the participating artists. For further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact:

Chris Clarke, Senior Curator, The Glucksman, University College Cork. exhibitions@glucksman.org / +353 21 4901844

Notes on events in the exhibition:

The Glucksman makes great art available to everyone. A wide range of events and activities are programmed for all abilities throughout the exhibition run. You can view the entire programme in our seasonal brochure at <http://glucksman.org/CurrentBrochure.pdf>

To discover new artists: Perspectives lunchtime talks

Now Wakes the Sea features artists whose work explores ideas of submersion and salvaging. Our **Perspectives** series of free lunchtime talks in the gallery welcomes exhibiting artists Maria McKinney (October 5) and Marcel Dinahet (October 19).

To experience art after hours: Culture Night

Come join the fun at the Glucksman as we open our doors for **Culture Night**. This year, we will be inviting all the family to get creative in our art workshops that explore all things aquatic! Across town in Fitzgerald's Park the Glucksman Young Ensembles group will be unveiling their large scale mural to the public. Drop by at 6pm to show your support.

To learn about photography: Adult art clubs

This season, our adult art clubs and courses put you behind the camera! From our lunchtime course on pinhole photography (20 September – 25 October) to our Saturday mobile photo class (7 – 28 October) to our 2-day workshop on shadows and photography (23 and 30 September), we invite you to learn more about taking pictures at the Glucksman.

The Glucksman is open:

10 am – 5pm Tuesday – Saturday

2 – 5pm Sundays Closed Mondays.

Admission to the Glucksman is free / Suggested €5 donation.

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