

**GALERIE
ALLEN**

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MEL O'CALLAGHAN

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MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Born in 1975 in Sydney Australia
Lives and works in Paris, France

EDUCATION

- 2011 Master of Fine Arts in Research, College of Fine Arts COFA, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
- 2001 Bachelor of Science Architecture, Faculty Of Architecture, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
- 1998 Bachelor Visual Arts with Honours, Sydney College of The Arts SCA, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITION

- 2026 *Live Echo*, Sydney Opera House and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Slime of Time, WAMA, Victoria, Australia
- 2025 *My Heart Beneath The Earth*, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
- 2024 *LIVE ECHO*, Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 2023 *Pulse of the Planet*, Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada (survey exhibition)
Centre of the Centre, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery - National Art Glass Gallery, Wagga Wagga, Australia
- 2022 *All Is Life*, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia
Slime of Time, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
Ore of Cyprus, Kronenberg Mais Wright, Sydney, Australia
Centre of the Centre, Samstag Museum, Adelaide, Australia
Centre of the Centre, Hyphen Wadonga, Wadonga, Australia
Centre of the Centre, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo, Australia
Centre of the Centre, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Goulburn, Australia
Centre of the Centre, Glasshouse Regional Gallery, Port Macquarie, Australia
- 2021 *Centre of the Centre*, Glasshouse Regional Gallery, Port Macquarie, Australia
Primary/Secondary Score, Nuit Blanche, Centre sportif Léo Lagrange, Paris, France
- 2020 *Centre of the Centre*, Carpintarias de São Lázaro Centre of Contemporary Art, Lisbon, Portugal
Centre of the Centre, UQ Art Museum, Brisbane, Australia
Centre of Centre, Protocinema, Athens, GRC
Centre of the Centre, tour Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW), Australia
- 2019 *Centre of the Centre*, Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France
Centre of the Centre, Artspace, Sydney, Australia
- 2018 *Primary/ Secondary Score*, Barangaroo et Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia
- 2017 *Mel O'Callaghan: Ensemble*, cur. Jane Devery, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Dangerous on-the-way, cur. Daria de Beauvais, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
En Masse, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
Lacte Gratuit, Kronenberg, Mais Wright, Sydney, Australia
- 2015 *Dangerous looking-back*, Galeria Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon, Portugal
Ensemble, Loop, Barcelona, Spain
- 2014 *Lacte gratuit*, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
Time to Act, Museum Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon, Portugal
Ensemble, Osmos presents at First Street Green, New York, USA
- 2013 *Ensemble*, Belo-Galsterer Galerie, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2012 *Endgame*, Belo-Galsterer Galerie, Lisbon, Portugal
Move, Casa Museu Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2011 *Each Mineral Flake Of That Night Filled Mountain*, GRANTPIRRIE Offsite, Melbourne, Australia
- 2010 *Each Atom Of That Stone In Itself Forms A World*, GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney, Australia
- 2008 *Topsy Turvy*, GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney, Australia
- 2007 *Landslide*, Galerie Schleicher Lange, Paris, France
- 2006 *The Fall*, Galerie Schleicher Lange, Paris, France
- 2005 *Somewhere*, Galerie Schleicher Lange, Paris France
Somewhere, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia
- 2004 *The Fall*, Salles E.M. Sandoz M. David-Weill, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
The Fall, Annandale Galleries, Sydney, Australia

- 2003 *In The Half Light*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, Australia
 2002 *The Fly and the Mountain*, AGNSW The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
On This Day It Was Cold, Room 35 Gallery, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney, Australia
We Had Walked All Day, Department of Public Works, Sydney, Australia
 2001 *Vagari*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague, Czech Republic
Today We Looked At Walls, Sherman Galleries Hargrave, Sydney, Australia
Mel + Nell, Room Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
 2000 *Nell + Mel*, Stadt Munchen Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Mel + Nell, Room 35, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney, Australia
 1999 *Nell + Mel*, Room 35, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney, Australia
 1998 *Mel + Nell*, Room 35, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney, Australia
Lot, CBD, Sydney, Australia
 1997 *Illume*, 1st FLOOR, Melbourne, Australia
 1996 *Automate*, Firstdraft, Sydney, Australia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Earth, Water, Sky*, WAMA, Victoria, Australia
Normandie Impressioniste, Normandy, France
 2025 *Pulse of Life*, Daegu Photo Biennale, South Korea
Direct Bodily Empathy - Sensing Sound, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Aotearoa New Zealand
Asia Pacific Moving Image Program, Busan Museum of Art, South Korea
 2024 *Undo The Day*, NAS National Art School Galleries, Sydney, Australia
The Charge That Binds, Australian Centre of Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, Australia
PEACE MORE REAL, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
 2023 *Noor Riyadh Festival*, Riyadh, SAU
Zone de contact, Poush Manifesto, Paris, France
Un lac inconnu, Bally Foundation, Lugano, Switzerland
 2022 *INTERSTICES: TURNS #3*, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
Seeing the Invisible, Outset Contemporary Art Fund, Jerusalem, Israel
Seeing the Invisible, Museum of Contemporary Art - MOCA Toronto, Canada
 2021 *(Un)learning*, Seoul Museum of Art (SEMA), Seoul, Republic of Korea
Lost Weekend, Galerie Allen, Paris, France
 2020 *Abstraction*, Kronenberg Mais Wright, Sydney, Australia
 2019 *What Lies Within: Centre of the Centre*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manila, Philippines
Some of Us, Kunstwerk Carlshutte, Budelsdorf, Germany
Primary/ Secondary Score, Greater Taipei Biennale, Yo-Chang Art Museum, National Taiwan University of Arts
 2018 *200 Videos*, Museo D'Art Contemporanea Di Roma (MACRO), Rome, Italy
Vertiges, Lab-Labanque, Béthune, France
Out In The Cold, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK
International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Kronenberg Wright, Sydney, Australia
ARCO Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
 2017 *Prix Meurice pour l'art contemporain*, cur. Claire Moulène & Angela Blanc, Hôtel Meurice, Paris, France
ART-O-RAMA, Galerie Allen, Marseille, France
L'Éternité par les astres, cur. Léa Bismuth, Les Tanneries, Centre d'art contemporain, Amilly, France
Lock/ Route, cur. Khai Hori, Gillman Barracks, Singapore, Singapore
Galerie Allen, Arco, Madrid, Spain (dual presentation with Boris Achour)
Kronenberg Wright, Sydney Contemporary, Australia
 2016 *L'art de la révolte (The Art of Revolt) Hors-Pistes*, cur. Géraldine Gomez and Charlène Dinhut, Musée National d'Art Moderne/Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
L'art de la révolte (The Art of Revolt) Hors-Pistes, cur. Géraldine Gomez and Charlène Dinhut, Centre Pompidu Malaga, ESP
Museum as Performance, cur. Cristina Grande, Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal
Nuit Blanche, Place Dauphine, Paris, France
Do Disturb, cur. Vittoria Matarrese, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
J'ai Rêvé Le Goût De La Brique Pilée, cur. Natsuko Uchino et Sophie Auger-Grappin, La Borne, Centre céramique contemporaine, Henrichemont, France
 2015 *Demain dans la bataille pense à moi*, cur. Magalie Meunier, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France

- Les Drapeaux*, cur. Pablo Caverio, XPO gallery, Paris, France
Les Drapeaux, cur. Pablo Caverio, Maison des Arts, Malakoff, France
The Place of Disquiet, Third edition of A3bandas, cur. Miguel Amado F2 Galeria, Madrid, Spain
Nature/ Revelation, cur. Joanna Bosse, The Ian Potter Museum, NGV National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
2010 *Dying in Spite of the Miraculous*, cur. Alexie Glass, Gurtrude Contemporary Art Space and Melbourne International Arts Festival Melbourne, Australia
La Main Numerique, cur. Dominique Païni, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan
La Main Numerique, cur. Dominique Païni, MABA Maison d'art Bernard Anthonioz, Paris, France
2009 *Event: New Moving Image Works*, cur. Blair French, Artspace, Sydney, Australia
2008 *Fantasmata*, curator: Luigi Fassi, AR/GE KUNST Galerie Museum, Bolzano, Italy
Le Main Numerique, cur. Dominique Païni, Ecole d'art de la Communauté d'Annecy, Annecy, France
2007 *Hamsterwheel*, cur. Francenz West, Printemps De Septembre, Les Jacobins, Toulouse, France
Hamsterwheel, cur. Francenz West, CASM, Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, ESP
Vergäleibhaftig, Kunstverein Konstanz, Germany
Vergäleibhaftig, Städtische Galerie Ravensburg, Germany
Vergänglichkeit, Galerie Schleicher Lange, Paris, France
Phases Of The Moon, IrmaVepLab, Châtillon-sur-Marne, France
Sommerfrische Sehnsucht Nach Dem Paradies, Kunst:raum Sylt Quelle, Germany
2006 *Videoformes*, Prix de la Création Vidéo, Clermont Ferrand, France
2005 National Sculpture Prize, NGA National Gallery of Australia, Australia
Videobrasil 05 15º, Internacional Electronic Arts Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil
Impakt 16th Impakt Festival, Utrecht, The Netherlands
Edinburgh International Film Festival, 59th Edinburgh International Film Festival, Edinburgh, UK
2004 *Site (Unseen)*, Sherman Galleries, cur. Laura Murray-Cree, Sydney, Australia
A Cut Across, curated Megan Keating, Plymsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Australia
That Was Now, This is Then, cur. Alexi Glass Kantor, Gitte Weise Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2003 *Printroom*, Witte de Witt, Centre for Contemporary Art, cur. Karin de Jong, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Printroom, Gurtrude Centre for Contemporary Art, cur. Karin de Jong, Melbourne, Australia
2002 *Shoproom*, Gun Gallery, Oslo, Norway
2001 *Shoproom*, Room Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Award, Artspace, Sydney, Australia

GRANTS, AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2024 Prix Carta Bianca
2021 Create NSW Project Grant
Australia Council For The Arts, Project Grant
2020 The Fauvette Loureiro Memorial Scholarship (finalist)
Australia Council For The Arts, Project Grant
2019 Aide de Projet, Fondation National des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques (FNAGP)
2018 Australia Council For The Arts, Project Grant, Centre of the Centre
2017 Finalist, Meurice Prize for Contemporary Art / Prix Meurice pour l'art contemporain, France
Fondation National des Arts Graphiques et Plastiques (FNAGP), Artist Studio, Nogent-sur-Marne, France
Cité Internationale des Arts, Artist Residency, Paris, France
2016 Cité Internationale des Arts, Artist Residency, Paris, France
2015 Recipient of the SAM Prize for Contemporary Art, France
2014 Nominated for the Bernd Lohaus Prize, Belgium
Finalist, Kaldor Public Art Projects, Sydney, Australia
The Australia Council for the Arts, Research and Development for new video piece in Borneo, Malaysia
2013 The Australia Council For The Arts, New Work Recipient for 19th Biennale of Sydney, Established Artist Category
2011 Cité Internationale Des Arts, Artist Residency, Paris, France
2007 Cité Internationale Des Arts, Artist Residency, Paris, France
2006 The Australia Council For The Arts, New Work Recipient, Established Artist Category
2005 Cité Internationale Des Arts Paris, Artist Residency, Paris, France
National Sculpture Prize, Finalist, NGA National Gallery of Australia, Australia
2004 Cité Internationale Des Arts Paris, Artist Residency AGNSW, Paris, France
2001 Centre For Contemporary Art, Artist Residency, Prague, Czech Republic
Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Award, Finalist, Artspace, Sydney, Australia

The University of Sydney, Dean's Honours List, Sydney, Australia
The Australia Council For The Arts, New Work Recipient, Emerging Artist Category

PUBLIC ART COMMISSIONS

- 2018 Sydney Contemporary Commission, Carriageworks and Barangaroo, Sydney, Australia
- 2015 Australian Embassy, Paris, France
- 2007 Attorney Generals Dept. 'Landslide', The Justice Precinct, Sydney, Australia
Attorney Generals Dept. 'All In One Day', Foyer, Trial Courts, The Justice Precinct, Sydney, Australia

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Fonds régional d'art contemporain Bretagne, FRAC, France
The Art Gallery of South Australia, AGSA, Australia
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, USA
National Gallery of Victoria, Australia
UQ Art Museum, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
Monash University Museum of Modern Art, Australia
Artbank, Australia, Australian Government Office for the Arts, in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Australia
New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice, Australia

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2023 Lissa Robinson, "Mel O'Callaghan: The pulse of the planet", Galleries West, June 19, 2023
Jennie Simm, "Pulse of the Planet: The art of tapping into the Earth's Heartbeat", Big Kitty, June
Eric Volmers, "Australian artist explores rituals and rhythms of the natural world with first Canadian exhibit", Calgary Herald, May 30, 2023
Marianne Derrien, Jérôme Cotinet-Alphaize, Adrien Elie, Huz & Bosshard "Some of Us: une anthologie des artistes contemporains du XXIème siècle en France", Edition Manuella
- 2022 Mara Hoberman, "Mel O'Callaghan: All is Life", exhibition essay, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia, June 2022
Erin McFadyen, "Mel O'Callaghan", Artist Profile, 23 June 2022
Joao Silverio, Gesture and Resonance, exhibition essay, Slime of Time, Galerie Allen, Paris, France, October, 2022
Melissa Bianca Amore, "Un/learning Australia", The Saturday Paper, February 5-11, 2022 | No. 385
Stephanie Bunbury, "Seeing The Invisible", The Age, January 6, 2022
Interview, Art Works, Series 2, Episode 4, ABC television, April 6, 2022
- 2021 Elyse Goldfinch in Know My Name, publication National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
Alana Kushnir, "Seeing the Invisible", Broadsheet, 7 October, 2021
Lonnie Burstein Hewitt, "Seeing the Invisible", Del Mar Times, 18 November, 2021
Jessica Abelsohn, "Digitally making the invisible visible", The Jewish News, 27 October, 2021
- 2020 Mel O'Callaghan: Centre of the Centre, Artspace; Le Confort Moderne; UQ Art Museum with Perimeter Books
Julie Ewington, "Mel O'Callaghan: Centre of the Centre", Australian Book Review, May 2020, no.421 p.200
Ashleigh Wilson & Dr. Edward Scheer, "Breath of experience: Mel O'Callaghan", The Australian, March 5, p. 20-21
Anabelle Lacroix, "Mel O'Callaghan Centre of the Centre, Art Monthly Australasia, Issue 324, Winter, p.72-75
Stephanie Bailey, editor in chief, "Mel O'Callaghan", Ocula Magazine, May 29 2020
Dr. Edward Scheer, "Mel O'Callaghan's Rituals for the Anthropocene", Art Guide Australia, April 1 2019
- 2019 Christopher Allen, "Stillness of the Deep Soul", The Australian, September 28 2019 p.27-28
Emma-Kate Wilson, "Mel O'Callaghan Centre of the Centre", Art Almanac, September issue p.39-41
JT Nisay, "Understanding the Centre of the Centre", Business Mirror, September 17
- 2018 Marie Chenel, Mel O'Callaghan, Artpress 2: Vertiges, Septembre 2018 p. 20-21
- 2017 Mel O'Callaghan, Artist Monograph, Palais de Tokyo, Sam Art Projects : Paris
"Le Prix Maurice pour l'art contemporain dévoile ses nommés," *Le Quotidien de L'art* no. 1323, 4 July 2017, p. 2
Mara Hobermann, "Mel O'Callaghan," Artforum, May 2017
Arnaud Laporte, "Art plastique: Spéciale 'En toute chose' au Palais de Tokyo," *La Dispute - France Culture*, 8 February 2017
Thierry Hay, "Notre rapport à la nature et aux objets: exposition 'En toute chose' au Palais de Tokyo,"

- FranceInfo*, 8 February 2017
 Anne-Lou Vicente, "Mel O'Callaghan, transe collective au Palais de Tokyo," *Troiscouleurs*, 7 February 2017
 Felix Wilks, "From cave to gallery - Mel O'Callaghan's entrancing new exhibition," *Happening*, 6 February 2017
 Maria Luisa Gaspar, "El Palacio de Tokyo busca el arte entre el hombre y los objetos," *Agencia EFE*, 3 February 2017
 Orianne Hidalgo-Laurier, "Les rites de Mel O'Callaghan," *Mouvement*, 25 January 2016
 Emmanuelle Jardonnet, "Cinq bonnes raisons de s'immerger dans Do Disturb," *Le Monde*, 9 April 2016
 2015 Joao Silverio, "Memory and Resistance," exhibition catalogue *Dangerous Looking Back*, Galeria Belo-Galsterer, November 2015
 Béatrice Cotte, "Soirée de remise du Prix SAM 2015 à Mel O' Callaghan," *Follow Art With Us*, 17 December 2015
 2014 Juliana Engberg, "You are what you imagine," in *You Imagine What You Desire* 19th Biennale of Sydney exhibition catalogue, 2014
 Annabel Ross, "White Night: A melancholic artistic dream that lingers long," *The Age*, 3 February 2014
 Nicole Elpnick, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 2014
 "Mel O'Callaghan: Time to Act," in *Hope and Faith* exhibition catalogue, Encontros da Imagem, Porto, 2014, p. 184-185
 2013 "Mel O'Callaghan:Ensemble," *Love will Tear us Apart* exhibition catalogue, Encontros da Imagem: Porto, 2013, p.142-143
 Alda Galsterer, *Natura. Paisagem e Natureza*, catalogue essay, Museum Nogueira da Silva, Braga, Portugal
 2012 Jack Cox & Alexandra Delage, "Les Langues Terrestres", in *LIVRET IV* exhibition catalogue, Musée Rochechouart, Rochechouart, France, 2012
 Andrew Stephens, "The Path less travelled," *The Age Newspaper*, 15 December 2012, p. 23.
 Andrew Stephens, "Desire Lines," *The Age*, 15 December 2012
 Maura Edmond, "Desire Lines," *Time Out*, December 2012
 Leonor Nunes, "Destaque," *Journal Deletras*, no 1100, November - December 2012, p. 28.
 Nuno Crespo, "O ar do tempo," *P2/Publico Lisboa*, 23 December 2012, p. 8.
 "Miguel Branco & Mel O'Callaghan," *Agenda Cultural Lisboa*, November 2012.
 Anja Schneider, "The Rehearsal of Repetition," exhibition catalogue, Gallery Grantpirrie, Sydney, Australia, 2012
 Juliana Engberg, "Desire Lines," catalogue essay, ACCA Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2012
 2010 Dominique Païni, *La Main Numerique*, catalogue essay, MABA Maison d'art Bernard Anthonioz, Paris, France, 2010
 Dominique Païni, *La Main Numerique*, catalogue essay, Musée National de Taiwan, Taipei, Taiwan, 2010
 Alexie Glass Kantor, *Ever Tried, Ever Failed*, catalogue essay, Grantpirrie Gallery, 2010
 Anja Isabel Schneider, *Mel O'Callaghan Ever Tried, Ever Failed*, catalogue essay, Grantpirrie 2010
 2009 Blair French, *Event: New Moving Image Works*, exhibition catalogue, Artspace Sydney 2009
 Blair French, "Event: Recalling The Cinematic," Column publication, Sydney 2009
 2008 Alison Kubler, *Topsy Turvy - Mel O'Callaghan*, catalogue essay, Gallery Grantpirrie, Sydney, Australia, 2008
 2007 Bénédicte Ramade, "Les Perdreaux De L'année En Liberté," *Artclair L'Oeil* n°595, October 2007
 Bérénice Bailly, "La Fugacité Decryptée Par Cinq Jeunes Artistes," *Le Monde*, April 2007, p. 32
 Emmanuelle Lequeux, *Le Monde*, 29 September 2007
 2005 Australian National Sculpture Prize & Exhibitions, catalogue, 2005
 Alexie Glass Kantor, "Mel O'Callaghan, Space Travel," *Monument*, April-May 2005
 Jens-Emil Sennewald, "Mel O'Callaghan in the Galerie SchleicherLange," *Kunst-Bulletin*, April 2005, p. 75
 Bérénice Bailly, "Mel O'Callaghan, Somewhere," *Le Monde*, 3 December 2005, p. 32
 Beatrice Gralton, National Sculpture Prize, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, Australia
 Laura Murray Cree, "Finding Nowhere," *Somewhere* exhibition catalogue Sherman Galleries, Sydney, Australia
 "New Vectors," catalogue essay, 15o Internacional Electronic Arts Biennale Videobrasil, Brasil 2005
 2002 Alexie Glass Kantor, "The Fly And The Mountain - Mel O'Callaghan and Nell," *Monument Magazine*, Issue 47 p.108, 2002
 Jacqueline Millner, *The Fly And The Mountain*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery New South Wales, Australia, 2002
 Jacqueline Millner, *The Fly And The Mountain*, Postwest Publication, March 2002
 Lenny Ann Low, "The Fly And The Mountain," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, p.11, 2-3 February 2001
 Alex Szczepaniak, "Conversation With Mel O'callaghan," *Look*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, February 2002
 2001 Victoria Hynes, "Weird Science," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22-28 June 2001 p.22
 Courtney Kidd, "On The Cutting Edge," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 June 2001, p. 22
 2000 Bruce James, "Mel - New Millenium Kinetics," *The Australian Art Collector*, Jul -Sept p.140 2000
 Mark Jackson, "Awakening To The Dream," *Realtime Magazine*, Aug-Sept p.48 2000
 1997 Jaqueline Millner, "New Guard Avant Guard," *Realtime Magazine*, June, 1997

VIDEO PRESS

- 2017 "Dans l'atelier de Mel O'Callaghan", Palais de Tokyo
 2013 "Interview, The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art", Melbourne Australia Conversation with Alda Galsterer,

Making Art Happen

2012 “Documentary of filming of Parade video work by Mel O’Callaghan in Corsica”, France, STUDIO channel, SBS Australia



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Exhibition view, *PIECE MORE REAL*, Galerie Allen, Paris, 2024

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Exhibition view, *PIECE MORE REAL*, Galerie Allen, Paris, 2024

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

The Source, 2023

Two-channel 8K color video, 9:16 with sound 11 minutes 01 seconds Edition of 3 ex + 2 AP

Noor Riyadh Festival Presented by RCRC and Riyadh Art
Courtesy the artist, Galerie Allen, Paris & Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

The Source, 2023

Two-channel 8K color video, 9:16 with sound 11 minutes 01 seconds Edition of 3 ex + 2 AP

Noor Riyadh Festival Presented by RCRC and Riyadh Art
Courtesy the artist, Galerie Allen, Paris & Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

My heart beneath the earth, 2023

Peinture acrylique, titane, hématite, argent, zéolithe, phosphorescence, bronze et ocre sur mur, dimensions variables

Photo by: Romain Danaud

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Zone de contact*, 2023 Poush Manifesto, Paris, France



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Vessel, 2017 (detail)

Sculpture, Acier brut et eau

Photo by: Romain Danaud

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Zone de contact*, 2023 Poush Manifesto, Paris, France



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Vessel, 2017

Sculpture, Acier brut et eau

Photo by: Romain Danaud

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Zone de contact*, 2023 Poush Manifesto, Paris, France



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire (orbe), 2019

verre diélectrique et câble d'acier avec performance 150 cm diamètre x 16cm

Photo by: Andrea Rosetti

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Un lac inconnu*, 2023 Bally Fondation, Lugano, Swiss



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire (orbe), 2019

verre diélectrique et câble d'acier avec performance 150 cm diamètre x 16cm

Photo by: Andrea Rosetti

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Un lac inconnu*, 2023 Bally Fondation, Lugano, Swiss



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire (orbe), 2019

verre diélectrique et câble d'acier avec performance 150 cm diamètre x 16cm

Respire, Respire (courbe), 2019

verre diélectrique et câbles métaux avec performance

2m x 1.25m x 77cm

Photo by: Andrea Rosetti

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Un lac inconnu*, 2023 Bally Fondation, Lugano, Swiss



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019

3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound 48:9 / 20 mins

Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet*, 2023, Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Pulse of the Planet, 2023

Six glass tuning forks, audio recording, 2 minutes 9 seconds

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet, 2023* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Pulse of the Planet, 2023

Six glass tuning forks, audio recording, 2 minutes 9 seconds

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet, 2023* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

First Sound, Last Sound, 2022

Two steel tuning forks, wooden resonance chamber, performers in white costume, 20 minutes

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

First Sound, Last Sound, 2022

Two steel tuning forks, wooden resonance chamber, performers in white costume, 20 minutes

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019

3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound 48:9 / 20 mins

Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019

3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound 48:9 / 20 mins

Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

My heart beneath the earth, 2023

Acrylic paint, titanium, hematite, silver, zeolite, phosphorescence, bronze, and ochre on wall, dimensions variable

Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Snakes entwine while the stars tremble, 2023
Acrylic paint on glass, titanium,
phosphorescence, bronze, silver, ink 160 x 280cm
Photo by: Elyse Bouvier
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, *Pulse of the Planet* Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019

3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound

48:9 / 20 mins

Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD), Manilla, Philippines, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019
3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound
48:9 / 20 mins
Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, Australia, 2020



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019
3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound
48:9 / 20 mins
Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view, University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane, Australia, 2020



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019
3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound
48:9 / 20 mins
Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

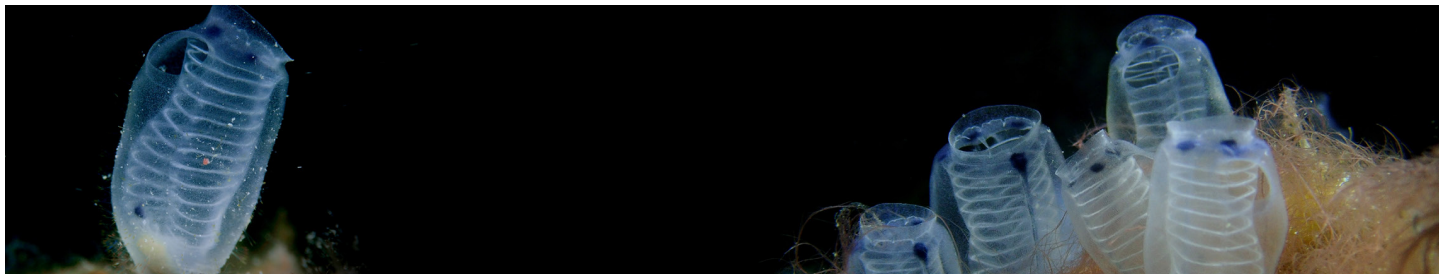
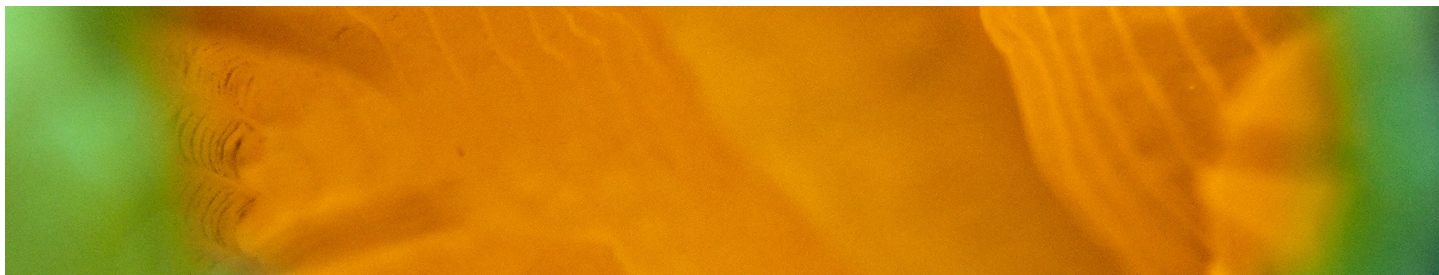
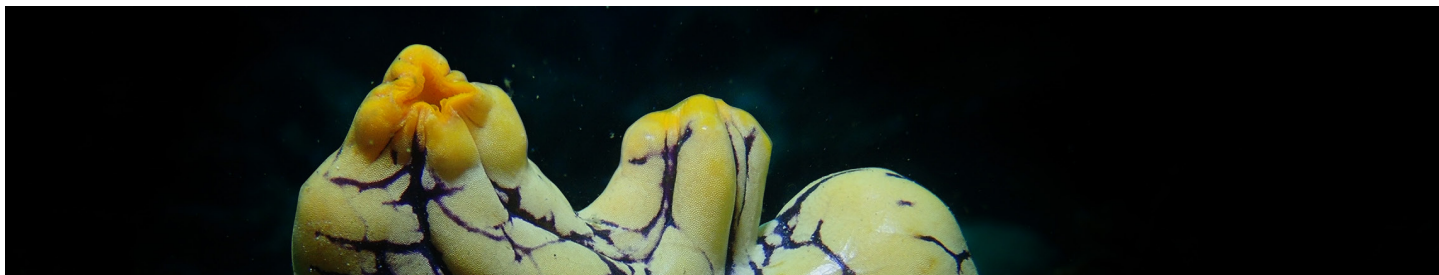
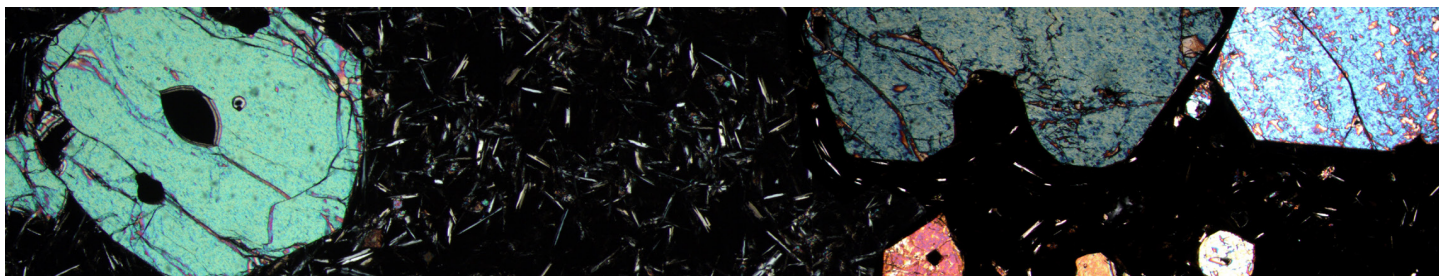
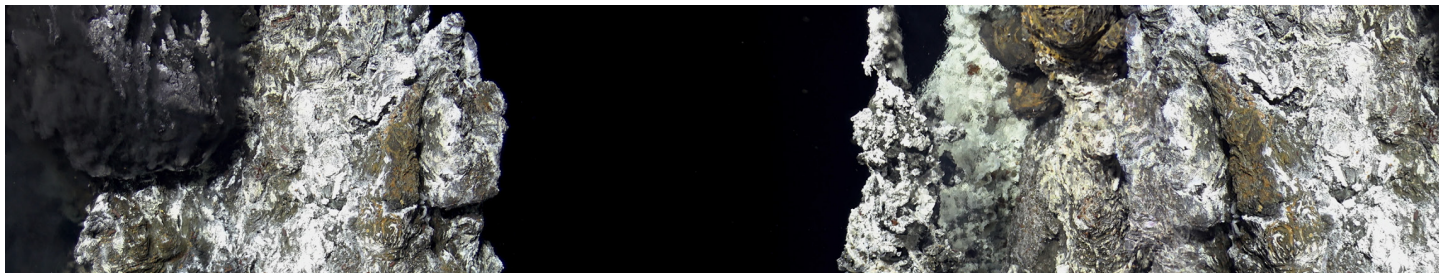
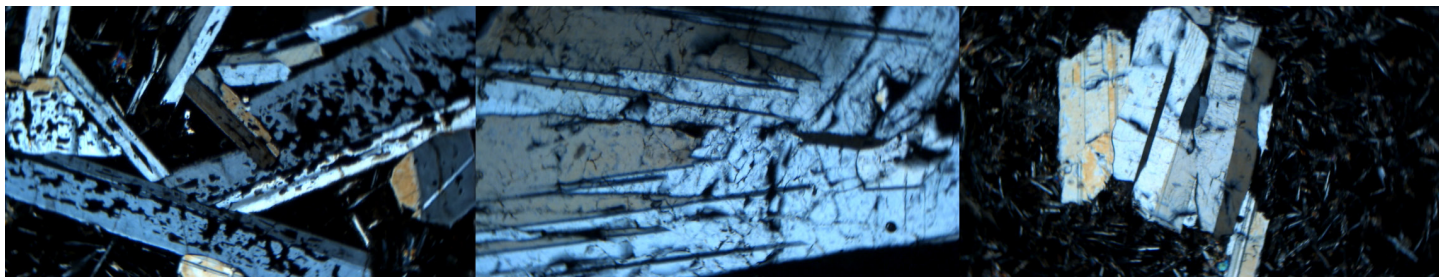
Exhibition view, Artspace Sydney, Sydney, Australia, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, 2019
3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound
48:9 / 20 mins
Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view at Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Centre of the Centre, (vidéo stills) 2019
 3 channel HD colour video, 5.1 surround sound
 48:9 / 20 mins
 Edition de 3 ex + 2 AP
 Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire (orbe), 2019
dielectrique glass and metal wire with performance
150 cm diamètre x 16 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Exhibition view at Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire (formation), 2019
dielectrique glass and metal wire with performance
3 elements of 280 x 200 x 26 cm each
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

Exhibition view at Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire, 2019
dielectrique glass and metal wire with performance
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

Performance at Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Respire, Respire, 2019
dielectrique glass and metal wire with performance
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

Performance at Confort Moderne, Poitiers, France, 2019



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

To Hear With My Eyes, 2017

Performers: Minimum 2, Duration: 20 minutes

photo : André Morin

courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

Production : SAM Art Projects & Australian Government through the Australia Council

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen

Performance of Ecstatic Trance and Ritual Body Postures with the sculptures - 'Gong & Drum', 'Charred Tree', 'Sistrum' and 'Vessel'



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Dangerous on-the-way, 2016

2 channel high definition colour video, sound

32:9

45 minutes

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Ensemble, 2013
2 channel colour HD video
7 minutes, 15 seconds
Edition of 3 ex + 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

Exhibition view, *L'art de la révolte*, cur. Géraldine Gomez and Charlene Dinhut, 2016
Centre Pompidou, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

L'acte Gratuit, 2014

High definition colour video, sound

9:16 vertical

29 minutes

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Endgame, 2012

HD video programme, colour, sound, 16:9
indefinite time

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Move, 2010

16mm film, colour with sound, 16:9

7 minutes, 13 seconds

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Chop, 2010

16mm film, colour without sound, 16:9

9 minutes, 13 seconds

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Ever Tried, Ever Failed, 2009

High definition colour video, sound, 16:9

11 minutes 30 seconds

Edition 3 + 2AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Capturing Trees, 2008
HD video colour with sound, 16:9
7 minutes, 25 seconds
Edition of 3 ex + 1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

To the End, 2007

HD video programme, color with sound, 16:9
time indefinite

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

To the End, 2007

HD video programme, color with sound, 16:9
time indefinite

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Somewhere, 2005

High definition colour video, sound 16:9

3 minutes 18 seconds

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



Mel O'Callaghan

The Fall, 2004

HD video colour with sound, 4:3

4 minutes, 15 seconds

Edition of 5 ex + 2 AP

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



Mel O'Callaghan

Woe Implores Go, 2016

Performance Palais de Tokyo

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



Mel O'Callaghan

Woe Implores Go, 2016

Performance Palais de Tokyo

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



Mel O'Callaghan

Going over, Going under, 2016
Performance Nuit Blanche, Paris
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Going over, Going under, 2016
Performance Nuit Blanche, Paris
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Ensemble, 2016

Performance Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Parade, 2014

steel, wood, rope, performers

20m x 5m x 5m

commission 19th Biennale of Sydney.

Photo: Stephen Ward

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Parade, 2014

steel, wood, rope, performers

20m x 5m x 5m

commission 19th Biennale of Sydney.

Photo: Stephen Ward

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Time to Act, 2014

Performance, 45 performers

Commissioned by Museum Medeiros e Almeida, Lisbon, Portugal

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Endgame, 2012

Performance with diatomite Stone

Performance ACCA The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art,
Melbourne, Australia

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

En Masse (red and black), 2016

Acrylic paint on glass

100cm x 100cm

Photo: Paul Green

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



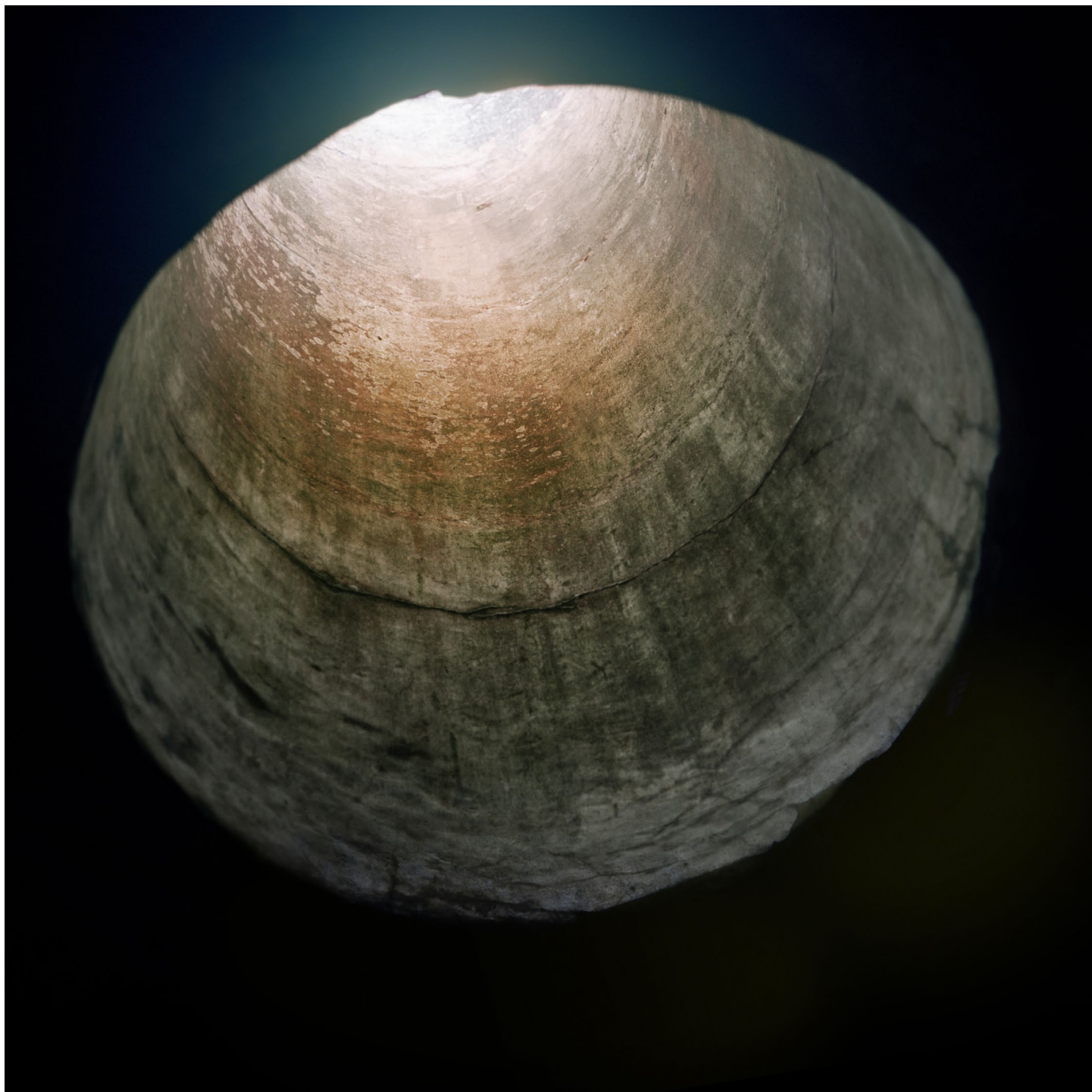
MEL O'CALLAGHAN

En Masse (yellow sun), 2015

acrylic paint on glass

140 x 160 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

MOONS (03), 2010
pigment print on superior matte paper 250g
Image: 100 x 100 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Balance of the Day, 2011

lamda photographic print

Image: 180 x 100 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Landslide, 2007

lambda photographic print

Image: 120 x 45 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Dangerous looking-back (#4, 6, 9), 2015

White clay

45cm x 30cm x 6cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Dangerous looking-back, 2015
Dangerous looking-back table Installation
white clay, mirror, wood, steel
120 x 80 x 74.5 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Framework, 2014

clear pine, steel

727 cm x 173 cm x 195 cm / dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Topsy Turvy, 2008
mixed media
variables dimensions
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Over Lines, 2007

tents, lines, weights

450 x 400 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

All In One Day, 2007

ice, water, acrylic plastic, steel, compressor motor
dimension variable

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris

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Press

Communiqué

PRIX CARTA BIANCA LAURÉATS 2024

Pour sa troisième édition, le Prix Carta Bianca présente un panel d'artistes riche en diversité. Originaires des quatre coins du monde, les huit lauréats, qui ont en commun de résider en France ou en Italie, travaillent avec de multiples supports pour donner forme aux récits de patients en rémission d'un cancer.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Respire, Respire*, Performance de Breathwork avec orgue et harpe, verre diélectrique, pigment d'argent, fil d'acier, 20 minutes. Vue de l'installation, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design MCAD, Manille (PH).
Courtesy de l'artiste ; Galerie Allen, Paris (FR) ; Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney (AU) © Maculangan

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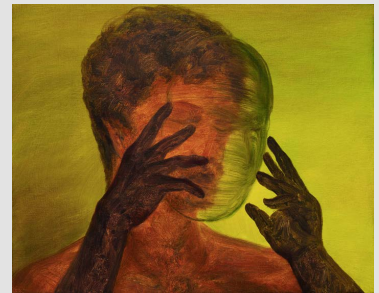
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Premier Prix 2024

Diego Cibelli *When I Was the Sky Itself* 2023, porcelaine à feu, 90 x 20 x 20 cm.

Courtesy de l'artiste et Alfonso Arliaco © Francesco Squaglia

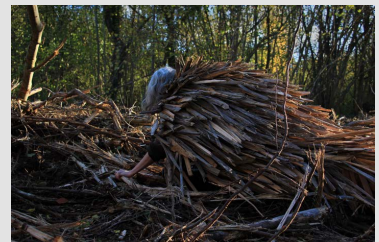


Xie Lei *Revelation* 2022, huile sur toile, 40 x 50 cm.

Courtesy de l'artiste © Tous droits réservés

Lélia Demoisy *La Cape* 2023, tirage jet d'encre contrecollé sur bloc de chêne, 23 x 32 x 4 cm.

Courtesy de l'artiste © Tous droits réservés



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gallerieswest

MEMBER

Mel O'Callaghan: Pulse of the Planet

MAY 27, 2023 TO AUG 27, 2023

Esker Foundation 444-1011 9 Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 0H7



Mel O'Callaghan, "First Sound, Last Sound" (performance), 2022, Installation view, "All is Life," 2022, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia. (photo by Zan Wimberley)

Pulse of the Planet is a major solo exhibition by Paris/Sydney-based artist Mel O'Callaghan that synthesizes several years of collaborations and ways of knowing. For the last twenty years of her practice, O'Callaghan has explored resonant objects, spaces, and tools—namely how they affect, codify, and connect bodies. By working alongside experts in other fields, O'Callaghan seeks to pose new questions through her artistic practice, to highlight the natural synergies between disciplines, as well as to focus attention on how highly curious researchers reciprocally approach complex questions about our more-than-human existence.

The works in this exhibition convene transdisciplinary creative research—from oceanographers, physicists, microbial ecologists, psychologists, and musicologists, among others—that converges around the most

urgent problems of our time, including planetary shifts, the viral age, climate futures, interspecies living, and which lifeworlds we must be attentive to and why. Drawing on our innate impulse to connect with one another and to Earth's inexplicable forces, *Pulse of the Planet* sees all bodies—human and non-human—as sites of revelation and connection.

The exhibition brings together a chorus of works that begin at the planet's very depths; at a site from which all life is said to have emerged kilometres below the surface of the ocean. O'Callaghan's collaborators recently made a hydrophone recording at the Axial Central Caldera, East Pacific Rise—a site on the floor of the Pacific Ocean at the boundary of diverging tectonic plates—which captured vibrations beneath the planet's surface, a phenomenon often referred to as the Earth's heartbeat. Previously, these vibrations were emitted at a constant low frequency of 7.83 hertz, but in recent years scientists have witnessed an increase to 8 hertz. This acceleration reinforces the complex planetary changes that are currently afoot. We might understand this shifting, pulsing vibration as a bodily connection with all life, both on a microbial and an immensely geologic scale, that underscores a universal resonance that transgresses global borders.

Films presented here chart the minute and the planetary, and our own fallibility and survival in this shifting system. These works give tone and form to sites as far afield as the Termite Fields near Orrtipa Thurra (Bonya), Eastern Arrente Country; the cliffs of Baie de Singes, Calanques; and the quicksand tidal island of Mont-Saint-Michel, Normandy. The frames of these films pan across and below landscapes and surfaces, submerging the viewer to both a termite-eye-view, and across great distances. O'Callaghan also contributes a series of new paintings, poured and rendered on-site to the hertz of the tuning forks; the colours of each painting chosen to optically resonate in the space.

At the centre of the exhibition is a durational performance featuring two large-scale tuning forks installed on a resonant chamber. When played, the tuning forks emit a fundamental note that creates a sympathetic call and response, which on a cellular level is in solidarity with the heartbeat of the Earth. During a series of performances performers and audience members become conduits for sympathetic sound and are called into awareness of their own somatic rhythms—such as a calm nervous system, including pulse, breath, and movement—and to consider the notion, championed in many of the planet's knowledge systems, that the Earth, too, is a living organism.

Communiqué

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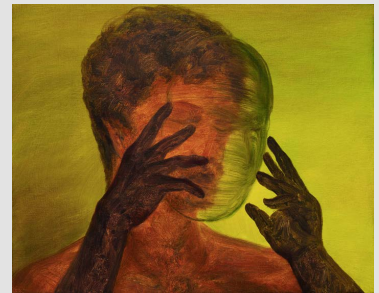
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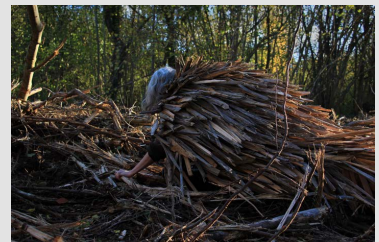


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The act of breathing is key to the work of Mel O'Callaghan

EDWARD SCHEER

One of the key problems in performance art is transmission; that is, the extent to which a spectator may or may not receive what is presented, partly because it is often an experience, first for the artist and secondarily for the spectator.

Performance artists, especially those whose work involves an element of endurance, submit their bodies to extreme experiences to circumvent other less direct modes of communication.

Sometimes transmission is attempted through shock, as in the work of the first wave of performance artists from the 1960s and 70s such as Stelarc, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Gina Pane, Chris Burden, the Viennese Actionists and Mike Parr; or through the extreme durational pieces of artists such as Tehching Hsieh in his five

One Year Performances. What is transmitted does not always arrive — what is usually conveyed is still the idea of the experience rather than the experience itself.

Mel O'Callaghan, a Sydney artist who divides her time between Australia and Paris, has explored an approach to artmaking that has taken her into the heart of the problem. For O'Callaghan, the way through this conundrum is the breath, which occupies an increasingly prominent place in her performance work.

During her 2014 work *Parade*, commissioned for the 19th Biennale of Sydney, O'Callaghan observed that her performers (who manipulated ladders, pulleys and other sculptural objects) unconsciously breathed in unison and seemed somehow altered afterwards. Subsequent experimentation showed that trance states could be achieved with participants based on breathing, rhythmic sound and altered posture.

O'Callaghan's experiments have taken her into a universe of symbolic behaviour where the



ZAN WIMBERLEY

Mel O'Callaghan's *Respire, Respire*

sacred overlaps the profane and where states associated with ancient rituals can be induced in participants in a contemporary art context.

In *Respire, Respire* (2019), six performers enter the space and take up positions behind hanging sculpted glass panels. A musician plays a soundtrack of string and

percussive sounds while the performers breathe rhythmically against the glass.

This form of synchronised breathing is designed to induce hallucinogenic or visionary states. It is technically possible for spectators to participate if they wish and perhaps experience the same kind of state as the performers.

That this is theoretically achievable is an important development in the transmission problem, which has a long history in this type of performance art. By staging or producing extreme physical states, the artist can transmit the ideation of that experience, if not the experience itself, to an audience with more force than other forms of representation.

For example, in some of Parr's endurance-based work, the delivery of the artist's pain to an audience — electric shocked or cut or branded or stitched up or nailed down — sets up an immediate and intense presence that dilates over the length of the piece.

The intention seems to be that shock follows sensory overload. Physical shock focuses time into an instant, a sudden break from the usual flow. Extreme duration does the opposite. In Hsieh's *Time Clock Piece* (One Year Performance 1980–1981) he punched a time clock every hour on the hour for 365 days, leaving him unable to complete any other meaningful tasks.

So we may well be shocked to see an artist's arm nailed to a wall, and we may feel discomfort and be challenged, but we do not receive the pain the artist feels. We can witness the documentation of Hsieh's *Time Clock Piece* without experiencing the suspension of selfhood that an entire year of that activity involved for the artist.

O'Callaghan is exploring something more direct, aimed at the spectator rather than focused on the artist. But she also adopts a familiar ritual format: performers go out on to the stage, enter the trance state, then return to everyday consciousness at the end.

The idea is a threshold experience where one becomes aware of crossing over into a different state, one of being (a newlywed, a graduate) or of consciousness (speaking in tongues, trance states).

In another kind of ritual, O'Callaghan presents *Centre of the Centre* (2019), a video work made with the help of a deep-sea submersible craft. *Centre of the Centre* is an artwork, not a documentary film, so there is no explanation as it cuts

between the alien deep ocean space of hydrothermal vent fields and the shallow coral outcrops of the Verde Island Passage in The Philippines.

The video is also a trace of a journey the artist has taken to imagine and to report on zones of the

The idea is a threshold experience where one becomes aware of crossing over into a different state

world where humans cannot survive, such as these fields 4km to 5km below the surface.

O'Callaghan shows us rare footage of life forms that have evolved to thrive in this harshest possible environment, offering absurd, almost sculptural images of survival against the odds. We are accompanied in this journey by

the sound of the intensely rhythmic, almost gasping breaths of trance practitioners that serve as a link to the human world above, as well as connecting *Centre of the Centre* to the rest of the artist's breath works. As climate change accelerates and assumes a critical state, this work, with its array of bizarre forms and movements, its soundtrack punctuated by the sounds of holotropic breathing, presents a kind of life crisis ritual for the anthropocene. One section of almost orgasmic breathing ends in a long exhale as the screen goes black. There is no narrative here, no shaping of the experience, just an invitation to keep breathing.

Edward Scheer is head of school at the University of NSW Art and Design. This is an edited extract from *Mel O'Callaghan: Centre of the Centre*, published by ArtSpace. O'Callaghan's latest exhibition is at the University of Queensland Art Museum, St Lucia, until July 4, with performances of *Respire, Respire* every Wednesday and on selected Saturdays.

12 Visual arts



All works courtesy the artist/Kroneberg Mats Wright, Sydney/Galerie Allen, Paris/Belo-Galsterer, Lisbon. Picture: Zan Wimberley

As far as we know, humans are the only creatures that possess self-consciousness and self-awareness in the fullest sense. Other animals enjoy various degrees of awareness of the world but it is limited, perhaps above all because they don't have language, the quintessential organon of the human mind.

The power of language to organise and articulate our thoughts, and to present them to us as the object of rational thinking, is in turn immeasurably enhanced by the invention of writing. Unfortunately, we spend a very small part of our time and employ a fraction of our intellectual energy in the search for wisdom; much of our attention is devoted to illusory fears and desires, to useless chatter, complaints and the vociferous expression of futile opinions. Social media is almost entirely filled with the expression of opinions and especially of anger, mainly as a way of bonding with virtual friends.

This useless agitation of the human mind is fostered and encouraged by the mass media because it is so addictive. But it is superficial, like choppiness on the surface of the sea, which is why the Stoic concept of ataraxy or non-disturbedness comes from a verb that describes the way the oars of a ship churn up the surface of the sea while the deeper water remains still.

In a similar way the ancient Indian Samkhya philosophy that underlies yoga sees the mind as an ultimately material thing, connected with the body: it is not the same as consciousness, but that through which we are conscious of the world. Hence the idea of yoga practice as citta vritti nirodha, the stilling of the turning of the mind: it is only when the mind becomes clear and limpid like still water that we can see through it.

Meanwhile, most of what goes on in our bodies, the organic and physiological processes, is completely beyond the scope of consciousness, and mostly beyond the range of will.

The autonomic nervous system keeps our heart beating, our lungs breathing, our digestion assimilating food and our bodies sitting, walking and carrying out other necessary actions seemingly of its own accord.

Complex cellular processes are taking place continually, as old cells are replaced or repaired. Even more disconcertingly, we are beginning to more fully appreciate just how many other living entities, mainly the gut flora or biome, coexist with us in a symbiotic way.

And yet this corporeal existence is far from entirely divorced from our mental experience: body and mind are not wholly separate and parallel phenomena.

On the contrary, our thoughts can affect our physiological processes: anxiety, for example, can cause sleeplessness, digestive disturbances and even an accelerated heartbeat; and these physiological states, sometimes triggered by memories, associations of ideas or acquired responses of fear, will in turn distort our ability to think calmly and accurately.

And there are ways that we can affect this system, which different cultures have understood to varying degrees for centuries. The main principle is the control of breath. This is in fact the only part of the autonomic system that is also capable of being consciously controlled and directed: we can hold our breath, we can breathe more or less quickly or slowly and more or less deeply.

And this kind of control can be enormously powerful, for just

**CHRISTOPHER
ALLEN**



Mel O'Callaghan: Centre of the Centre, Artspace, Melbourne, until October 27

Finding stillness in soul of the deep

From controlled breathing to the ocean's depth, the search for meaning, life and soul continues



Zan Wimberley

as our breathing becomes faster and shallower when we are afraid or stressed, consciously slowing and deepening the breath can bring feelings of anxiety and panic under control.

Conscious breath control is not only used in yoga but actually underpins the whole movement practice, as well as forming a whole discipline called pranayama. Breathing is also fundamental to meditation, but also to other practices that aim to achieve a trance-like state, and this is part of the subject of Mel O'Callaghan's installation at Artspace, although this would not be immediately apparent on entering the gallery.

The first of two rooms occupied by the gallery is all white, brightly lit and hung with curved glass sheets, treated to be partly reflective and partly frosted.

The first impression of this room is of being caught in a kind of hall of mirrors: the glass panels reflect the viewer, as well as other visitors, although we can also see through them. There is a sense of distortion but above all of being surrounded by our own image, ubiquitously reflected back at us, like an illustration of the inescapability of the ego.

It is, however, in this room that a performance is held twice a week, at midday on Friday and Saturday; and the performance — which I have not had the opportunity to see — apparently consists of movement and above all breathing practices that are inspired by Sabine Rittner, a German trance-therapist, whose website has details of various seminar and workshops, including one that invites participants to "immerse yourself in the magical power of rhythm, pulsation and sound. Explore the effect of archaic cult rhythms of your body".

It seems at first sight that we are entering an entirely different world in the second room of the exhibition, which is dark, with benches to sit on and the far wall occupied by the floor-to-ceiling projection of a three-channel video work that lasts for 20 minutes and is immediately impressive and absorbing.

I ended up watching it twice through on the first sitting and then dropping back in for a third look after a second walk around the glass mirrors.

The video was made in collaboration with an eminent scholar of marine geology and is based on footage shot, under the artist's direction, by a deep-sea exploration submersible at the East Pacific Rise axis, at a depth of almost 4km.

Here hydrothermal vents emit streams of superheated water — three to four times the heat of boiling water — in the midst of an otherwise freezing ocean abyss.

This is an extreme environment, where the pressure alone is almost unimaginable — something like 400 times the pressure of our atmosphere at sea level.

The deepest any scuba diver has been able to reach, for example, is around 300m and most stay at around 10-15m, which is barely below the surface compared to these terrifying depths. It is also pitch black, for no light can penetrate so far through the intervening water.

But even in these seemingly unlivable conditions there are creatures that have adapted to the pressure and to the huge variation in temperatures. At one point, for example, an extraordinary red worm coils through the water: this is the Alvinella worm, which has apparently adapted to living in water that can change temperature so dramatically.

And this is the real subject of this work, as the title suggests: it is looking for something like the epicentre of life itself, where



Pictures this page: Zen Wimberley

Mel O'Callaghan's performance and installation *Respire, respire* (2019), main; installation views from O'Callaghan's *Centre of the Centre* (2019), above and below left

we discover some glimpse of the state of the very early stages of living creatures, unimaginably long before there was any life on dry land, let alone any of the subsequent evolution that eventually produced the human mind.

Depending on the point at which you come into the gallery, you may encounter a bleak undersea terrain of colourless rocks that looks at first barren, but then you notice a tiny starfish-like creature clinging to the rock, or the movement of an octopus in a dark crevasse. Or you may enter as the red *Alvinella* worm glides through the water.

There are many other colours too, some of which may be the result of colour treatment of the original film, for many things are dark or colourless in the depths of the ocean simply because of the lack of light. Red is apparently nonetheless a common enough colour to discover when you introduce the artificial light needed to film anything. Some of the other colours may be artificially enhanced, although no doubt based on some differences of tonal value and perhaps of vestigial chroma.

One of the most interesting questions, at this level of the chain of life, is whether we are looking at examples of flora or fauna. Are these plants or animals? The answer is clear in some cases, not in others: they are certainly living things, but what kind of life do they have exactly?

St Thomas Aquinas, whose philosophy was derived from Aristotle, distinguished three categories of life, based on different kinds of soul: plants had a vegetative or nutritive soul, that is a life-principle that allowed them to grow; animals have this as well as a sensitive soul, which allows for perception and subsequently movement; humans have both of these as well as an intellectual soul, which is the basis of the consciousness and awareness that I mentioned earlier.

But what to make of the extraordinary reticulated plant or creature that opens out across all three screens in a rare panoramic view in which we lose all sense of scale? Or of those remarkable things that bloom like tropical flowers, or in another case sprout out of tubes, becoming pink phallic forms with vulval mouths — and which are in fact riftia pachyptila, the tube worm.

These last creatures look and behave like flowers rather than animals, both in their physical appearance and also in their fixed position, because one of the properties of animals is generally the capacity for locomotion. But that is precisely the point, that at this level of primitive forms the boundaries and the behavioural differences between the two kingdoms are ambiguous.

This is also part of what is intended by the title: *Centre of the Centre* suggests a quest for something like the epicentre of living forms, the point at which some mutation in the primal soup of minerals and chemicals produced the first very elementary organic cells.

In reality, this probably happened in more tepid waters — at least common sense would lead us to this conclusion — but these warmer waters are now filled with more evolved creatures.

It is only down here at the very frontier of the inhabitable world that we still encounter nothing but the most primitive and ambiguous lifeforms.

But what of the theme of breath, which seemed so important in the first room? In reality, that theme is carried on in the video through the soundtrack, reminding us that even down in the extreme icy depths creatures need to extract oxygen from the unimaginably pressurised water.

The sound of breath is pervasive, but especially important at certain points, particularly in one section where the screen is filled with tiny white creatures waving tentacles in the water, while the soundtrack is of increasingly rapid and urgent breathing, as though gasping for breath. This is one of the points that, although the projection is on a loop, could be considered a conclusion: the gasping reaches a crescendo, then suddenly ends with a long exhalation as the screen goes dark.

PUBLIC WORKS



The Historic Umpire's Whistle, 1886. The Bob Gartland Collection. On display in *The Greatest Team of All – Treasures from the Bob Gartland Collection*, Geelong Gallery, Victoria, until November 10.

Bronwyn Watson

From when Australian football was first played in 1858 until the middle of the 1886 season, the concept of umpires stopping play by blowing a whistle had never been considered. Rather than a whistle, umpires used their voices to control matches.

All that changed on June 5, 1886, at a game between Fitzroy and Carlton at Brunswick Street Oval in Melbourne, according to AFL and Geelong Football Club historian Col Hutchinson.

At that game, an umpire, Jack Trait, became one of the first field umpires to ever use a whistle. Later that same day, the whistle was used again when another umpire, Joe Shaw, officiated at an afternoon game between Melbourne and Essendon at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Trait, who lived in Geelong, had imported the whistle from England, says Hutchinson.

“Initially the whistle was blown to signal that the ball had gone out of bounds because in those days there were no boundary umpires,” he says.

After Trait introduced the whistle, he used it in at least 154 matches. He then presented it to Jim D’Helin, who was Geelong’s leading goalscorer in 1896 but a serious leg injury had ended his playing days.

“Jim D’Helin took up umpiring in the local competition, probably with the encouragement of Jack Trait, who presented him with the historic whistle,” says Hutchinson. “Jim then graduated to senior match level and officiated in 81 league matches from 1900 until 1905.”

The whistle, which is made of ebony rather than metal, would have been used in around 300 matches at both local and senior level, explains Hutchinson.

“As well as clearly being the oldest whistle used in Australian Football, it may also be the earliest surviving sporting whistle in the world.”

Given that Saturday is the AFL grand final and that Geelong won the minor premiership, it is perhaps fitting that the historic whistle should be on display at Victoria’s Geelong Gallery to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the Geelong Football Club. The whistle is part of an exhibition featuring many historic items collected over 50 years by Bob Gartland, Geelong’s vice president.

The Greatest Team of All – Treasures from the Bob Gartland Collection has been curated by Geelong Gallery director, Jason Smith, who says that the whistle is significant because it is “one humble object that, through ingenuity in its early technology and design, transformed the game and the way in which its rules were communicated in Australia”.

Smith says the whistle is conserved as a relic in its own little reliquary and is “seemingly a world away from the shape and structure of game whistles today”.

“The whistle is a treasure in the Gartland collection not only because it is probably the earliest whistle used in Australia, but because it is one of so many objects in the collection that tell fascinating stories about the Geelong club, its history, its players, and the wider social history of Geelong.”

Materials: ebony
Dimensions: 60mm x 30mm x 15mm high

SALEROOM

When Ken Plomley was just 14, he made his first art purchase, a print of colonial Sydney. Plomley went on to become a principal research scientist at the CSIRO, but he was also an avid art collector. Along with his wife Joan, he built a collection that featured many notable Australian artists, such as Roy de Maistre and Margaret Preston. The Plomley Collection of Modernist Art, along with other Australian and international works, was auctioned recently in Sydney by Deutscher and Hackett. “The auction was like a condensed art history lesson,” says executive director Damian Hackett,

“with works dating from 1822 through the entire 20th century.” Many of the sales exceeded expectations. Preston’s *Indoor Still Life* (1913), for instance, sold for \$268,400, while de Maistre’s *The Meeting in the Garden* (c1929) sold for \$256,200. The top sale of the night was for Jeffrey Smart’s *The Tuscan Farmhouse* (1980), which fetched \$902,800, the artist’s fifth highest price ever at auction. Second top price was Howard Arkley’s *Floriad Address* (1995), which sold for \$732,000. Overall, there were total sales of just over \$7.2 million.

Bronwyn Watson



13 AVRIL 2017 / DANS ACTUALITÉS, EXPOSITIONS / PAR BERNINI ISABELLE

MEL O'CALLAGHAN, *DANGEROUS ON-THE-WAY*

L'extase est une idée qui fascine depuis longtemps les anthropologues, philosophes, poètes, théologiens, artistes... Cet état d'ivresse durant lequel la conscience du monde sensible s'abolit, cette « sortie de soi », ouvre les portes d'une réalité alternative. L'aptitude à rentrer en transe est indissolublement liée à la nature humaine. Qu'elle soit à des fins de guérison, spirituelle, pour améliorer l'équilibre psychologique des individus ou pour développer les relations sociales, le changement d'état de conscience advient notamment par le rituel, dont toutes les sociétés et religions à travers le monde ont depuis longtemps reconnu l'importance. Il est un moyen d'autonomiser et d'améliorer l'état de transe, et constitue une passerelle possible vers l'extase.

L'exposition de Mel O'Callaghan au Palais de Tokyo, *Dangerous on-the-way*, explore la question du geste rituel et de la transe comme éléments évocateurs de la condition humaine. Ce nouvel opus approfondit le champ d'investigation de l'artiste sur le mouvement corporel comme indice de lien social et la nécessité pour l'homme d'avoir des gestes rituels. Ces dernières années, des œuvres comme *Parade* (2014) ou *Ensemble* (2013) mettaient en scène des personnages anonymes plongés dans une endurance corporelle.

Dans *Parade* (2014), des performeurs tiraient inlassablement sur des cordes reliées à des systèmes de poulies. La répétition des mouvements en fait une activité éreintante, les nuances dans les gestes accomplis peu à peu avec une fatigue grandissante font la beauté de la performance. La vidéo *Ensemble* (2013), un diptyque panoramique, montre un homme luttant contre le puissant et redoutable jet d'eau d'une lance à incendie, portée par trois hommes vêtis d'uniformes de pompiers. Sa marche, si elle est entravée, parviendra pourtant à se poursuivre. Chorégraphie involontaire, elle est l'image d'une détermination sans fin. Montrée au ralenti, promptitude et lenteur agissent ensemble. Cette maîtrise du temps, permise par le ralenti, rend premier le mouvement. Ainsi, l'élément fondamental est dans l'acte même, dans le geste et sa puissance. Les postures du protagoniste – te un Sysiphe dans le continuum de la vie – poussées à leur extrême, deviennent un moment de beauté et de stupéfaction.

Ce mouvement en avant, effectué dans l'adversité mais pourtant inexorable, est celui d'un élan sans précipitation, d'une insurrection silencieuse. Il renvoie au corps social, quand l'individu ne peut agir que par le collectif. Le corps doit trouver sa place dans le chaos des désirs individuels, des contraintes et des conventions sociales, dans le besoin brûlant d'affirmation de soi. L'enjeu est ainsi celui d'une résistance permanente, salvatrice.

Ici, *Dangerous on-the-way*, à travers la question du geste et du rituel, est une proposition ambitieuse qui permet à Mel O'Callaghan d'ouvrir un espace d'ivresse entre la vie et l'art.

Un ensemble de performeurs sont invités à tenter l'expérience de la transe par l'utilisation d'objets rythmiques – comme des crécelles ou encore un gong – et l'adoption d'une posture précise selon une durée donnée. D'après les recherches de Felicitas Goodman (1914-2005) – docteur en philosophie et en anthropologie – l'accession à l'état d'extase ne serait possible que dans la réunion de certaines conditions : la position du corps, la répétition de mouvements, tels des balancements, associés à un rythme sonore précis, et enfin, l'environnement. Autant de facteurs (changements physiologiques, stimulus rythmiques) qui permettent de modifier le niveau de conscience et parvenir à un état de transe, portail vers une réalité alternative où l'on atteint l'extase. L'ensemble des gestes répétés dessinent un rituel dont le sens reste une énigme. Le spectateur, face à ces expérimentations, s'apprête à embarquer dans un voyage de l'esprit.

Présenté dans la salle suivante, le film *Dangerous-on-the-way* a été tourné dans les grottes de Gomantong situées sur l'île de Borneo. Profondément logées dans la colline, dans une épaisse forêt poussant sur un sol calcaire, ces immenses grottes sont célèbres pour abriter des nids de salanganes (espèce d'hirondelle de l'Asie du Sud-Est et d'Océanie), qui, récoltés depuis le 13^{ème} siècle, constituent des mets particulièrement appréciés de la cuisine asiatique. Simud Putih est le plus vaste des deux complexes de grottes dans le système de Gomantong.

Les cueilleurs de nids sont des hommes d'une communauté autochtones, les Orang Sungai, vivant à proximité. Cette collecte, qui a lieu deux fois par an, relève d'une pratique comme il en existe nulle part ailleurs. S'élevant à une centaine de mètres de hauteurs sur des échelles de rotin, et grâce à un enfilage de cordes et poteaux ficelés ensemble, les hommes parviennent à l'objet de leur quête par le biais d'un équipement ingénieux, mais précaire. Suspendu au-dessus d'un abîme de plus de 120 mètres de hauteur, ils bravent le danger de manière qu'on pourrait qualifier d'inconsciente. Dès lors, le résultat de leur récolte est en regard des moyens mis en œuvre pour y parvenir, de l'ordre du miraculeux. Comment ne pas penser ici à cette mondialité qui dérange, dans laquelle règnent l'oppression et l'exploitation des faibles par les puissants ? Certes, mais l'œuvre de Mel O'Callaghan a la finesse de mettre d'abord en scène l'idée d'un « monde en relation », un monde aujourd'hui emmené par l'interpénétration des cultures et des imaginaires. Ici, l'individu ne peut agir que par le collectif. Et l'expérience, solitaire et partagée, produit le lien social.

La récolte des nids de salanganes, destinée à fournir les commerçants asiatiques, a pris au fil des siècles la forme d'un rituel qui a forgé l'identité culturelle et spirituelle du peuple Orang Sungai. Chants, cris, paroles échangées dans un dialecte unique, fumée de tabac... accompagnent dans un maelstrom de sons et d'odeurs leur ascension vertigineuse. L'environnement sensationnel de la grotte créé un paysage qui renvoie aux tréfonds d'une ère perdue, où la nature, première et invincible, a une intensité presque « hallucinogène » et dicte son dogme. Se dessinent ici les conditions d'une possible accession à l'extase, que la vidéo de Mel O'Callaghan, englobante, révèle par le prisme d'un temps ralenti, et suspendu. Suspendus comme le sont les cueilleurs au-dessus d'un vide sidéral, dont le visage ressent et exprime toute cette tension cathartique. Les réflexions de Nietzsche, à travers les paroles de Zarathoustra, selon lesquelles l'homme est une corde tendue au-dessus de l'abîme, et dont l'artiste s'est inspirée, résonnent à la vision de ces images. (« *Il est dangereux de passer de l'autre côté, dangereux de rester en route, dangereux de regarder en arrière – frisson et arrêt dangereux.* »).

L'extrême difficulté de cette pratique qui repousse les limites, rend ce rite collectif extatique. Le film montre comment un corps peut se confronter aux choses, aux épreuves, et comment la quête peut être le prétexte – heureux ou malheureux, consenti ou contraint – à tenter de transcender la réalité.

Cette possibilité de transe extatique serait-elle salutaire en regard du danger de cette pratique ? Il est étonnant de voir à quel point l'expérience physique peut être considérée comme violente et dangereuse, tout autant que méditative et libératrice.

C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle la beauté des images provient aussi de la rudesse de l'expérience. Elles évoquent, en filigrane, à quel point la connaissance s'éprouve dans l'errance. Transpire ici l'expérience même de l'artiste, qui après avoir emprunté le long sentier escarpé qui mène jusqu'à la grotte, éprouvé physiquement ce trajet à travers l'adversité de la jungle, s'est emparée du rituel de ce spectacle aérien, approchant la personnalité de ces danseurs de cordes, dans les moments d'exultation ou tragiques. La matérialité du film évoque aussi ce vécu subjectif. Il est nécessaire pour l'homme d'avoir des rituels. La grotte de Simud Putih, telle que rêvée par l'artiste, est une hétérotopie : elle héberge l'imaginaire, et obéit à des règles autres que celles du monde réel. Ici, le temps est suspendu aux gestes des collecteurs de nids d'oiseaux. Le film de Mel O'Callaghan est le récit d'une expérience loin des tremblements du monde : métaphore de la condition humaine, elle est « au bord du monde. »

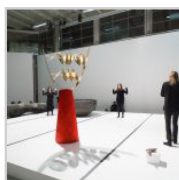
Isabelle Bernini



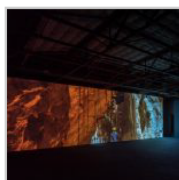
22/02/2019

artpress | Mel O'Callaghan, Dangerous on-the-way

Vue de l'installation de Mel O'Callaghan « To hear with my eyes », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : André Morin



Vue de l'installation-performance de Mel O'Callaghan « To hear with my eyes », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : Clemens Habicht

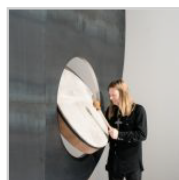


Vue du film de Mel O'Callaghan « Dangerous on-the-way », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : André Morin

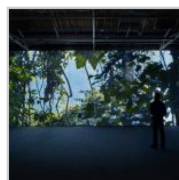


Vue de l'installation de Mel O'Callaghan « Intramygdala », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : André Morin

Vue de l'installation-performance de Mel O'Callaghan « To hear with my eyes », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : Clemens Habicht

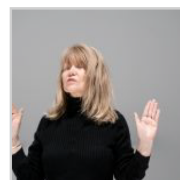


Vue de l'installation-performance de Mel O'Callaghan « To hear with my eyes », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : Clemens Habicht



Vue du film de Mel O'Callaghan « Dangerous on-the-way », Palais de Tokyo, 2017 – Photo : André Morin

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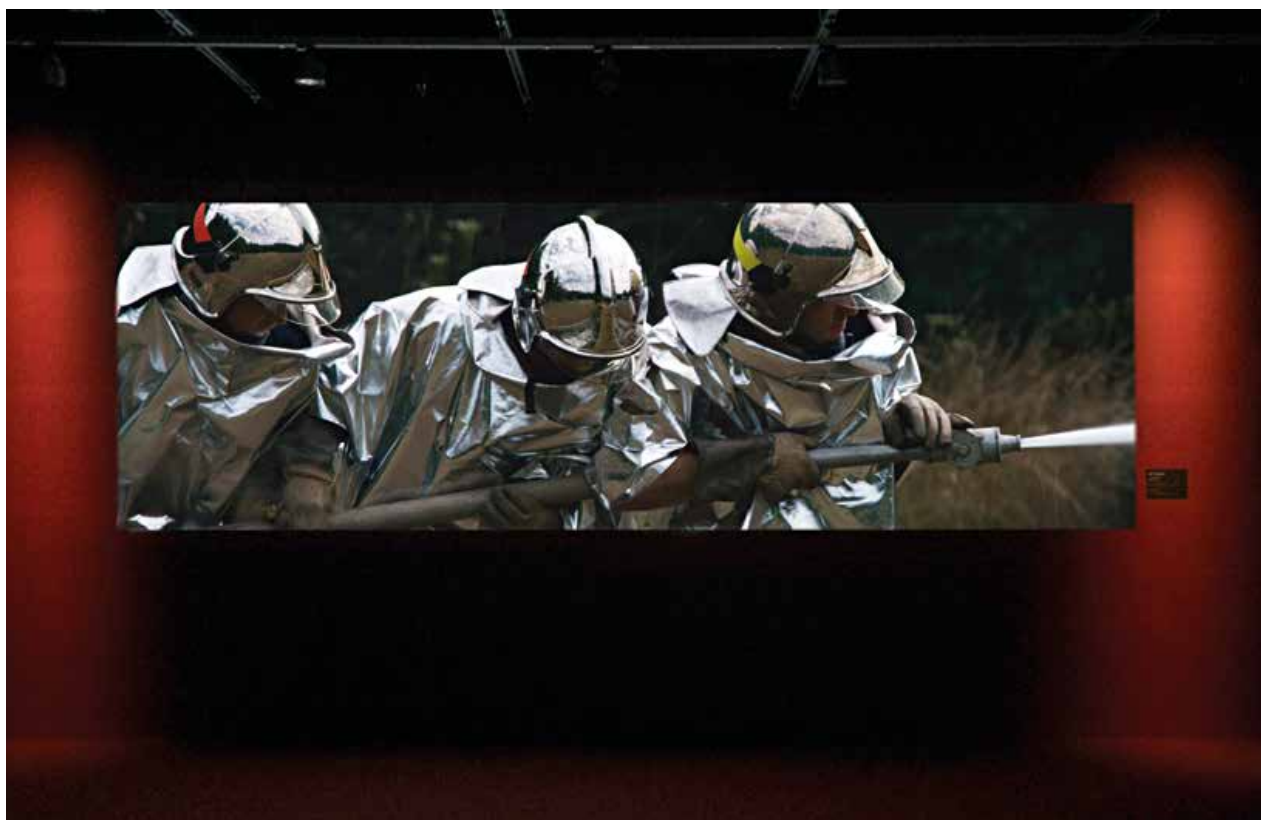
AUCUN COMMENTAIRE

Désolé, le formulaire de commentaire est fermé pour l'instant.

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CREATIVE SPARKS



Creative Sparks invites creative people, from artists to entrepreneurs, to share the journeys that shaped their careers. Artist **Mel O'Callaghan** credits transcendent moments in Spain and Borneo as drivers for her work.

(left)
Installation view of **Mel O'Callaghan Ensemble**, 2013, Courtesy of the artist, Kronenberg Wright, Sydney, Galerie Allen, Paris and Belo Galsterer, Lisbon
© Mel O'Callaghan

(right)
Mel O'Callaghan during the installation of her exhibition *Dangerous on-the-way*, 2017, at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Photo © Laura Stevens

I work with film, performance, painting and installation and focus on the generative and transformative possibilities of resistance and endurance. My works may be seen as a type of destruction in order to create, mirroring nature's cycle of death and renewal. I love to work with video. It feels to me that I am sculpting and framing time and experience. Video acts like a sun around which my other works orbit. It's such a focused way of seeing life, moving over the world in a way that is so revealing. I prefer to watch my own performance works through a camera.

I knew I wanted to be a contemporary artist early on; I recall sitting in the sunroom of my grandparents' house, drawing a portrait of my beloved grandfather. For the final years of high school I chose to transfer to Barker College in Sydney, which had an excellent new arts facility that also offered video. My teacher, Jeff Kossew, was engaged, generous and inspiring, and introduced us to contemporary artists, works and exhibitions. One key experience from this time was a class visit to the 1992 Biennale of Sydney. I clearly remember seeing the work of Doris Salcedo and knowing that she was the artist I hoped to be. Her work *Atrabiliarios* was ambitious in its

scale, and was spatially, conceptually and socially engaged. To make the work Salcedo drew upon personal memories of losing family members who were abducted during Columbia's internal war.

I have had a few watershed moments. In 1995 I visited the Santa Maria de Montserrat, a monastery that sits above Barcelona. Without knowing it, my experience began at the base of the mountain when we took a cable car to the peak, entered the church, lined up and filed one by one through a series of chambers that felt to me to become increasingly adorned with gold and jewels until, at the end of the passage, we were exposed, still inside the church, to a window that looked out over a valley. From there we climbed a set of stairs that led to a small chamber, more bejewelled than the previous spaces, that housed the Virgin of Montserrat. From this point we were quickly spat back out into the world and I was left with an intense understanding of being outside of myself, beyond everyday reality. I could say this was my first religious experience, or rather that it afforded me an understanding of what is sacred. In making my works I relive this moment over and over again.

In 2015 and 2016 I travelled to a remote part of north-eastern Borneo to shoot a video to be



'I WAS LEFT WITH AN INTENSE UNDERSTANDING OF BEING OUTSIDE OF MYSELF, BEYOND EVERYDAY REALITY. I COULD SAY THIS WAS MY FIRST RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, OR RATHER THAT IT AFFORDED ME AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS SACRED. IN MAKING MY WORKS I RELIVE THIS MOMENT OVER AND OVER AGAIN.'

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

presented as part of a solo exhibition earlier this year at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. My husband, Clemens Habicht, and I filmed in the Simud Putih caves of Gomantong, observing the Orang Sungai people as they climbed 120 metre-high ladders to the tops of the caves to collect birds' nests. The men push themselves into an altered state of consciousness that allows them to undertake a sacred act in a hostile environment with both beauty and poise. Making a body of work like this was a momentous creative-life-work experience. The exhibition was conceived as an immersive journey: each room and work, either bathed in light or plunged into darkness, echoed the changing states of the self. The exhibition was also about the principles of transition and procession, reflecting on the progressive neurophysiological changes associated with altered states of consciousness. Performances based upon the Ecstatic Trance and Ritual Postures developed by twentieth-century anthropologist Dr Felicitas D. Goodman were performed daily in the exhibition by the directors of Goodman's Cuyamungue Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and students from The Newschool Parsons Paris.

I moved to Paris permanently in 2007. In 2004

I stayed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales studio in the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. I was lucky to join a gallery during the residency, and with this base it felt like I could make a home here.

My work presented at the NGV is *Ensemble*. Displayed over two screens in 32:9 ratio, *Ensemble* presents a solitary figure who protests the violence of man through a silent but powerful act of resistance. Three uniformly dressed firemen move into frame and prepare to turn on their hose. We watch as they lean into and align themselves with the elemental force of the water. After a time, a lone figure enters into view, walks into the direct firing line of the hose and is hit full-force. As he pushes on, transgressing the seemingly impossible barrier from right to left of screen, the uniformed men begin to retreat. It is at this threshold point between the two channels that the figure's simple action reaches a powerful point of climax.

Ensemble encompasses all the themes that I explore in my work, and as such it is one of my favourite pieces. I filmed it in 2013 in the small village of Tonnerre, in Bourgogne, France, in cooperation with three generations of the local firemen.

This is a political work. My aim was to empower the viewer through the simple action of resistance, pushing against a collective force. *Ensemble* invites both personal and social introspection by generating an empathetic impulse towards protecting the rights of individual and collective freedoms. The singular body, frail against the physics of force, marks out an important symbolic space of dissent, through resilience. This quiet action might characterise a paradoxical poetics of violence, using violence to create rather than annihilate, and transforming what may appear as (self)destruction into a source of generative potential for the collective. The act portrayed requires the resolve of both performer and onlooker alike. Breaking beyond physical and psychological limits is perhaps here a question of both pushing against such forces and accepting to fall in order to prevail.

MEL O'CALLAGHAN: *ENSEMBLE* RUNS FROM 17 NOVEMBER 2017 TO 12 MARCH 2018 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA.



1 ▶ « Ensemble » (2014), installation vidéo de Mel O'Callaghan - Courtesy Mel O'Callaghan et galerie Allen, Paris.

QUAND L'ART BAT LE PAVÉ

EXPOSITION ▶ « L'art de la révolte », au Centre Pompidou, fait la part belle aux agitateurs. Tour d'horizon historique des images de la contestation

**LA POLICE S'AFFICHE
AUX BEAUX ARTS**



2 ▶ « La police s'affiche aux Beaux-Arts » (1968), affiche de l'Atelier populaire - DR



3 ▶ « Octobre » (1928), film de Sergueï Eisenstein et Grigori Aleksandrov - DR

PHILIPPE DAGEN

1 ▶ **Affronter les canons à eau**
Photographies, installations et surtout vidéos : Mel O'Callaghan, Australienne de naissance, Parisienne d'adoption, inscrit ses émotions et ses réflexions dans des formes et des images sobres que l'on dirait simples si cette apparente simplicité n'exigeait un long travail de conception et d'exécution. Sa vidéo *Ensemble* est, si l'on peut associer ces deux mots, une chorégraphie de la répression. Un homme affronte, dans un pré, la puissance de l'eau que projette contre lui la lance à incendie-touze par trois pompiers. Il s'épuise à avancer contre elle, se recroqueville, se redresse. À l'origine de cette performance se trouvent les innombrables reportages de manifestations dispersées à coups de canons à eau. De ces documents, Mel O'Callaghan ne conserve que cette lutte inégale, la transposant dans un décor neutre et supprimant ainsi toute référence à un lieu ou une date. En réduisant la scène à une épure, elle obtient une allégorie universelle.

2 ▶ **Les murs ont la parole**
En mai 1968, l'École des beaux-arts de Paris est un pôle de la révolte étudiante. Du 14 mai au 27 juin s'y organise l'Atelier populaire. Artistes et élèves y dessinent et produisent plus de trois

cents affiches, dont certaines sont devenues des symboles de Mai 68. À ce titre, elles figurent dans les livres d'histoire et font l'objet d'expositions. Caricatures de De Gaulle, satires de la télévision d'État, dénonciations de la répression : quel que soit leur but et quels que soient les auteurs – qui, pour la plupart, voulaient demeurer anonymes –, des règles visuelles se sont imposées : fluidité instantanée grâce au découpage et à la schématisation des formes, impression en noir et blanc ou, plus rarement, en rouge et blanc, phrases drôles et violentes. Si l'on a choisi celle-ci de préférence à de plus connues, c'est que la question de l'efficacité politique de la création artistique y est posée et résolue dans le même mouvement.

3 ▶ **La légende de la révolution**
Commandé pour célébrer le dixième anniversaire de la révolution de 1917, tourné vite, Octobre prend appui sur le reportage de John Reed publié en 1919, mais n'a rien d'un documentaire. Il exalte une version légendaire – et fautive – des événements.

▶ **À VOIR**

« L'art de la révolte », exposition dans le cadre du festival Hors pistes au Centre Pompidou (Paris 4^e), jusqu'au 8 mai.

Longs effets de foules, prises de vues nocturnes et clairs-obscurs vivement contrastés, fusils et lances dressés contre le ciel et la tyrannie, visages aux expressions sans équivoque et personnages incarnant des types sociaux – l'ouvrier, le paysan, le bourgeois, l'officier –, en sont les figures de style. Chaque événement devient séquence symbolique, du renversement des statues impériales à la prise des palais par le peuple, jusqu'au triomphe de Lénine. La révolution devient icône cinématographique, dont le grandiose doit faire oublier les distorsions infligées à la vérité historique.

4 ▶ **La Liberté sur la barricade**
Impossible de faire sans elle : si la toile de Delacroix n'est pas la première peinture de révolte – « Goya l'a précisée », elle est la plus célèbre. Aux combattants des Trois Glorieuses qui, du 27 au 29 juillet 1830, ont fait tomber le régime de Charles X, elle rend hommage en associant récit et allégorie. Intitulée *Scènes de barricades* quand elle est révélée au Salon de 1831, elle évoque les combats de Paris, la foule disparate des révoltés et les morts. Mais elle s'organise autour de la Liberté aux seins nus brandissant le drapeau tricolore, et cette idole spectaculaire a fait sa gloire, au point de figurer sur les billets de la Banque de France de 1978 à la disparition du franc. ▶



4 ▶ « La Liberté guidant le peuple » (1830), d'Eugène Delacroix - Imago/Austrian Archives

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Quand l'art bat le pavé, Le Monde, 30 April 2016
By Philippe Dagen

MY SECRET SYDNEY

Mel O'Callaghan

ARTIST

Mel O'Callaghan's family have lived in Glebe for generations. The video, installation and performance artist grew up there and still feels a strong connection with the suburb. "My grandfather's father moved there as a captain with the merchant marines and was offered a house in Glebe Point," she says.

More recently, her work has taken her further afield; she splits her time between Australia and France. Last year, she co-founded Galerie Allen in Paris. She returns regularly to Sydney to exhibit. Her newest piece, *Parade*, is a performance and installation work taking place on Cockatoo Island as part of the 19th Biennale of Sydney.

"The performers activate the space by performing these absurd repetitive actions - going up and down ladders, pulling weights," O'Callaghan says. "It's a way of looking at society's tendency towards ritual - ritual is about feeling a sense of security in society. I think in watching these endless actions that people kind of fall into this meditative state and perhaps consider their own human condition."



What is your favourite place to relax?

Avalon. My husband's family has a house there. After the density of Paris, Avalon is like this unreal paradise. We swim and go fishing.

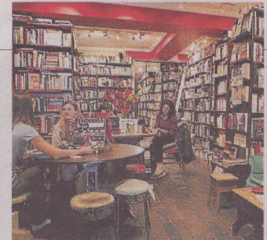


What are your memories of growing up in Glebe?

One of our favourite spots was the Chinese joss house (Sze Yup Temple and Joss House), it's a 19th-century Chinese temple. It was like another world with the smells and the colours. There was an old man there who used to

Is there an art gallery more people should know about?

An artist-run space called Firstdraft - It just moved to Woollahra. It gives an opportunity to young artists to do some of their first exhibitions at the same time as showing established artists.



Bookish: Mel O'Callaghan (left) with some of her favourite things (clockwise from far left) Avalon beach; Gertrude & Alice bookshop; Sze Yup Temple; and gelato. PHOTOS: WOLTER PEETERS, MARCO DEL GRANDE, STEVEN SIEWERT, KAREN WEBBER

What are your favourite buildings?

One thing I like about architecture in terms of Sydney is that you have in the suburbs this untapped collection of incredible houses from the '60s, all made by Australian architects. They're so

serene, often in bush landscapes using materials like stone and concrete, mixed in with the trees.

Is there a spot that has special meaning for you?

The Australian Museum, because my grandfather's mineral collection is there (the Albert



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

The Age, 15 December 2012
By Andrew Stephens

Mouvement.net

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Vidéos

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Mel O'Callaghan, *Ensemble* (détail) © Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Austr. Paris.

Entretiens arts visuels

Les rites de Mel O'Callaghan

Mel O'Callaghan

L'exposition *Demain dans la bataille pense à moi* à l'IAC de Villeurbanne jusqu'au 14 février, réunit 9 artistes internationaux autour de la structure narrative du roman éponyme de Javier Marías. À cette occasion, Mel O'Callaghan présente une vidéo, *Ensemble*, réalisée avec la collaboration de la commissaire de l'exposition Magalie Meunier. Chez cette artiste, la performance, la vidéo ou l'installation participent d'un même « rituel » sculptural et collectif où le hasard et la répétition s'engendrent mutuellement.

Par Orianne Hidalgo-Laurier
publié le 25 janv. 2016



VOIR LE SITE

[de l'IAC de Villeurbanne](#)

Vous êtes Australienne. Qu'est-ce qui vous a amené à vivre et à travailler à Paris ?

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Les rites de Mel O'Callaghan, Mouvement.com, 2016
By Orianne Hidalgo-Laurier

« J'ai quitté l'Australie en 2004 pour Berlin. Puis, j'ai fait une résidence de 3 mois à la Cité Internationale des Arts à Paris, ce qui m'a conduite à entrer à la galerie Schleicher Lange. Déménager à Paris en 2007 a été naturel. À partir de ce moment-là, j'ai été exposée plusieurs fois en France et devrais bientôt présenter une œuvre dans l'exposition de Franz West, *Hamsterwheel*, à l'occasion du Printemps de Septembre. J'ai aussi réalisé beaucoup d'œuvres en France où il existe énormément de paysages variés. J'ai trouvé cela très excitant : le pays offrait tant de potentiel pour l'artiste que je suis.

En 2014, vous avez réalisé une performance/installation, *Parade*, à l'occasion de la 19^e Biennale de Sydney. Comment appréhendez-vous le processus performatif et la place du spectateur ?

« Je crée des expériences où le spectateur devient un performeur/collaborateur essentiel dans l'aboutissement de l'œuvre. Je crois que la performance et le rituel ont le potentiel de créer du lien social. Je cherche à favoriser l'interaction au sein d'une collectivité. Ensemble, le performeur et le spectateur prennent intégralement part dans le succès du processus performatif. En ce sens, ce dernier implique le "nous" collectif, pas l'individu. Il s'agit d'une somme de personnes, un corps social.

Dans *Parade*, j'ai travaillé avec 70 volontaires pour créer une performance évolutive sur une période de 3 mois. Elle s'est déroulée sur une grande scène meublée d'accessoires : des poids, des échelles, des cordes, des contrepoids et des poulies. Quatre fois par jour, 20 performeurs devaient entrer dans la salle, monter sur la scène et utiliser l'équipement de manière répétitive. Ce qui était éreintant. Tout en entraînant le performeur, l'endurance plongeait le public dans une sorte d'état méditatif. Les différents objets fonctionnaient comme un appel à l'engagement et à l'action. À la fin de la Biennale, les performeurs avaient joué 324 fois. Cette dimension évolutive fut très excitante. J'adorais l'idée qu'il s'agisse d'une progression naturelle de l'œuvre. À travers sa participation, le performeur construit et forme le corps de l'œuvre.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Parade*. Photo : Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Allen, Paris.

Dans certaines de vos œuvres vous utilisez des matériaux organiques soumis à des phénomènes physiques et parfois difficilement maîtrisable. *All In One Day* (2007) se compose d'eau et de glace, *Weight Unknown* (2007) de brume. Quelle place laissez-vous au hasard ?

« Le hasard fait partie intégrante de ma pratique. Je mets des éléments en place puis j'observe et enfin je documente le résultat. J'encourage les phénomènes répétitifs comme un moyen de promouvoir l'essence hasardeuse du changement.

Dans *All In One Day*, j'ai utilisé la glace comme un matériau sculptural que je pouvais presser, étendre et contracter. L'œuvre présentait une étendue d'eau qui gelait, craquait puis fondait tout au long de la journée. Ce processus de transformation et de devenir se répétait tous les jours. Cependant, comme dans tout ce qui est répété, le changement est inévitable. Je suppose que c'est un processus similaire à la façon dont j'aborde les performeurs dans mon travail. J'explore leurs limites : ils résistent et luttent mais se transforment inévitablement. L'expérience devient en quelque sorte méditative et introspective.



Mel O'Callaghan, *All In One Day* (détail). Photo : Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Allen, Paris.

Weight Unknown fut un travail très difficile. En fait, je ne le montrerai plus. Une série d'émetteurs à ultrasons provoquait la transformation de l'eau en brouillard, lequel a ensuite été perturbé par des ventilateurs placés dans la pièce. À certains moments, la salle était donc baignée dans un brouillard doux qui disparaissait momentanément ou se transformait en des formes plus concrètes. À l'image de notre expérience du temps météorologique. Mais je n'ai pas pu reproduire certaines des formations que j'espérais provoquer dans le développement du travail. C'est pourquoi j'ai été déçue. Avec le recul, les résultats étaient probablement plus intéressants parce que je ne pouvais pas les reproduire ou les prédire. J'ai exploré ce hasard dans la réalisation de deux de mes œuvres vidéos : *To The End* [2007] et *Endgame* [2012]. J'ai travaillé avec un programmeur pour développer un type de système aléatoire où les clips vidéo se jouent selon le hasard.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Weight Unknown*. Photo : Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Allen, Paris.

Quel rapport entretenez-vous avec le landart, l'abstraction géométrique et l'art povera ?

« Si je devais considérer mon travail par rapport à un mouvement, je dirais qu'il est plus en lien avec l'*art process* et les situationnistes. Il met en jeu des recherches philosophiques autour de l'existentialisme et de l'absurde.

Votre pièce vidéo *Ensemble* présentée à l'IAC fonctionne comme un diptyque, y a-t-il une relation avec la peinture ?

« Ce choix fut davantage conceptuel. Je sentais qu'il fallait une rupture physique dans la vidéo, tournée dans un paysage horizontal, pour que le héros isolé dans un écran puisse traverser le second. L'espace entre les deux écrans est également un seuil symbolique. Nietzsche décrit le « seuil » comme un espace d'ivresse entre la vie et l'art. En parlant de l'art comme d'une panacée, Nietzsche conclut que l'expérience transcendante de l'art arrache l'homme aux griffes du nihilisme.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Ensemble* (vue de l'exposition à l'IAC). Photo : Blaise Adillon.

La vidéo montre un homme vêtu simplement violemment arrosé par un groupe de trois individus protégés par un uniforme de pompier. Peut-on considérer cette construction comme un jeu sur les rapports de pouvoir dans une société ?

« Absolument. *Ensemble* montre la protestation d'un homme seul contre la violence de l'homme. C'est une protestation silencieuse et non-violente. J'espère que ce travail invitera à une introspection personnelle pour une empathie collective vers la liberté individuelle. Trois hommes se déplacent dans le plan et se préparent à ouvrir leur lance d'incendie. Nous les regardons s'appuyer contre la force élémentaire de l'eau. Après quelque temps, un homme entre dans le champ de la caméra et marche de manière improbable contre la force extrême du jet. Tout en poussant en avant, il brise la barrière du premier écran pour entrer dans le second, les hommes commencent alors à se retirer. L'acte dépeint nécessite une détermination et une résistance à la fois de la part des performeurs et des spectateurs. L'homme est confronté à ses limites physiques, s'accroche au sol, et finit par prendre le dessus. Ce moment offre un moyen de se regarder à nouveau, de prendre du recul par rapport à nos actions et les reconsidérer.



Mel O'Callaghan, *Ensemble*. Photo : Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Allen, Paris.



PRIX SAM 2015 : MEL O' CALLAGHAN

Posted by Beatrice On 17 décembre 2015 Prix art contemporain

Jeudi 17 décembre 2015, le **Tokyo Art Club** fait « salle comble » à l'occasion de la soirée de remise du **Prix SAM pour l'art contemporain**. Les professionnels du monde de l'art contemporain, commissaires d'expositions, galeristes, journalistes, artistes, directeurs d'institutions ou de foires, collectionneurs et amateurs d'art se bousculent pour assister à l'annonce du nouveau lauréat.

A 20h00, entourée des membres du comité de sélection (Jean de Loisy, Jean-Hubert Martin, Alexia Fabre, Jérôme Sans, Laurent Le Bon et Alfred Pacquement), **Sandra Mulliez**, mécène et fondatrice du Prix SAM, remercie chaleureusement l'assemblée de sa présence et donne la parole à Jean-Hubert Martin qui révèle la nouvelle lauréate : **Mel O' Callaghan**.

Lors des délibérations, qui se sont tenues un peu plus tôt dans la journée, autour des dossiers des cinq finalistes (**Julien Bismuth**, **Bruno Serralongue**, **Raphaël Siboni & Fabien Giraud**, **Matthieu Martin**, **Mel O' Callaghan**), cette jeune artiste australienne, semble avoir fait assez rapidement l'unanimité au sein du jury. Son projet basé sur la nature et des oiseaux vivant dans des grottes inexplorées d'Australie a sensiblement séduit le comité scientifique.

Née en 1975 à Sydney, l'artiste vit et travaille aujourd'hui à Paris. Elle est représentée par la jeune galerie Allen. Une galerie qui a le vent en poupe et qui a été très remarquée lors de la dernière édition de la FIAC.

A l'annonce de son nom, **Mel O' Callaghan** a poussé un cri de joie. Très émue, elle a remercié rapidement le jury et offert à l'assemblée un merveilleux sourire. Une artiste spontanée et pimpante qui donne immédiatement envie de la suivre!



Tokyo Art Club - Jeudi 17 décembre - remise du Prix Sam pour l'art contemporain 2015 - Sandra Mulliez Mel O' Callagahn, Jean-Hubert Martin

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Je m'abonne !

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MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Follow Art With Me, 17 December 2015
By Beatrice



► **EL FESTIVAL HORS PISTES** llega a Málaga. Un evento donde habrá, hasta el próximo 28 de febrero, una muestra expositiva, varias performances y encuentros con artistas. Bajo el lema, *El arte de la revuelta*, el festival toma como núcleo de su investigación la lucha ciudadana y sus múltiples representaciones en la escena artística contemporánea, a través de las creaciones de una veintena de artistas nacionales e internacionales. **1** Las videocreaciones recrean situaciones de lucha del hombre contra la violencia y la sociedad. **2** Algunos de los artistas que participan en la muestra de Hors Pistes en el Pompidou. **3** Un momento de la performance de Pedro Romero. © ARCAINEA

Festival. Hors Pistes recala por primera vez en España y trae al Centre Pompidou de Málaga un conjunto de dispositivos documentales, poéticos y participativos concebidos por una veintena de artistas nacionales e internacionales en torno a la lucha ciudadana. El emblemático evento estará en la ciudad hasta el próximo 28 de febrero

El arte de la revuelta gira en el Pompidou

► Cincuenta obras, películas, espectáculos e instalaciones, además de encuentros con algunos de los artistas, forman el programa del festival

PEPA LÓPEZ MÁLAGA
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La protesta, la reivindicación, la huelga y el activismo cobran vida y se transforman en obras de arte que dan sentido y forma a la nueva apuesta de Hors Pistes. Un festival que organiza anualmente el Centre Pompidou de París y que este año se celebra por primera

vez en la capital malagueña. Hors Pistes, que desde hace más de diez años gira en torno al mundo de la imagen en movimiento, recala por primera vez en España y lleva *El arte de la revuelta* al Centre Pompidou de Málaga hasta el próximo 28 de febrero.

El festival toma como núcleo de su investigación la lucha ciudadana y sus múltiples representaciones en la escena contemporánea, a través de las creaciones de una veintena de artistas nacionales e internacionales. El alcalde de Málaga, Francisco de la Torre; la directora de desarrollo cultural del Centre Pompidou (París), Kathryn Weir; y el director de la Agencia Pública para la gestión de la Casa Na-

dana y sus múltiples representaciones en la escena contemporánea, a través de las creaciones de una veintena de artistas nacionales e internacionales. El alcalde de Málaga, Francisco de la Torre; la directora de desarrollo cultural del Centre Pompidou (París), Kathryn Weir; y el director de la Agencia Pública para la gestión de la Casa Na-

LA EXPOSICIÓN HORS PISTES, EL ARTE DE LA REVUELTA

► Lugar: Sala de exposiciones del Centre Pompidou Málaga en el Muelle Uno.
Horario: Hasta el 28 de febrero. De lunes a domingo, de 9.30 a 20.00 horas. Cerrado los martes. Precio: 9 euros, combinada.

tal de Pablo Ruiz Picasso presentaron ayer, junto a las comisarias de Hors Pistes y algunos artistas participantes, la undécima edición de este festival.

Hors Pistes se centra cada año en un tema de actualidad, desde el deporte hasta el estatuto de los animales, pasando por documentales biográficos o las luchas ciudadanas. Alrededor de estos temas se muestran unas cincuenta obras, películas, espectáculos e instalaciones, además de un encuentro con algunos de los artistas invitados. Tras su estreno en Málaga, el festival se celebrará en el Centre Pompidou París, del 22 de abril al 8 de mayo.

El Centre Pompidou de Málaga mostrará las instalaciones y creaciones audiovisuales durante los próximos quince días de Iván

Argote, Mel O'Callaghan, Iem Cohen, Naeem Mohaiemeny y Mary Waling Blackburn, Oliver Ressler, Justine Triet, Helena Cabello y Ana Carceller, Miquel García, Pedro Reyes, Mark Tribe, Marco Godoy, Philippe Parreno, Aimee Zito Lema, Pedro G. Romero, Santiago Cirugeda y Adrian Melis.

Las comisarias del festival, Géraldine Gómez y Syvie Pras explicaron que la exposición busca sobre todo la interacción con el público. «La muestra tiene un carácter participativo muy importante y así el visitante va a entender el mensaje», señaló Géraldine. El grupo de Charo Martín y las Carreteras inauguraron ayer el ciclo de performances con *Las Procesiones*. Un espectáculo de Pedro Romero, que puso en perspectiva las marchas de protesta política junto a las procesiones religiosas.

Cercles, una instalación participativa diseñada por el artista Iván Argote, ocupará hoy la explanada del Cubo, con el fin de proponer una reflexión sobre el activismo civil y político mediante una instalación compuesta de objetos y esloganes diseñados por familias durante un taller.

DECEMBER 15, 2012 • THE SATURDAY AGE

ART & DESIGN

EXHIBITION

The path less travelled

BY ANDREW STEPHENS

WANDERLUST might be mistaken for a medical condition: it inhabits its hosts quietly, produces symptoms, consumes. Driving them to forgo the comforts and securities of a place called home, it compels those it afflicts to travel lonely paths, tracks and byways. And while it requires energy, most of all it demands a sort of feverish curiosity while afoot.

Unlike an illness, though, it is usually therapeutic, restorative and enjoyable. In her book *Wanderlust* (2000), Rebecca Solnit writes that children begin to walk in order to "chase desires no one will fulfil for them; the desire for that which is out of reach". And as adults, she suggests, we often walk in order to think because "the random and the unscreened" help us find things we don't know we are looking for.

Juliana Engberg has a copy of *Wanderlust*, a general history of walking, on her bookshelves at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she is director. It's little surprise Engberg has a daily walk and is a confirmed wanderer, preferring to take the longer route, the unknown path: to seek in sights, unbidden thoughts and unexpected sounds. All this has been much in her mind lately, as she has put together a new exhibition that explores many manifestations of the idea of "desire lines" – the physical, psychological and conceptual.

The most literal versions of desire lines are also known as goat tracks: paths people take from A to B in defiance of the official route, taking the winding, scrubby track through a park, for example, that scorns the concrete pathway put down by authorities.

"I like this wayward sense that we can still master space in a way that urban designers and architects and urbanists and city councils can't control," Engberg says. "That they aren't going to make us walk there if we can get there by going that way. It is a subtle protest, those maverick paths that we make for ourselves. I like the poetry of that."

Such poetry emerges much more broadly in *Desire Lines* in a host of work by international artists such as Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, Yvonne Rainer, Richard Long and even Samuel Beckett. There's Robert Smithson's famous *Spiral Jetty* (1970); Tacita Dean's audio work about a (fictitious) 1997 journey to find that jetty, so iconic in the history of art; A. K. Dolven's film, *Looking Back*, of a group of Nordic women walking backwards amid the glories of their landscape; or Paulien Oltheten's *Walk on a Line* (2008), a film about a tightrope walker crossing between two housing towers.

"I have always loved the concept that we make these maverick lines for ourselves," Engberg says. "In a way that is a metaphor for the artistic process itself. It likes to go off the beaten track; it likes to go down the byways and behindways, sometimes to bring us back to ourselves, as it were. For me, it is a nice way of describing the process of artistic encounter and creation – you must take yourself off the main place to reach the more creative spot."

Artist Charlie Sofo became aware of goat tracks while growing up in Canberra, one of the world's



most fabricated cities. The layout of the place, doused liberally with bushland and footpaths, has made it a walker's paradise, with enormous tracts of land between built-up areas. On his traverses, Sofo became acutely aware of how pedestrians, joggers and hikers cut their own routes through the carefully planned civic blueprints.

Sofo is certainly an explorer, though his art is not about walking, and the physical act of walking is not always his means to an artistic end. It so happens, though, that in recent years his night-time (usually) wandering around Melbourne's inner-northern suburbs (he does not drive) with a camera, video camera, mobile or simply his memory, has produced fascinating results that articulate beautifully the joys and the serendipitous nature of wanderlust.

One of his first art works to emerge from this began with his noticing the number of used condoms on the ground. He began to document them on his phone, dropping a virtual pin onto an

i-map every time he saw one of these unromantically squishy mementoes of intimacy.

He posted the project and others began to contribute.

More recently, he has become aware of those patches of ground – a dislodged piece of concrete, a wonky manhole cover, creaky floorboards, a warped drainage grille – that one can stand on and rock from side to side. The video he has made of dozens of these things has a percussive, musical effect as the people he has commissioned to perform (we only see their sneakers, thonged, socked or bare feet) clackety-clack on their favourite pieces of urban shaky ground.

"They are sort of like small failures, things that are loose or cracked, markers," he says of the surfaces various people (commissioned by word of mouth) brought to his attention. "One man cycled over one [a grille above a drain] every day, and it clanked."

Sofo has many other examples of urban discovery that have been turned into art – cat-watching,

repeated sensor-light activation, collecting the objects that get stuck on shoe soles, a mapping of sundry tactile surfaces – and several of them are part of *Desire Lines*.

As Sofo observes, his work is not about walking, but about "expanded notions of mapping and engagement with the world". Each work is a collection of either images, objects, sounds or experiences he thinks of as "fieldworks", or a different way of framing things.

"It's another way of gathering things," Sofo says. "Everything is rhythmic, somewhat everyday, minor, arbitrary."

Such desires to disrupt imposed order are investigated in other works in *Desire Lines*, such as Leopold Kessler's video work of his audacious 2004 project to hook up his apartment with power from his local art school, running electrical cable several kilometres. Or, perhaps, Eva Koch's magical video, *NoMad* (1998), of people walking (so it seems) on water.

An interesting theme is the treatment of landscape. Engberg

reflects that its use as a basis for artwork has changed dramatically in the past century, from a merely pictorial engagement to "a meaning, a poetry, a line, a word, a navigation".

"Those things are beautiful," she says. "It helps you realise that it is made up of many parts and that the journey is also a mental one. That is essential to our recuperative character. There is something really nice about meandering about the qualities of the reverie of walking, to give yourself time to do that. It is incomprehensible to me that people put buds in their ears. It blocks out the songbirds. I like to leave myself open to the ambience of meandering. I think it helps develop the qualities of thinking."

As she says, our lives are so speedy, it is essential to depart from the highway and "go down a little path", to be more aware of the poetry of space. Movement, then, that might give us pause.

Desire Lines is at ACCA until March 3. accaonline.org.au

Clockwise from above: Mel O'Callaghan's 2012 video work *Endgame*; a scene from A. K. Dolven's *Looking Back*; Mircea Cantor's *Shortcuts*.
PICTURES: DAVID BORTHWICK

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

The Age, 15 December 2012
By Andrew Stephens

Mel O'Callaghan

Galerie Schleicher + Lange

Un brouillard épais fond sur le visiteur de ce petit espace. Il le plonge dans une torpeur idéale pour partir ensuite au sous-sol contempler le film de la plasticienne australienne Mel O'Callaghan, installée en France depuis peu. Errance sur une vaste plage noyée sous un semblant d'eau, caresse des lignes d'horizon au fil du vent... La vidéo est d'autant plus lancinante que le montage en est aléatoire. Un homme, seul, se perd dans cette immensité. S'enfonçant par moments dans le sable, fusionnant avec les éléments, s'y opposant, il semble appartenir à ce paysage. ■

E. L.

« Landslide », Mel O'Callaghan, galerie Schleicher + Lange, 12, rue de Picardie,

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Le Monde, 29 September 2007
By Emmanuelle Lequeux



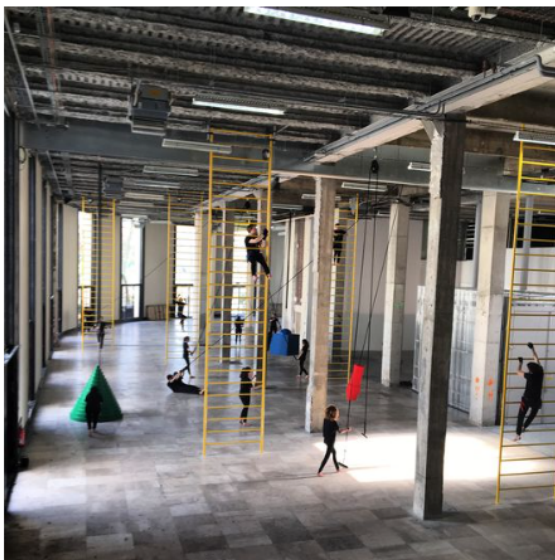
■ **Folies capillaires**

Le « Coiffeuriste » Charlie Le Mindu est un artiste du cheveu, dont les créations avaient été présentées, l'an dernier, dans l'exposition « Le Bord des mondes ». Cette fois, le Palais de Tokyo lui a offert un écrin pour créer un cabaret onirique, gothique et forcément échevelé. *Charlie Wood*, visible depuis quelques semaines, est intégré à Do Disturb dans la limite des places disponibles, mais, à partir de 21 h 45, samedi 9 avril, pour la dernière, le spectacle sera retransmis en direct au milieu du festival.

Deux autres performances jouent étranagement sur la fibre capillaire dans Do Disturb : *Dancers*, d'Aurélië Hoegy, jeune diplômée de la Design Academy d'Eindhoven qui a dessiné des chaises anthropomorphes, avec lesquelles des danseurs aux longs cheveux noirs brouillent les perceptions. Et chez Grégoire Schaller, étudiant en design industriel à l'Ensci Paris, qui propose un projet aux confins du bizarre et du burlesque : *Das Lichtquant*, soit « le photon », en allemand. Tandis que des explications scientifiques sont diffusées sur les attractions-répulsions entre photons et neutrons, des photons font le show, en plusieurs actes. Rigolade assurée face à ces personnages, sortes de monstres-cerveaux aux longs poils qui défilent sur une musique technoïde.

■ **Quand la gym prend des airs de sculpture**

Mel O'Callaghan, prix SAM pour l'art contemporain 2015, propose un « gymnase de l'absurde », pour reprendre les mots de la commissaire de la manifestation, aux dimensions monumentales, qui ressemble à un mobile de Calder géant habité et activé par une vingtaine de performeurs. L'artiste australienne installée à Paris réactualise ici une performance (*Woe Implodes Go*) créée pour la Biennale de Sydney et réadaptée à la taille du bâtiment.



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Le Monde, 29 April 2016
By Emmanuelle Jardonnet

DO DISTURB ! Performance, danse, cirque, design...

Après le succès de sa première édition en avril 2015, le festival DO DISTURB remet à nouveau le Palais de Tokyo en effervescence les 8, 9 et 10 avril 2016.

Au programme de cette édition figurent plus de 50 propositions expérimentales au croisement des arts du cirque, de la performance, de la magie, de la danse, du design, de la mode et du son : des créations nouvelles, des pièces inédites en France ainsi que des performances revisitées pour l'occasion.

Aux côtés d'artistes incontournables ainsi que de jeunes talents émergents sur la scène internationale encore jamais montrés en France, la très jeune création sera au rendez-vous dans le cadre de collaborations inédites nouées avec des écoles d'art, de cirque, de design et de mode françaises et étrangères.



Mel O'Callaghan, Parade, 2014

Courtesy de l'artiste, Galerie Allen (Paris) et Belo Galsterer (Lisbonne) — Crédit image © Stephen Ward

Ainsi, aux côtés du chorégraphe Trajal Harrell, aujourd'hui une figure majeure de la performance, DO DISTURB propose de découvrir de jeunes talents tels Gérard & Kelly avec *Reusable parts/Endless Love*, inspiré de *Kiss* de Tino Sehgal et montré pour la première fois en Europe, la créatrice de mode Marga Weimans et ses pièces de haute couture vivantes, Mel O'Callaghan, prix SAM pour l'art contemporain 2015, avec une installation immersive présentée précédemment à la Biennale de Sydney à travers laquelle l'artiste interroge la résistance physique, Ed Fornieles, dont les dispositifs explorent la subjectivité formatée d'une génération biberonnée au web 2.0, ou encore Ollie Palmer, actuellement résident du Pavillon Neuflyze OBC, le laboratoire de création du Palais de Tokyo.

DO DISTURB vient également à la rencontre de la très jeune création en accueillant les projets d'artistes affiliés aux départements de recherche de prestigieuses écoles d'art françaises et étrangères.

Parmi eux figurent par exemple le projet *Tokyo Jump Cuts*, tournage expérimental en temps réel, de l'Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon, qui met ainsi en avant son cycle *Post-Performance Future* dirigé par Marie de Brugerolle, ou encore un projet sonore et visuel piloté par David Zerbib et Thierry Mouillé de l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art de l'Agglomération d'Annecy.

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Slash, April 2016

**MEL O'CALLAGHAN
REMPORTE
LE PRIX SAM 2015**

> Le Prix SAM 2015 a été remis hier soir au Palais de Tokyo à Mel O'Callaghan (Galerie Allen, Paris) pour son projet à Bornéo. Le comité SAM, composé de Sandra Hegedus Mulliez, Jean-Hubert Martin, Jean de Loisy, Alfred Pacquement, Alexia Fabre, Jérôme Sans, Laurent Le Bon, s'est aussi enrichi de deux nouveaux membres, Marie-Ann Yemsi et Thierry Raspail.

<http://www.samartprojects.org>



Mel O'Callaghan.
Photo : Sandra Mulliez.

/...

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Quotidien de l'Art, 18 December 2015 Issue 967

**VEN-
DREDI
08/04**
festival



Mel O'Callaghan.
Parade, 2014.

Courtesy the Artist & Galerie Allen Paris and Belo Galsterer Lisbon
© Stephen Ward

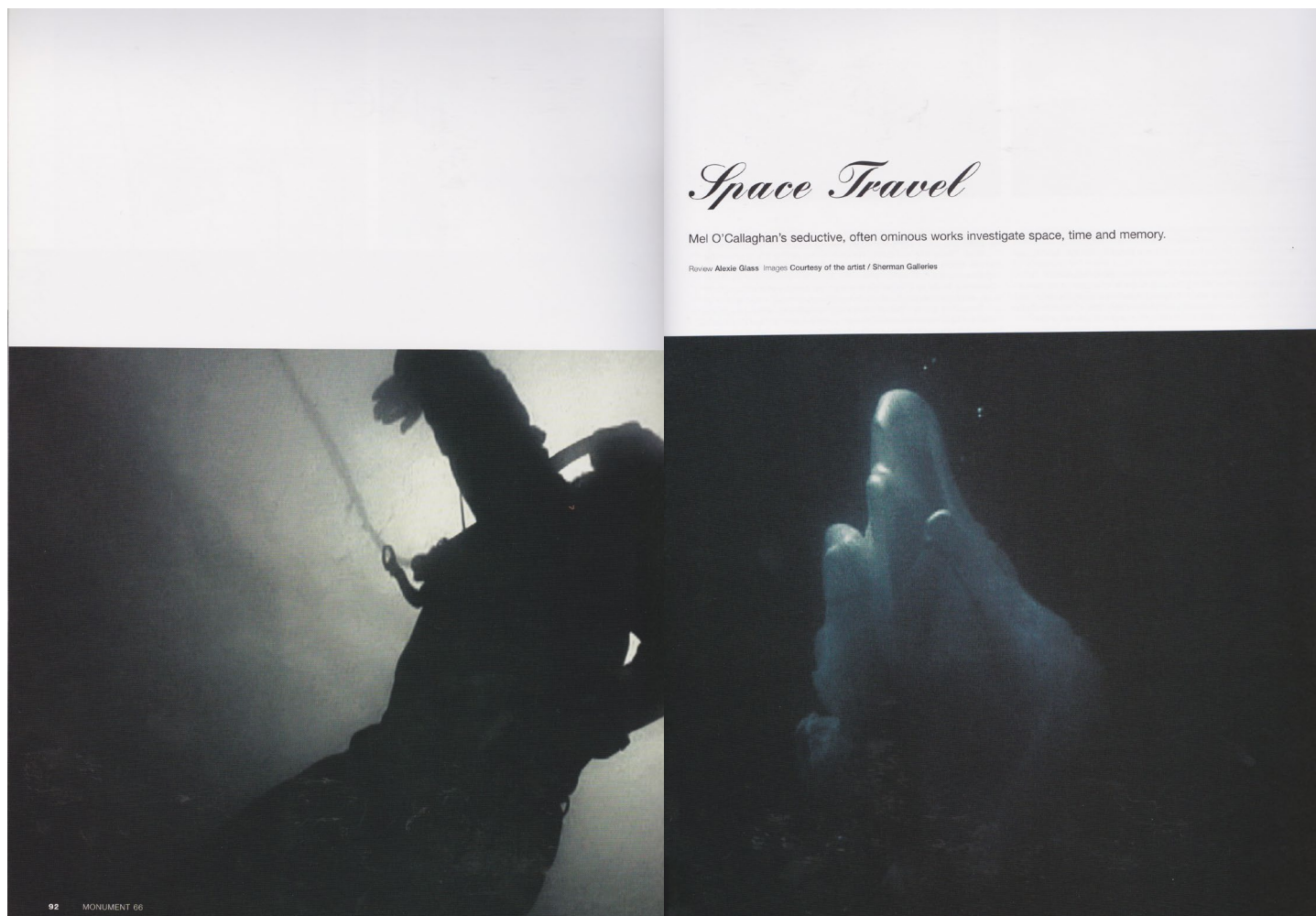
Prière de déranger

Comme son nom l'indique, le festival Do Disturb bouscule quelque peu les habitudes du spectacle vivant, du cirque ou de la mode. Au menu, des artistes incontournables côtoient des talents émergents de scènes internationales. Et chacun semble se faire un devoir de surprendre, d'innover, d'émouvoir... La vocation première de l'art.

Festival Do Disturb, Jusqu'au 10 avril, au Palais de Tokyo, 16^e. M^o Iéna, Alma Marceau. Entrée : à partir de 15 € (12 € TR).

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

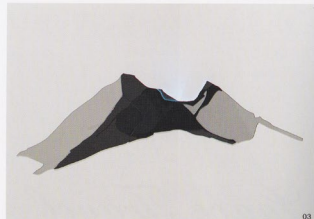
Prière de Déranger
A Nous Paris, 4 Avril 2016
By Stéphane Armand



MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Monument, April/May 2005

01-02 *The Fall*, 2004, video stills, ink-jet print on aluminium
 03-04 *We Had Walked All Day*, 2002, resin, acrylic, LED lights
 05 *The Mountain*, 1999, (detail) vacuum-formed plastic, rotational motors, steel
 06 *It Had Been Cold That Day*, 2002, MDF timber slings
 07 *In The Half Light*, 2003, stainless-steel laser-cut drawing
 08-09 *Somewhere*, 2005, video stills, ink-jet print on aluminium
 10 *There*, 2003, ink-jet print on aluminium



03

The day was about to end; scarcely any light remained, but it was still possible to see certain details...

Maurice Blanchot, 'Thomas the Obscure'

MEL O'CALLAGHAN'S PRACTICE could be characterised by its attention to detail and ruthlessness in extracting the superfluous to speculate on the covert mechanics and poetics of the world. Frequently kinetic and eerily futuristic, O'Callaghan's early works were mostly sculptural installations, with a subversive edge. Executed in an essentialist palette of gunmetal grey, black and white these vinyl cutouts of geometric detailing of Modernist architecture were reduced to finger-sliding simplicity, their form reassembled upon the gallery wall. Perspex-cast rotating mountains – soft tops with a Swiss Matterhorn twist – were activated into (slow) motion by the gallery visitor's movement in space. Miniature robots constructed of curious electronics and cut-outs of a foreign

landscape, were elongated, compressed and stretched along the breadth of the gallery wall with a clarity that confronted the excesses of expressionism. The titles – *Three Who Fell* (2002), *We Had Walked All Day* (2002) and *In the Distance* (2004) – helped evoke intimacy and heighten the works' tension beyond formalism.

Describing her art as a "digestive practice", the radical shift in O'Callaghan's recent work has emerged in two experimentations with video – *The Fall* (2004) and *Somewhere* (2005) – that developed from her desire to "achieve a sculpture in movement" and marks the introduction of human subjects. In *The Fall* we witness the descent of a dead alman. Attached to his parachute he falls through the air and down to the bottom of the ocean. What holds our gaze, however, is not the alman – as his death has been foretold – but the parachute's transformation in motion between air and water. The soundtrack further conveys an ominous sensation of seduction and dread.



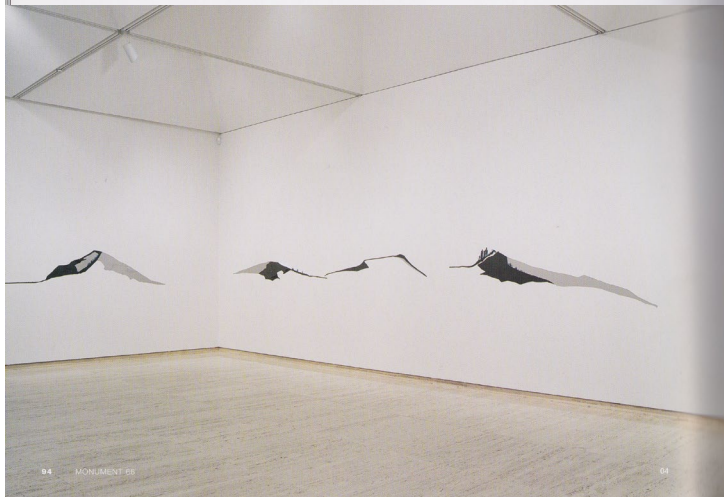
05



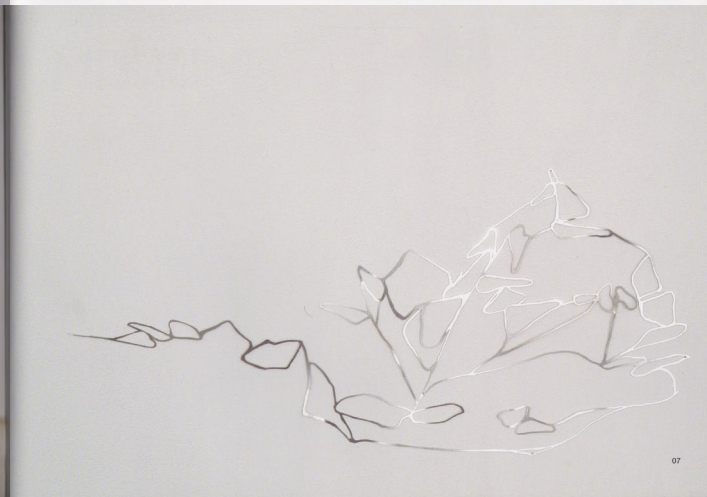
06

In *Somewhere* she examines the uncertainty of human motives. The video is the central component in an installation comprised of sculpture, laser-cut drawings and photography. In the video we follow the carriage ride of "a group of people who have been exiled from a home". These characters, dressed in what at first appears to be Victorian-era costuming, are in search of an elusive and apocryphal "somewhere". O'Callaghan sees the work as an opportunity to "create a new environment that has its own time, space, and design, and present it as the possibility that we may hear or sense another world other than our own". Choreographing uncanny collisions is a talent O'Callaghan seductively exploits. Originally from Sydney, but currently based in Berlin, O'Callaghan is herself an unusual paradox of disciplines and training. A significant emerging artist with an impressive exhibition history – her work has been included in shows as far afield as Paris, Taipei, Prague and Melbourne – she is also a qualified architect and a lecturer in design and architecture.

The underlying force delineating her practice has been a fascination with the ambiguities of perception inherent in any philosophical investigation into an engagement with understanding space, movement and form. She has a passion for unravelling and examining the poetic potential between art, architecture and design. It is this that led her, as an honour student in photomedia and visual art, to accept a position working for the architect Clark Walton at Walton & Associates. Walton's mentoring was the motivation behind O'Callaghan pursuing a further degree in science and architecture. A subsequent offer to tutor in the Interior Architecture Department, University of NSW in the Faculty of the Built Environment, helped expand her own ideas on architecture, form, and design. Describing the role of architecture and design in her practice O'Callaghan says "It is a choice not to practice architecture in the design/build tradition. I think that practising architecture by rumination in my art practice and teaching substitutes that. Before studying architecture my art practice viscerally reflected my interest." >>



04 MONUMENT 04



07



08



09

>> in design and architecture. It dealt more with mechanics than my work does now. I now think that my work deals more with ideas of architecture than it does with form. I play with notions of existence as spaces, both experienced as imagined and real. It explores the ambiguous conditions we live in and presents atmospheres and realities that are half lucid. I actually think that I am now directly focusing on concepts of architectural space – more so than when I was presenting works that may have been seen to be more visibly architectural."

O'Callaghan considers all her work as interconnected, believing that: "I can place a work I did eight years ago next to a work I have only just completed and see that they could belong next to each other. I am not interested in exploring one idea or form and then moving onto another for the purposes of opinion." In both these recent video works she has attempted to deal with the subjects in a sculptural or painterly way, rather than as objects or people. She exhibits her video as sculpture, directly drawing on her investigations to date. Across O'Callaghan's

practice she elucidates the breadth of visual, experiential and emotional space. As Ivin Leo articulates in *Past, Present and Future* (1992): "Everything is real, but things are real in different ways; there are different kinds of realities or differences between the kinds of realities." O'Callaghan's fictions slide realities – space vignettes – empowered with possibilities beyond everyday perception. (A)

Mel O'Callaghan is a finalist in the 2005 Helen Lampson Award, Wembley Park, Victoria. 2005 National Sculpture Prize, National Gallery Australia, Canberra. She is represented by Sherman Galleries, Sydney.

MEL O'CALLAGHAN

Monument, April/May 2005



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