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ISABEL NOLAN

'Run for the shadows'

Opening: November 24, 2016, 7 pm

Duration: November 25, 2016, - January 21, 2017

Isabel Nolan will be present at the opening

Noit Banai, Art Historian, University Vienna, will be speaking

“Nolan’s works both seduce and disarm us. Her work is underpinned by a desire to examine and capture in material form the moments of intensity that can define our encounters with the objects around us; inexplicable and unsettling moments that leave us with a heightened awareness of what it means to be alive. For Nolan this exploration happens through making things – whether monumental or intimate in scale – that are presented as tentative and precarious markers of our place beneath the sun.”

(Sarah Glennie, Director, Irish Museum of Modern Art)

Nolan’s work draws on topics as wide-ranging as the formation of primeval bedrock, religious artefacts, supernovae, donkeys as cultural tropes, or the use of flags. Within each subject she finds an inherent vulnerability or contingency that is given expression in a mercurial array of compelling works. Following a two-month residency at Krinzinger Projekte in 2015, ‘Run for the shadows’ is Isabel Nolan’s first show at Galerie Krinzinger.

This new body of work includes both suspended and floor based sculptures made primarily with mild steel and fabric and drawings prompted, in the main, by specific works in the KHM. As with all of Nolan’s oeuvre, these new works reveal, through their subjective and intimate nature, the inherent, beautiful absurdity of attempting to tackle big ideas through a quixotic process of making.

„I spent a lot of time visiting museums, the KHM in particular and just walking the city. I experienced a slow physical and psychic reveal of my foreignness in tension with Viennese grandeur.

Wishing to compel people to attend to their feet, I’ve made a new modular rug, a floor based sculpture, which sees an arrangement of units form, in outline, motifs and shapes found in various, highly elaborate Viennese ceilings. It evokes the decorativeness of a rug (and the ceilings) but fails to function as might be expected. Comprising 153 pieces of cut steel tube, each hand-stitched into a fabric skin, the piece is unfixed and reconfigurable. It simply demands that anyone who wishes to walk over the rug give full attention to the ground.

The new suspended sculptures have the structure of chandeliers but are ersatz, provisional and cast no light. Made of mild steel, and swathes of hand dyed fabric, they lack the clarity or grandeur we associate with their real counterparts. Delicacy is found not in light passing through crystal drops, but rather in how a fold of coloured fabric overlaps another or hits the floor. These low-hung, faux chandeliers draw the gaze down and like the rugs fail absolutely to function appropriately.

Accompanying these works is a series of drawings that make partial and intimate, almost personal descriptions of some of the Kunsthistorisches Museums most famous works.

The title of the show is a line from the David Bowie song ‘Golden Years’. Following on from verses urging his ‘baby’ to re-embrace life, singing ‘Nothing’s gonna touch you in these

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golden years' is the quiet, insistent refrain of 'Run for the shadows.' Light is haunted by an appeal to the dark, as height, physical or cultural, is always shadowed or underpinned by that which is lowly. The works in the show share a simple, fundamental impulse to collapse the high into the low, to render the grand as homemade, the austere as genial, the ornate as cosy. Bringing anxiety and awkwardness into a relationship with extravagance at a bodily scale, these works make of the impressive, alienating beauty of Vienna's opulent interior architecture something inviting, soft, unfixed and troublingly useless.'

(statement by Isabel Nolan)

Isabel Nolan was born 1974 in Dublin and lives and works in Dublin.

Selection of solo exhibitions: Run for the shadows, Galerie Krinzinger, AUT, (2016), The weakened eye of day, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, CAN and Mercer Union, Toronto, CAN (2016), A Thing Is Mostly Space, Launch Pad, New York, USA (2015); The weakened eye of day, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IRL (2014), Unmade, Goethe Institute, Dublin, IRL (2012–13), A hole into the future, Musée d'art moderne de Saint Etienne, FRA (2012), The Paradise (29), Douglas Hyde Gallery 2 (2008), Trance in Inaction, Artspace, Auckland, NZ (2008), Here and Now, Glasgow International (2006), Everything I said let me explain, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, IRL (2005).

Selection of group exhibitions: Cabin Fever, Launchpad Art, London, GB (2016), LIAF biennial, (Lofoten International Art Festival), Norway, (2015), Überschönheit, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg AUT, (2015), An Imprecise Science, Artspace, Sydney, AUS (2015), The Black Moon' (Nouvelle Vague), Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FRA (2013), 'This is going to take more than one night', Irish Film Institute. (2012), Instantaneous Personal Magnetism, Galway Arts Centre, Galway, IRL (2010), King Rat, The Project Arts Centre, Dublin; IRL (2010), Coalesce: Happenstance, Smart, Amsterdam NL (2009). What you see is where you're at, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, GB (2009), Fragile, Fields of Empathy, The Daejeon Museum of Art, South Korea (2009), If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution, De Appel, Amsterdam, NL (2006), Ireland at Venice, 51st Venice Biennale, Venice, ITA (2005).

Forthcoming shows include solo exhibitions at Douglas Hyde Gallery 1, Dublin, IRL (2017), Grazer Kunstverein, AUT (2017) and the San Antonio Museum of Art, USA (2018).