

PLATFORM

Issue two | Transitioning

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Thank you

Hello! And welcome to the second issue of the Platform newsletter.

Documented within these pages are the very first instances of us being able to open our doors. Showcasing the last two exhibitions along with compilations of text and imagery from the artists Instagram takeovers.

It is an exciting time to be sure, but not one without bumps along the way.

We want to express our gratitude to the outstanding artists that have exhibited with us as we find our feet during this transitional time in Platform's life.

- **John Macormac** [@johnmacormac](#)
with *Rule Driven*

- **Ellen Duffy** [@ellenduffy_va](#)
& **Kate Murphy** [@katemurphy](#)
with *Parallel [in]Between*

- **Tara McGinn** [@the_happy_heifer](#)
with *nothing alien is human to us*

As well as the incredibly talented photographers who documented the exhibitions...

- **Simon Mills** [@photosby.si](#)

- **Ben Malcolmson** [@ben.malcolmson](#)

And of course **Connswater shopping centre** [@connswatersc](#) for welcoming us into our new home.



The gallery in May 2021 featuring *Parallel [in]Between* by Ellen Duffy & Kate Murphy
Photographed by Simon Mills [@photosby.si](#)



The Gallery in June featuring *nothing alien is human to us* by Tara McGinn
Photographed by Ben Malcolmson



The gallery in November 2020



We uncovered some mischievous metal poles under the all the old furniture -these needed to be removed before we could safely open

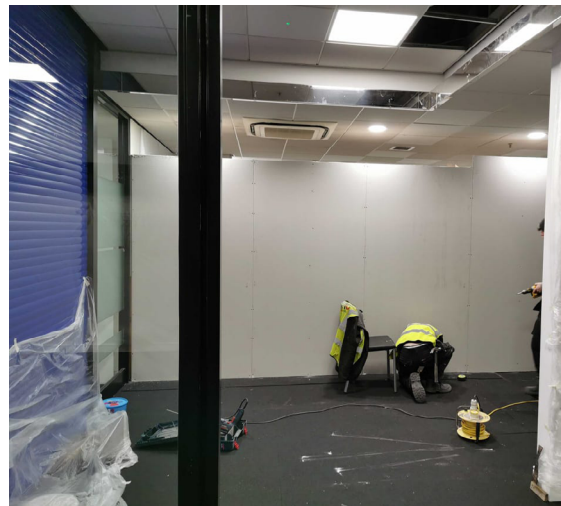
Progress update

Since moving into what was once a bank unit, a great deal of work has gone into transforming the space into an art gallery.

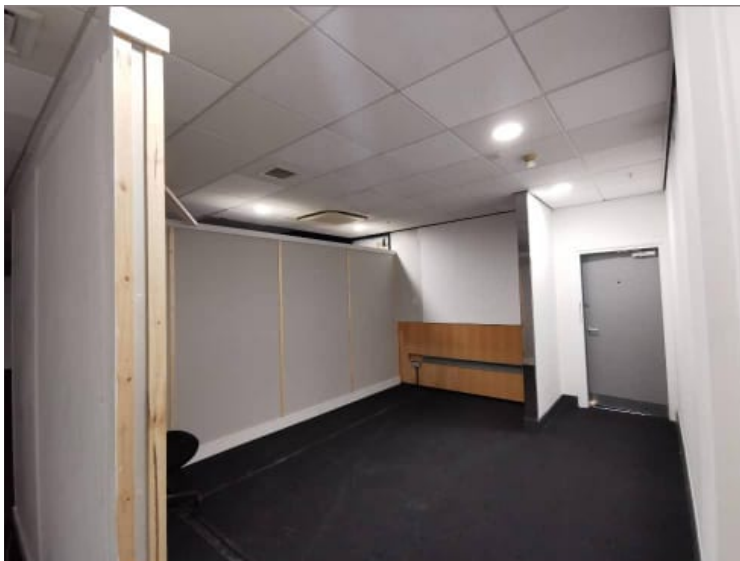
The most recent major work was the new wall going up, this was to split up space and create a new artist studio.

The large, semi-private studio space is available for £75 P/M.

If you are interested please send an email with your c.v attached to platformbelfast@gmail.com.



The wall in the process of being built



Pictures of new studio email if interested



Parallel [in]Between | Kate Murphy & Ellen Duffy

8th - 28th May 2021

This was the first show in which we could open the gallery doors to a real-life audience. Not only since covid 19, but also into a brand new space.

It just so happened that as covid restrictions eased up. A lot of the building work that had been held up could start up again.

Therefore a very problematic wall that had been in the backlog for months could finally go ahead. Which would have been an enormous relief had it not coincided with the opening of our first show.

Navigating around this along with saying goodbye to two amazing co-directors was (we have to admit) rather overwhelming at times. However, we managed to pull it off (just about) and exhibit a great show.

It would have been impossible if it wasn't for the patience and utter brilliance of artists Ellen Duffy and Kate Murphy.

Who we want to express our utmost gratitude.

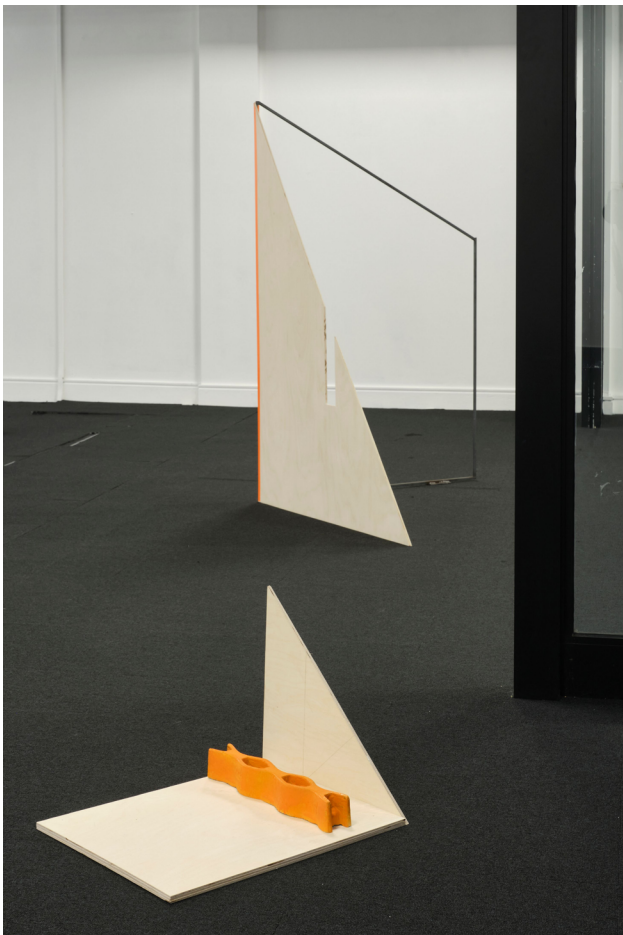
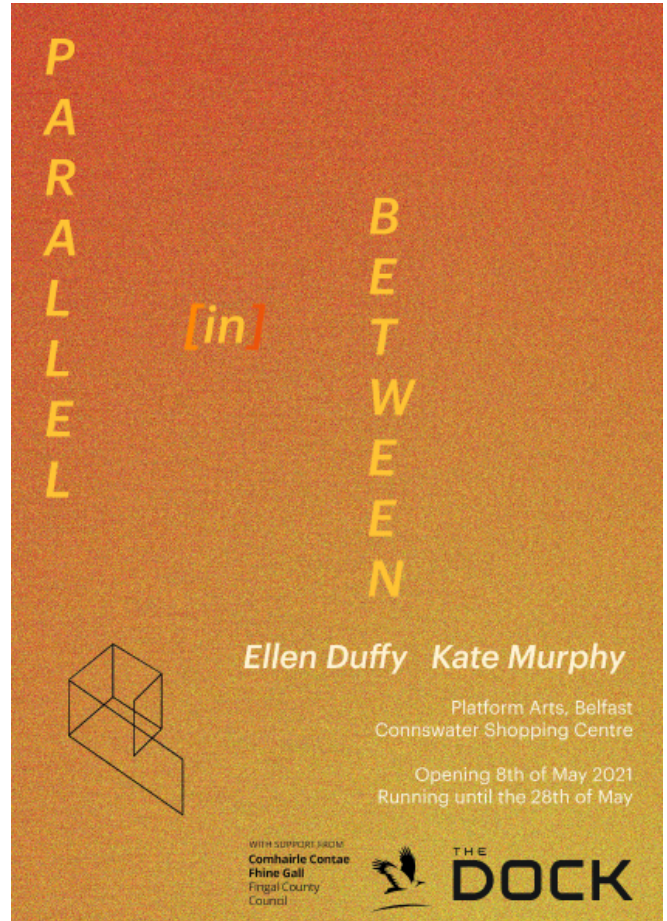


Photo - Simon Mills @photosby.si



Exhibition poster for *Parallel [in]Between* | Kate Murphy and Ellen Duffy

Parallel [in]Between is a collaborative show of site-responsive sculptural installations by Ellen Duffy and Kate Murphy. Born out of the pair's collaborative project of the same title that has been ongoing since early 2020. This iteration of the collaboration follows a series of events and collaborative happenings that lead to the body of work presented in Platform Arts Gallery. Utilising the tools garnered from working on their collaborative commission, they build on the vernacular established while working together extensively over the last year. This show will exercise their personally developed visual language and engagement with the gallery as a new site. There is a learned balance that has developed over the course of *Parallel [in]Between's* journey, and it is one that is at constant play.

Get to know the artists

Ellen Duffy - My multi-disciplinary practice involves; sculptural assemblage, installation, works on paper and, in the past year, I have been developing a practice in collaboration in my partnership with Kate. My practice involves free-form decision-making that utilises things like found/discarded materials, industrial materials among others and incorporating them into fabricated structures that create interdependent assemblages. My work is playfully provisional and seeks to create a network of relations which offer a freedom in responding to the context of a space. I view my work as a form of expanded painting. Each component within my work serves a purpose, whether it be structurally or through colour and form. There is a truth to function that reveals the contextual relationship between the materials and their environment. Their forms deviate, change and meander through a space in an attempt to create a non-narrative narrative. The work I make is site-responsive and it is in the installation period in which they are activated. This activation continues with the physical conversations and forming networks which speak of an inter-reliance between the work, the space and the viewer.

Instagram: [@ellenduffy_va](https://www.instagram.com/ellenduffy_va)



Kate Murphy - I live in Kildare but am primarily based between Belfast and Dublin. I am a sculpture & installation artist, more recently I have been developing my curatorial practice and am currently a co-director of Catalyst Arts, Belfast. I am concerned with the process of constructing a built environment, continuously re-evaluating and revising how I assemble sculptural interventions in a space and why. My relationship to 'site' is crucial to my practice and how I navigate an 'art space'. Exploring this through collaborative project Parallel [in]Between and a curatorial project Non-Events, where I am facilitating the production of new research concerned with site-oriented practice.

Time and reflection plays a role in my process of making, I spend long periods of time looking, moving, thinking. I don't feel one work is complete or final, but rather one iteration bleeds into the next, each material element of my work exists in relation to the last. I tend to use materials and processes of making that rely on following a set of rules, including cast making in concrete/plaster, welding with box steel and wood fabrication. The past year I have worked collaboratively through a number of projects & roles and wish to continue my participation in developing shared working spaces, collective making and archiving group discussions in 2021/ 2022.

Instagram: [@ katemurphy](https://www.instagram.com/katemurphy)

Background

The show's title 'Parallel [in]Between' comes from the our ongoing collaboration beginning in 2020 following a commission from @thedockarts Summer Commissions to support artists through the first lockdown.

This long term project played out in a series of formats, beginning with the exchange of a series of collages, writings, images and small sculptural objects.

We used this collaboration as a way to keep lines of communication open throughout the pandemic, as well as having a shared focus and accountability to continue working through uncertain times. It enabled us to engage haptically with work other than our own and allowed space for new ways of thinking about collaborative artmaking. We began sending packages and envelopes of drawings, collages, cut outs and materials through An Post to each other weekly. Upon receiving the other's envelope we then worked upon the pre-existing elements to create pieces that both artists had interacted with and contributed to.



One of the works on paper that were developed through their commissioned collaborative project supported by @thedock 2020. Many of these works are showcased in an online PDF titled Parallel [in] Between to view click [here](#)



Polaroids taken by the pair during installation of Parallel [in]Between at Platform

The pair share core values that impact how they make work. The importance of materiality, the dependence on the work's response to a site and a process led practice. These key factors manifest in sculptural installations for both of them. However, it is at that point they start to diverge. Ellen's assembling process involves free-form decision-making that utilises found/discarded and industrial materials, incorporating them into fabricated structures that create interdependent assemblages. Kate implements a more rigorous set of rules, taken from industrial processes – such as cast making, woodworking and welding – to exercise the points between object and space. Kate considers looking, reflecting and spending time within the boundaries of a site an important aspect of how she fabricates her sculptural interventions in space.

A dialogue began that freed up expectation and any preciousness one might have with our own work. A level of trust and intuition was developed and a shared language began to emerge.

A lot of these works on paper were the beginning points of larger structural plans and sketches for later sculptural works. Working from separate counties we depended on one another through meeting milestones within the project through virtual spaces. We maintained this dialogue and began preparation for our next venture of this collaboration. The collages set the precedent of how we continued to collectively design future installation based work. This allowed us to tease out certain colour palettes, materials and to imagine things situated in space alongside more free-flowing playful pieces.



Throughout the year the pair both worked through their copies of Contemporary Japanese Sculpture by Janet Koplos. Her chapter 'Sculpture as Relationship' resonated with both artists' practices in a significant way. When discussing the work of Mono Ha artist Lee U-Fan, she writes,

"... the materials do not merge into a unity but retain their separate identities and play off each other in weight, form, colour, etc."

The relational network of things are built in response to one another - in balance with one another and the space of the gallery.

Kate and Ellen fabricated and assembled this installation based on structural and spatial characteristics of the install site. Their show in Platform marked the final leg of this particular aspect of the project



Photo - Simon Mills @photosbyysi



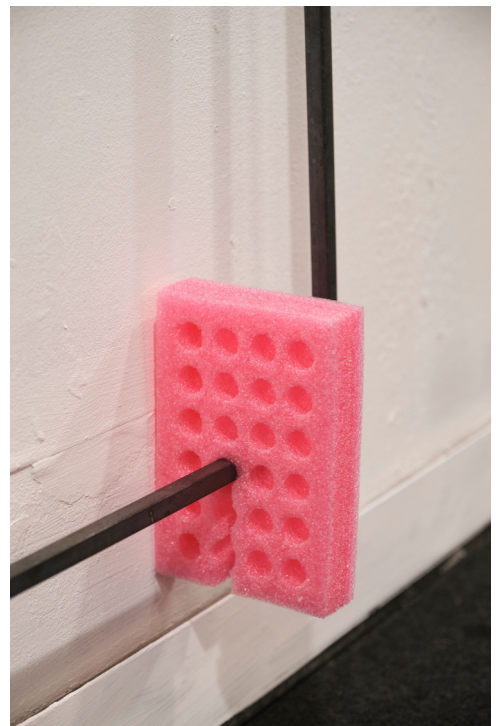
Parallel [in] Between

Kate and Ellen also released a 75 page online PDF of the same title Parallel [in]Between:

"We wanted to situate a vast year-long project of many elements in one place. We roughly broke up the document into Drawing, Assembling and Textures, this allowed us to categorise a number of different material elements. Documentation became important to us during this project, we photographed and recorded as much as we could during our four-day studio work in BKB Studios. We documented and archived conversations, works on paper, spatial perception and material based research. Along with sharing a packed google drive and endless working documents of text, we now had this one online space that housed a project spanning over more than 12 months."

You can still find this document under 'summer commissions' on the @thedockarts website: <https://www.thedock.ie/learning-projects/ellen-duffy>

or via this link [parallel inbetween pdf](#)



“After a long period of working collaboratively, albeit in separate countries, to design and construct a number of sculptural works we finally got to install them in a real life gallery that could be visited by the public, the joy !

There are no single or lone sculptural pieces but rather one installation of different material elements existing in relation to each other. The sculptural interventions are responding to the characteristics of the space and established through a shared process of making developed over the year of collaborating. We honed in on specific materials and processes of making after working through material research in our studio time in BKB Studios in December. We were able to design the works in response to each other's sketches and measurements, mostly deliberating over Zoom. Working away in our separate working spaces then meeting again with more finalised designs and structures. A continuous process of play, deliberation, experimenting, exchange and re-vision.”



To keep up with upcoming projects and exhibitions in 2021
Follow
Kate Murphy at [@__katemurphy_](#) and
Ellen Duffy at [@ellenduffy_va](#)

All of this was supported by [@fingalartsoffice](#)

All photos on this page - Simon Mills [@photosbysi](#) of the most recent iteration
of parallel [in]Between at Platform Arts.



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Nothing Alien is Human to Us
An exhibition of new work by visual artist
Tara McGinn.

5th - 26th June 2021

Tara McGinn is the recipient of the Platform Arts Graduate Award 2019.

After waiting for almost two whole years Tara was finally able to exhibit her first solo presentation of work (in a non-live event).

In this new, ongoing body of work she explores themes of historical absence and the uncanny in relation to domestic space, after a period of heightened anxiety and close proximity to her family home. Using narrative and fiction as a frame to explore objects, she employed mimicry and repetition through casting as a site to reify the cultural and sentimental values of her surroundings. Initially, she reacquainted herself with artefacts acquired through the line of matriarchal inheritance such as dishware, kitchen utensils and Pyrex paraphernalia. In her writing, she responded to the varying status these wares maintained to remain in circulation or to be redefined as obsolete. She reflected on how this determination also applied to the user; the obliging and invisible domiciliary worker, the unpaid (and usually female) counterpart of the homogenised home. The work developed to quietly subvert domestic roles aligning with gender bias that then impacts the worth of unseen labour. By incorporating tradition and reappropriating form, the surreality of a domestic interior becomes a space to collapse and rebuild a reimagined household.



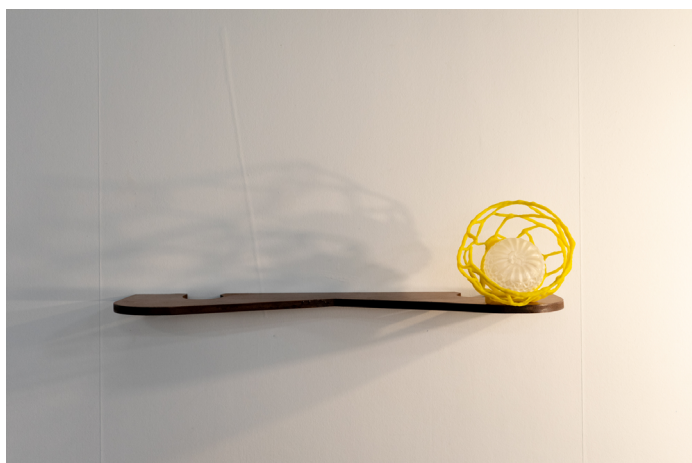
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opening 5.6

closing 26.6

Connswater Shopping Centre
 Belfast BT5 5LP

Poster for 'nothing alien is human to us' designed by Tara McGinn



Resin mushroom cup (grown in the fridge), 2021

Cast resin, chicken wire, wax.

Photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson

Tara McGinn combines sculptural reproductions, reflective writing and image-based assemblages as a layering device to interrogate meaning and reshape language. Her interdisciplinary work responds intuitively to media and how the truth can be transformed into a spectre of itself. She embraces the malleability of forms through storytelling; developing narratives that translate her studio processes and research to connect subjects of trauma, memory, identity and space.

This project was realised with support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Individual Emergency Resilience Programme 2020.

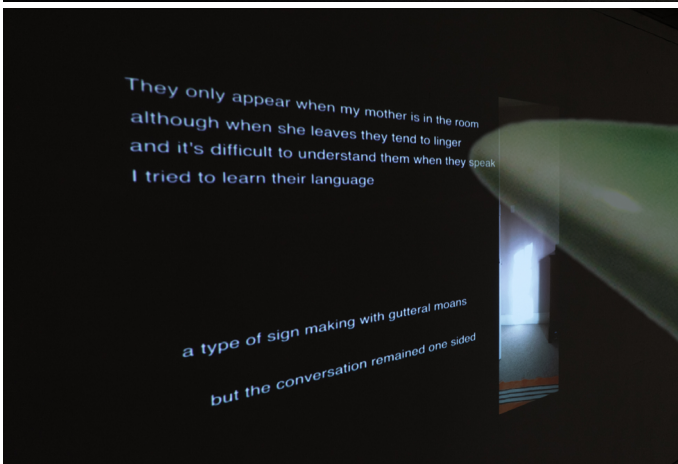
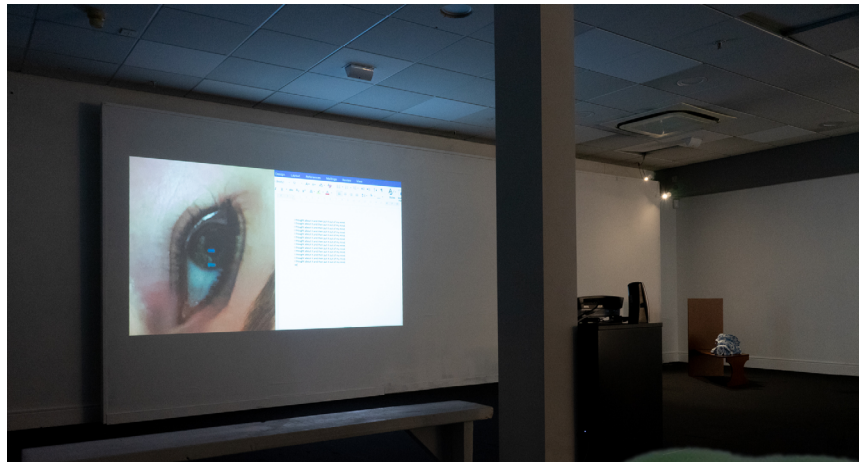
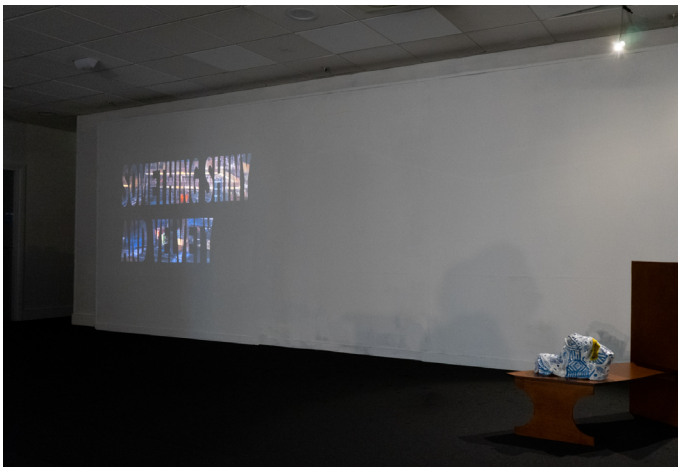
Tara McGinn

Tara graduated in 2015 from the Wexford Campus School of Art and Design, receiving the Student Purchase Award for the IT Carlow Public Collection. Tara founded the collaborative performance duo 'Beef or Salmon' who performed in both Wexford (2015) and Dublin (2016) and a solo performance as part of the Evolving Arts Festival in Wexford (2017). Tara became involved with the Living Arts Project (2015-17) in partnership with the Wexford Arts Centre and Wexford County Council as an artist in residence. Until commencing the MFA at Belfast School of Art. Graduating in 2019, she received the interim Hammerschlag Award (2018), the DAS Graduate Residency and Platform Arts Graduate Award. Tara is currently a co-director at Catalyst Arts Gallery in Belfast and an Arcade Studios Member.

To keep up with upcoming projects and exhibitions

Follow Tara on Instagram [@the_happy_heifer](https://www.instagram.com/the_happy_heifer)

or visit Tara's website : <https://www.taramcginn.com/>



As part of 'Nothing Alien is human to Us', Tara McGinn exhibited a short film 'Residue Project' 2020, which she completed during her DAS Graduate Residency you can view the full film on her website [here](https://www.taramcginn.com/)

The processes and propagations of *Nothing Alien is Human to Us...*

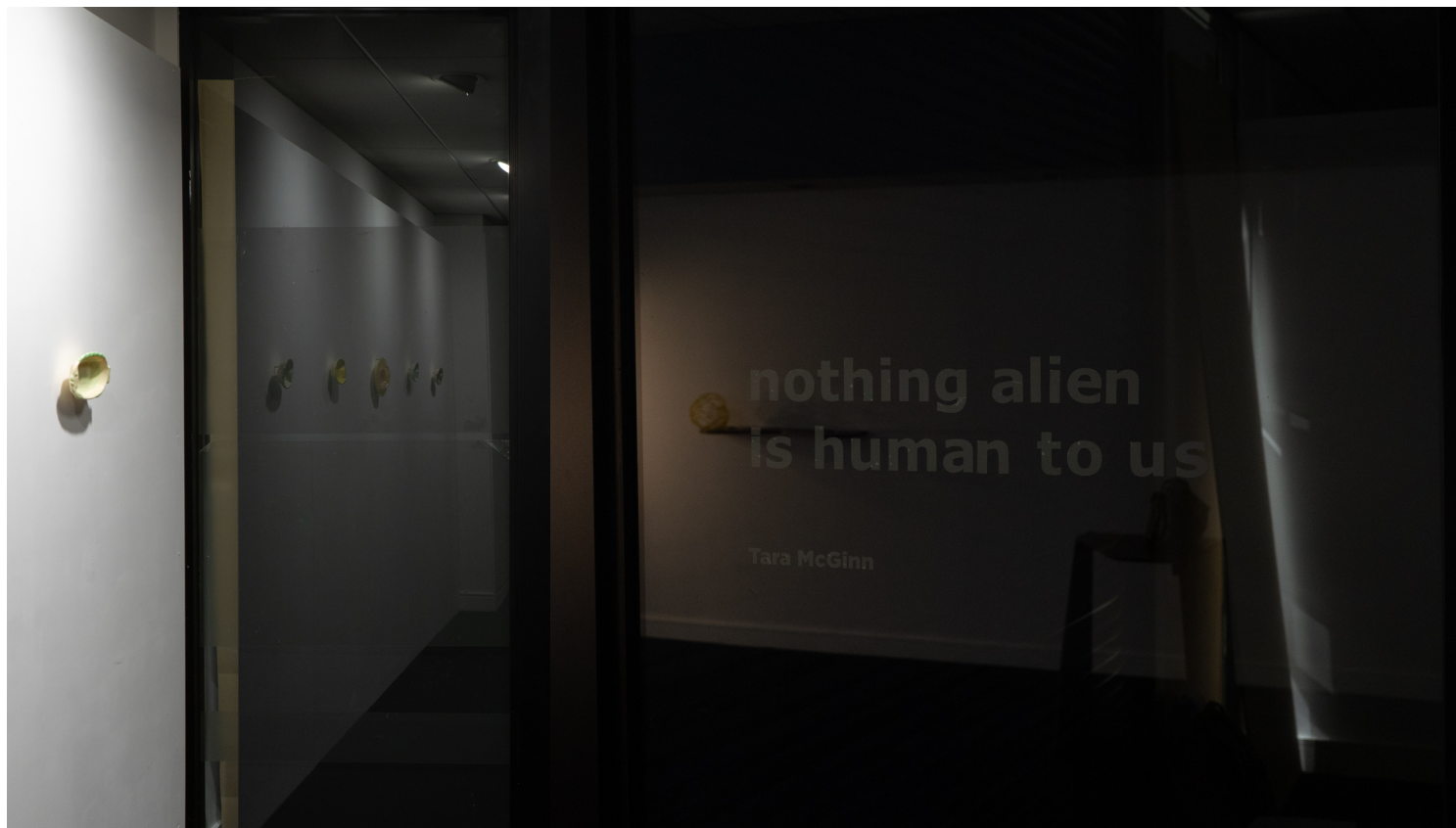
As '*nothing alien is human to us*' drew to a close.

Tara took over the Platform Instagram account, offering us a deeper understanding and precious insight into the "processes and Propagations" (Tara's words) of *nothing Alien is human to us*...

Some documentation of the resin casts that make up *Domestic Fossils* (a matriarchal lineage), and the heirlooms that informed their making...traditional figurative dishware inherited from a legacy of women preparing meals for others in prized precious porcelain with pastry papered pies...my own attempt in the image(right) at recreating some form of re-enactment in the simple ritual of dinner... having to undertake the duties of a primary homemaker consists mostly of resetting everything on a daily basis to ensure that daily routines move fluidly but appear immobilized...creating copies of the familiar in domestic forms developed into a practice of multiplying these replications in an attempt to reify the presence of invisible work...or perhaps the presence of a self in a private interior.



Photo taken by Tara McGinn



Domestic Fossils (or matriarchal lineage), 2021 - Cast resins, variable acrylic spray paint and hand painted details, clear varnish.

Photos - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson

As I developed the earlier forms and casts of the sculptures for Nothing Alien is Human to Us, an awareness for arranging and placing came to the forefront of my work as the exhibition drew closer. Over the course of lockdown last year, like many others, my anxiety was at an all-time high from cabin fever that no amount of 5km walks would ease. It came from how close in proximity I felt to the walls around me in my rented house, how permanent their armature sat in the foundations, and like so many architectural objects it was filled with temporary life. Not being able to sleep became part of my routine, and I managed to lull myself into a tired state and quell my anxiety by rearranging the furniture and decorative pieces around the house at night - challenging myself to do it as quietly as possible so as to not wake my housemates. Resetting the places of things, recreating their domains, re-organising the surroundings like everything is a curatorial pet project, made me notice how much domestic spaces stay the same, acquiring detritus and only reshaping when specific needs of the dwellers change or the notion of taste renews the acceptable design choices...if you catch the show this week you'll notice the dark wood plinths I've made for the sculptures inform the layout of the space, the way in which they are approached and the purpose for which they were given...well I hope you might notice, if you don't, then I hope it's because that sense of familiarity that can only be felt within a lived home is in some way present.



The plinths that feature as part of the exhibition have been designed, produced and constructed by the artist. - Photo Tara McGinn



Opening (like a front door made of labia), 2021 - Cast clay, acrylic paint, clear varnish, wax, resin cast.
Photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson



process pictures - Tara McGinn



She Was In My Dream (And then she left again) photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson



process picture - photo Tara

The clay composite sculptures *She Was In My Dream (And then she left again)*, *Premonition of the House I Will Live in When I'm Older*, and *Ground Rice Pudding* resulted from a sudden obsession with hand built clay casting that I saw on the Great Pottery Throwdown one evening. I had previously worked a lot with plaster casting and had become obsessed with the shapes and forms of commercial food packaging as I washed out the recycling day after day, the hard plastics were easy to press into poured plaster and have a permanent form remain, as were the heirlooms of glass trifle dishes and old braided curtain rope that I coated in layers of latex...repeating the forms became a juxtaposition of the precious and disposable formats of vessels that pass through

homes, lives and charity shops becoming objects of study in my studio - metamorphosing and subverting the purpose of their original design...I had considered how they might integrate into a space such as a gallery, when domestic objects are so readily sentimentalised or characterised by their use and aesthetic, the uncanny unfolds around an art object that attempts to mimic and reify or remind the audience of the cultural discourse that informed it's outcome...one that's so close to home it's unsettling.



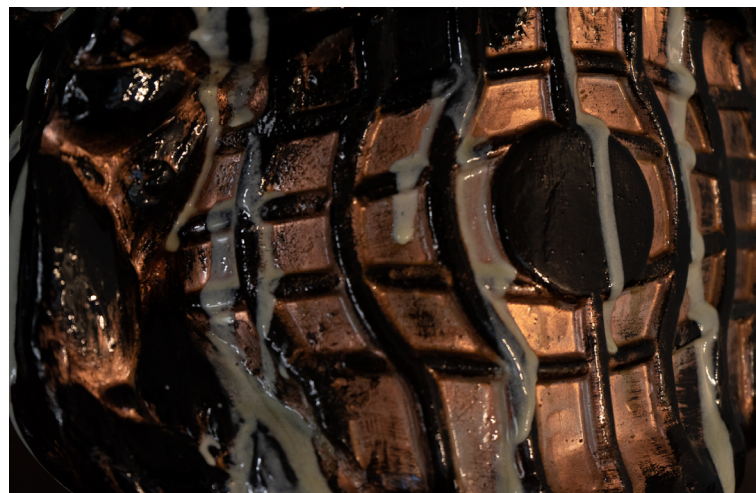
Premonition of the House I Will Live in When I'm Older,
Photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson



process picture - photo Tara



process picture - photo tara



Ground Rice Pudding photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson

A cast collapse (cut hair from a summer of head lice),
2021 photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson



Table leg #1, 2021 photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson

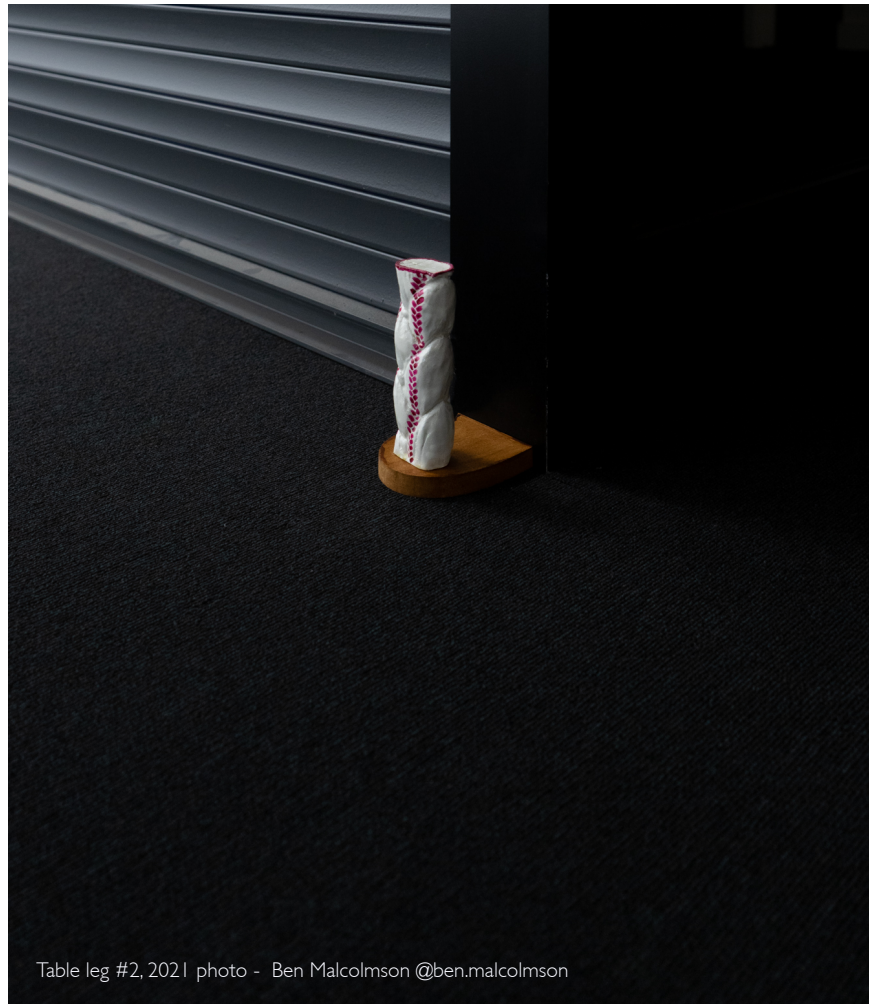


Table leg #2, 2021 photo - Ben Malcolmson @ben.malcolmson

July Exhibition Opening 2nd July Closing 30th July

Platform is delighted to present 'all that was once felt', an exhibition by three graduating students from the Fine Art BA programme at Belfast School of Art.

Maria del Pilar Morales Caamaño, Nina Oltarzewska and Sionnain Rafferty were selected as the recipients of the Platform graduate award 2021.

They will show selected pieces from the work developed for their degree show which due to Covid19 restrictions, was unable to open to the public this year. Works will include sculpture, video, performance, drawing and painting.

all that was once felt

Nina Oltarzewska

Sionnain Rafferty

Maria del Pilar Morales Caamaño



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Platform Arts Belfast
Connswater Shopping Centre

Other news

Congratulations to our studio member artist Una Kavannagh @unakavanaghstudio, who launched her beautiful new website showcasing her art on the 22nd of June. Check it out at <https://unakavanagh.com/>

ÚNA

A black and white photograph of a crumpled, textured surface, possibly a piece of paper or fabric, with the name 'ÚNA' overlaid in large white letters. The texture is highly detailed with many folds and creases, creating a complex pattern of light and shadow. The letters are bold and sans-serif, standing out against the dark, textured background.