

**Mercer Union**, a centre for contemporary art • 1286 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M6H 1N9 Canada  
T 416-536-1519 • F 416-536-2955 • [www.mercerunion.org](http://www.mercerunion.org)



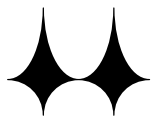
Isabel Nolan, installation view of *The Weakened Eye of Day* at Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art, 2016

## **Isabel Nolan *The Weakened Eye of Day*** **12 February – 2 April 2016**

Mercer Union is delighted to present a solo exhibition by Irish artist Isabel Nolan. The exhibition, *The Weakened Eye of Day*, explores how light manifests as a metaphor in our thoughts, obsessions and pursuits, and includes text works, sculpture, ceramics, drawings, paintings and a photographic image. It presents an artistic account of the fundamental strangeness of the world and humanity's endeavors to order and rationalize the incomprehensible. This is Nolan's first solo exhibition in Canada.

The exhibition takes its title from Thomas Hardy's poem *The Darkling Thrush* (1899), in which the sun, described as 'the weakening eye of day,' is a dismal star drained of its force by a gloomy pre-centennial winter afternoon. As the sun's gaze weakens, so flags the spirit of the poet who, until interrupted by birdsong, sees only the inevitability of death in the cold world around him. This show is a material account of the strangeness of the world from the formation of the planet's crust to the death of the sun and the enduring preoccupation with light as a metaphor for truth.

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 these things are sculptures, textiles, photographs or texts, monumental or intimate in scale, they are presented to us as tentative and precarious markers of the experience of our place beneath the sun.



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Isabel Nolan, *Disorder drowning everything in sight*, 2015, watercolour on canvas

This exhibition is originated by the Irish Museum of Modern Art, and is presented in collaboration with Mercer Union and the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, where it will travel to in July 2016.

Mercer Union would like to acknowledge the generous support of Culture Ireland, provided as part of the International Culture Programme to celebrate Ireland 2016.



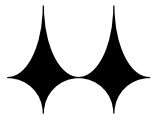
**Culture Ireland**  
Cultúr Éireann

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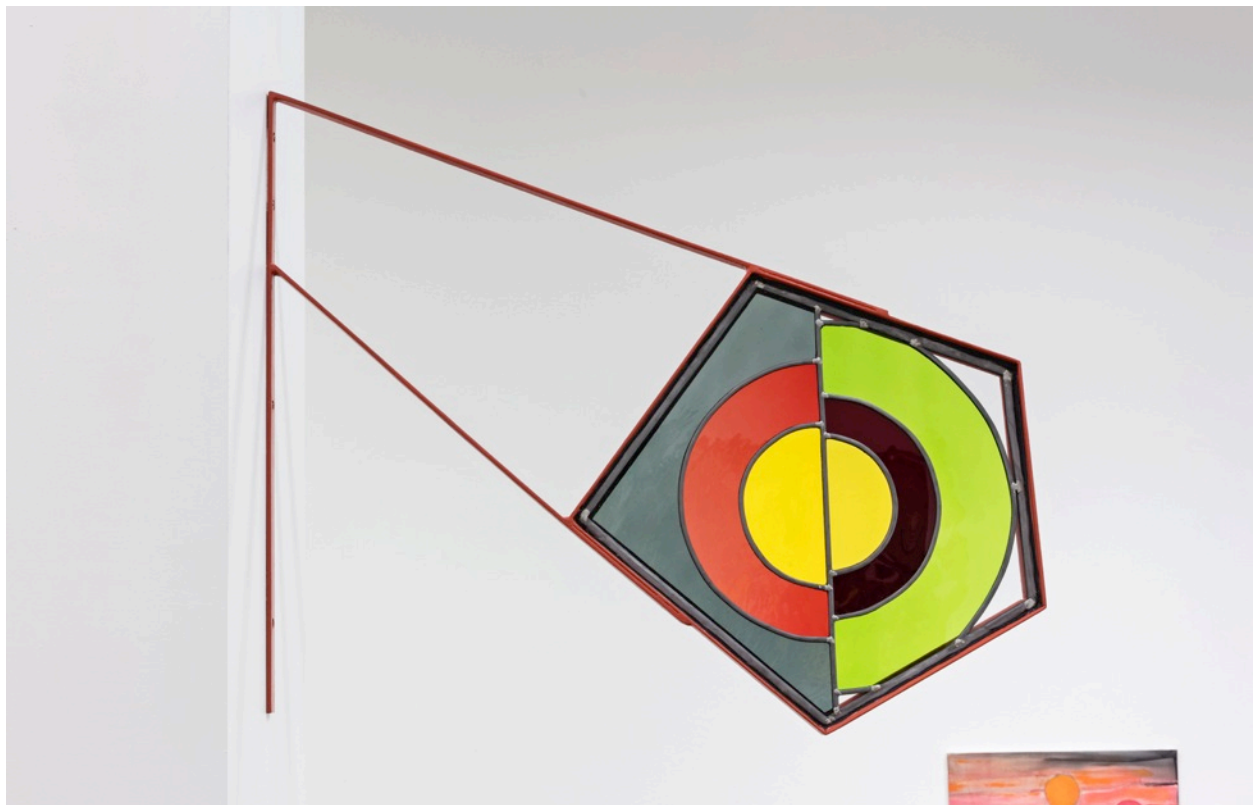
Clár Comórtha  
Céad Bliain  
Centenary  
Programme

**Irish  
Museum  
of  
Modern  
Art**

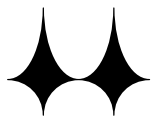




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Above: Isabel Nolan, installation view of *The Weakened Eye of Day* at Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art, 2016. Below: Isabel Nolan, *Harbinger*, 2014, stained glass, mild steel and paint



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Isabel Nolan, installation view of *The Weakened Eye of Day* at Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art, 2016 (foreground: *The weakening eye of day*, 2014, mild steel, wadding, wood and thread)

Recent solo exhibitions by Isabel Nolan include: Launch Pad, New York (2015); the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, (2014); Musée d'art moderne de Saint Etienne, France (2012); and the Return Gallery, Goethe Institute, Dublin (2012). Nolan has participated in numerous major group exhibitions including Lofoten International Arts Festival (LIAF), Svolvær, Norway and Artspace, Sydney (both 2015); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, traveling to The Model, Sligo (2012); EVA International, Limerick (2012); Musée d'art moderne de Saint Etienne, France, travelling to the Accademia d'Ungheria, Rome and The Daejeon Museum of Art, South Korea (2009). Nolan represented Ireland at the 2005 Venice Biennale in a group exhibition, *Ireland at Venice 2005* and lives and works in Dublin.

**Ongoing and upcoming programming at the gallery:**

SPACE: Maggie Groat  
27 January – 13 April 2016

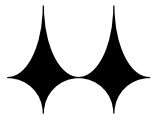
*Beloved Martina...*, Carlos Motta with Arisleyda Delone, Del LaGrace and others  
24 April - 2 June 2016  
Presented in collaboration with Images Festival

**For further information:**

**contact Katie Lyle, e. [katie@mercunion.org](mailto:katie@mercunion.org) t.416 536 1519**

All images courtesy of the artist and Mercer Union. Photography by Toni Hafkenscheid.





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