

CONOR MCFEELY & BEA MCMAHON

GOD

The Complex presents an exhibition of newly commissioned work by
Conor McFeely and Bea McMahon

In The Gallery, 21 Arran Street East, Dublin 7, D07YY97

Preview: 13 December 6pm - 8pm
Exhibition Run: 14 December - 17 January

Gallery Opening Hours: Monday - Friday 10am - 5pm, Saturday 12pm - 5pm



GOD marks the first collaborative exhibition between Bea McMahon and Conor McFeely. Initially introduced by the Curated Visual Arts Award from The Arts Council of Ireland and Arts Council of Northern Ireland in 2007, both artists exhibited their works in Dublin and Derry under the curation of Mike Nelson. Although they did not get to know each other well at the time, this shared experience has become a reference point for them both. My fundamental interest in making exhibitions is bringing artists together to develop work in conversation. Artists that don't know each other personally, have a distance between them geographically, and share concerns within their practice that have the potential to collide. The act of getting to know one another is integral to this process; the resulting entanglement holds greater value than the physical work produced.

I arranged a series of visits that facilitated introductions and created points of contact between the artists. One of note was an informal hunt for William Rowan Hamilton, the renowned Irish mathematician, astronomer, and physicist whose resting place we thought was in the crypts at St. Michan's Church in Dublin. It wasn't. Alexander Grothendieck was another mathematician involved in Bea and Conor's early conversations and sparked a mutual curiosity early on centering around mathematics, anarchy and God. Grothendieck believed that mathematics and God are mutually exclusive. His retreat from academia into mysticism in the 1970s continues to ignite conversations between both artists.

Bea and Conor share an interest in finding or happening upon materials that stimulate new ideas. These material sources may arise not only from our perceived physical reality (every species, from ants to mammals, perceives the universe in a way that eludes all others) but also from altered states of consciousness, whether through sleep or sleeplessness. A video developed for the exhibition represents a dive into insomniac ruminations. Like Grothendieck, dreams have been a recurring meeting point for the artists. Some works in the exhibition have been extracted directly from the artists' dreams and made physical in The Gallery. For instance, one sculpture references a dream in which a table was laden with fishy snacks.

Alexander Grothendieck was believed to view dreams not merely as random mental events but as a means to interface with God and get to know yourself, offering glimpses into reality beyond rationality. *GOD* seeks to observe the backgrounds that appear in dreams. Backgrounds that shift seamlessly from one scene to the next, setting the stage for whatever reflections come along.

Conor McFeely lives and works in Derry, N.Ireland. He has exhibited widely nationally and internationally. His work incorporates a wide range of processes, from the ready-made to sculpture and installation, as well as photography, video and audio. A fracturing and manipulation of 'material' in the service of finding new relationships is a chief characteristic of his practice. Often conceived as multi-layered in terms of their reading, many works have been driven by a consideration of the nature of individual freewill, choice and autonomy. Contexts and source material reflect interests in a history of counter culture, literature and social contexts. The work is cyclical in nature and his recent projects which include Electric Citizen, an Art Arcadia Residency Derry 2022, The Mariner series (ongoing), Pioneers and The Weatherman Projects point to historical episodes of exploration, invention, experimentation, altered states and interruptions of consciousness. His project Azimuth PointZero was shown this earlier year at The Mac, Belfast as part of The Weight of Light, a collaboration with Pascale Steven.

Bea McMahan uses many different media including sculpture, performance, song, dance, moving image and installation, often working in collaboration with others. Trained in mathematics and mathematical physics, she navigates through conceptions of reality and their corresponding appearances in the outside world.

Recent collaborations include *Pilot* a TV series shot in various locations including Treignac Projet, FR and Kunstverein Aughrim IE (ongoing); *Another Shot at Love*, a romantic comedy commissioned for the 40th EVA biennale in Limerick, IE 2023; live performance with lip-synching pop group Dina from Egypt in *I'll be your Mirror*, Hugh Lane Gallery, IE 2023 and pop-video-smash-hits magazine launch at Framerframed,

Amsterdam NL 2024. Recent exhibitions include *Animal Farm*, Paper Biennale, Museum Rijkswijk, The Hague, NL 2024; *Sequins*, with Maaïke Schoorel at Shimmer, Rotterdam, NL 2023; *Floppy Forest* at Treignac Projet, FR 2021; and group shows *Ad Ampio Respira*, Artopia Gallery, Milan 2022; *Under Bat Hill* at W139, Amsterdam 2021.

Exhibition statement by Mark O’Gorman – Curator / Producer of Visual Arts at The Complex.

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**For further info and images: contact Mark O’Gorman, Curator / Producer, Visual Arts at The Complex.
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