

Happenstance is an occurrence that appears intentional but is actually accidental. In the second phase of *Coalescence: Happenstance With All Due Intent*, the intuitive and the accidental become increasingly blurred, while the intentional solidifies—if only temporarily. What we do know is that to see the serendipitous—the happy chance—you need time. Time to observe how colours change each other, how the movement of one work sparks movement in another, and how a conversation with an audience deepens our understanding of what unfolds in the exhibition.

For now, we have removed Shimmer's office and storage to provide more room for the exhibition. Subtle yet significant changes have also been made to the placement of existing works by Nina Canell, Jaime Gili, Liam Gillick, William McKeown, Eduardo Padilha, Lawrence Weiner, and Walker & Walker.

With these changes, and as new works enter, the pairings in the exhibition become more pronounced. Moosje M Goosen responds to Nina Canell's work with *A Score of Two Lungs*, a written prompt for an artwork. Canell's work explores the mystery of energy and its transformation—its A4 printer paper flutters and fluctuates, now mirroring the standard size of a human lung. Happenstance or standardisation? Goosen questions standardisation in her work, reflecting on its implications. How fundamentally strange that the average human lung is the size of an A4 piece of paper. And how fundamentally strange that upon Goosen's rehanging of Canell's paper—to her own lung height—we discovered it had already been installed, unbeknownst to us, at Goosen's height in the first place. Such strangeness occurs in Shimmer often—what we call curatorial kismet—that the artworks are meant to be together at this moment in time. Is kismet, fate, actually intuition—the space between intent and accident?

Often, one finds themselves with a phrase echoing in their mind, seemingly unattached to any source, leaving them uncertain whether they conceived it themselves. Recently, we've been contemplating the phrase: "Your mother did not give birth to you to represent an idea." This suggests that you are who you

Coalescence: Happenstance With All Due Intent

Curated by Paul O'Neill and Shimmer

with Ilke Gers, Moosje M Goosen, Anne Tallentire, and Grace Weir joining Nina Canell, Jaime Gili, Liam Gillick, William McKeown, Isabel Nolan, Harold Offeh, Eduardo Padilha, Lawrence Weiner, and Walker & Walker.

until 30 November 2025

are, as you are. You are not a utilitarian object, nor a concept or notion; you are, very simply, your parents' child—with all the complexities that entails. Yet you are also more than that—you are uniquely you. This sentiment might seem so fundamental it risks sounding like one of those clichéd truisms teachers impart to their students, those kind of phrases we have waiting in our 'bags of concepts'. Admittedly, we reiterated this countless times to students these days and weeks. Perhaps it's the politics of difference that continually brings this phrase to the forefront—the constant endeavour to delineate unique individuality. The designed self, devoid of serendipity—the chance to learn, (not know) yourself.

In a world dominated by presenting and representing, what lies beneath the surface of this language? Before articulating differences, before the apparent reality that we may never truly find you again, or that you might never find you again. Lately, we've been revisiting Derrida and, dare I say, contemplating a form of 'universality' that might suggest some fundamental bond among us. Reflecting on Derrida, we might recall the concept of the trace—the idea that language, once spoken, immediately becomes a trace, a fleeting imprint left behind. This aligns with Walter Benjamin's concept of *aromata*, suggesting that we navigate a world filled with traces, in the wavering wake of perfumed language. That might also be how we curate—making choices from shows that were with us four or five years ago. Curating often feels like participating in the diffusion of memory,

that we are always curating in the mist of the past and the future.

Through this thinking, there is also hope of undoing representation: the moment you have defined me, I have already been redefined. Language, thankfully, cannot fully encapsulate me—nor you.

Derrida, drawing from Husserl, proposed that beneath the trace lies geometry. We've always interpreted this geometry as encompassing both mathematics and rhythm—the pulse of life. It's perilous to consider mathematics a “perfect language,” and as a friend who is a set theorist once told us, “there are infinite forms of infinity”—indicating that language is not perfect; it surpasses understanding. Liam Gillick's Serendipity wallpaper reminds us of this—a repetitive, seemingly geometric structure that nudges us to remember and allow for serendipity. And as the joke of Jason's Dutch parents goes: “Please always plan your serendipitous moments.” It's also the institution that plans chance encounters from 16:00–17:00. But life, as you may have noticed—well, life is a mess.

Yesterday, we observed Anne Tallentire (with assistance from George Bularca) transcribe the floor plan of two of the floors of the Kiefhoek—one of Rotterdam's early social housing buildings from 1925—onto the floors of Shimmer. Within those plans, lives were lived; people were born, and perhaps concluded their journeys there.

Yet, we recognise that tape on the ground doesn't equate to a life lived (how could it ever?). It's a translation—an approximation of space. Despite Anne's earnest efforts to faithfully render the floor plan, there will always be gaps or mis-takes. These mis-takes, where a centimetre doesn't align or a gap doesn't add up, are where we propose Husserl's geometry might reside—akin to what economists call slippage, where input doesn't precisely match output. A faithful accountant might insist it's impossible—what comes in must go out. But slippages do occur, remember, that life is messy.

Moments when you genuinely forget something—a receipt slipped behind a car seat, a foreign currency transaction miscalculated in the heat of an unfamiliar

place. Or when the value of something has changed by the time you noticed the difference. Slippages occur mostly in time. We also propose that in those gaps of ‘mathematical’ understanding, we can hide (and keep safe) what is most precious to each other: the You and the Me relationship can be placed in those gaps.

Ilke Gers' graphite lexicon finds companions in the negative space between the letters of Walker & Walker's work. Gers, drawing daily from muscle memory, works within the constraints of lecture cards. Walker & Walker's six pieces explore the space between letters—perhaps mirroring the two sleeping bags by Eduardo Padilha. Initially installed separately and moved around the exhibition, they only found their place when curled up and over each other.

As one audience member noted, this exhibition exists in the multiple in-between(s). These sleeping bags—made from secondhand mattresses found on the street—leave a gap between them. Gers finds a home in the hand, a familiar action repeated over and over, like the threshold in your house that you know so well but that suddenly feels foreign. That is the gap of doing—the slippages created in the folds of memory.

The point is: we must account for these slippages, and simultaneously allow those gaps to exist. When you deconstruct something, it can never be reassembled exactly as before. What remains are gaps—liminal spaces. This is what Eduardo Padilha shows us, those soft sleeping bags that have been made from found mattresses, cut and reassembled to create a form to wrap around rather than lay atop, reassembly, tailoring new forms, will always result in gaps.

The question is: what do we do with them? Do we perceive these gaps as spaces where we can find each other without the bias of the “known”? Do we, as Grace Weir suggests, let the geometry of each other's gaps grow inward—to find infinitude within one another, through time and space, through Euclid's foundational work in ancient Alexandria?

Where defined points, lines, and planes formed an axiomatic system, Weir traces the historical struggle to understand

parallel lines and expands beyond mathematics. She connects geometry to art, perspective, and philosophy—shifting the discussion from physical measurement to the relationships we have with each other.

The artworks and their placements bring fresh meanings. Their lines begin to grow shoots—entwining and cross-pollinating each other, much like the olive trees in Weir's video:

“Within the groves of olive trees that grow along the shores of the Mediterranean, some trees have sprouted shoots for over two millennia, still growing since Plato's circle paused within their shade. The leaves of the olive tree are arranged along the stem in pairs, each pair at right angles to the one above or below it. Generating from an infinitude somewhere within, while the outermost leaves gesture to the planar space of Euclid.

There are polarities which interplay and interweave, creating the diverse forms of life—flowers, leaf buds, and the human heart.” – In Parallel (2017) by Grace Weir

Meanwhile, Jaime Gili's paintings, now hung in pairs, face each other from across the room—creating breathing room for the positive future Gili envisions. Isabelle Nolan's work takes a rest, bathed in light over the months. The material needs to settle and rest. Often, exhibition spaces are suspended and separated from life—that's how you create sanctity. Theologically, you separate one thing from another. But we have churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues for that. We are an exhibition space that is part of the world. Light can damage fabric and paper. Works need time away from the harshness of summer light, so they may return in winter when the light is dimmer—more hospitable to the material conditions of what has been made.

The two paintings by William McKeown have changed places since their initial installation. Hung high, they suggest a clear sky and an eventual sunset over our polluted port. Their borders could be windows—quickly painted at the last minute, a brown square done at the end of the painting to ‘frame’—something to push back against. Because what I need is not

sameness; we need rhythms that create gaps. And in those gaps, we'll find each other:

At the doorway of a house made of tape,
In the sunset of an artist no longer with us,
In the memory of the size of someone else's lung,
In the muscle memory of a line that has dissipated into memory.

And as the lyrics of Solomon Rosowsky's song “Let's Make Up” go:

“Let's make up, make up, why are you standing by the door frame? Let's make up, come on, look at me.”

It is the gaps that make up who I am to you, and you to me—to allow for the space where we can find each other in the here and now. So cross the doorframe. Fall into gaps outside of intention—the gaps of the possible unknown self—and let's make it up together.

Thank you to Alice Weiner, Culture Ireland, Cultuurfonds, and Mondriaan Fonds for making this phase of exhibition possible.

ABOUT COALESCENCE

For one year, we have invited O'Neill to curate a new version of his Coalescence, which has been challenging the exhibition format since the early 2000s. We are thrilled to host O'Neill at Shimmer, where we will explore the potential of exhibitions by involving the artist and audience in an evolving process. Coalescence: Happenstance With All Due Intent is a durational, accumulative and evolving exhibition-form featuring artists from all over the world to experiment with the exhibition format through collaboration, intervention, constellation and juxtaposition. Throughout the year, artists will respond to each other's works, creating new pieces inspired by or adapting existing ones. Such actions turn the exhibition space into a dynamic environment where artists' works merge into a collective assemblage. This exhibition challenges the boundaries of individuality and authorship, promoting a sense of cooperative and coalescent gathering.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Title from Lawrence Weiner's work by the same name, installed in the exhibition

² Don't worry, we too are aware of the deep skepticism that the term 'universal' conjures up, we're asking you to give it a second chance

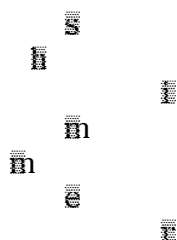
³ Walter Benjamin, Doctrine of the Similar (1933), in Walter Benjamin and Knut Tarnowski, New German Critique, No. 17, Special Walter Benjamin Issue (Spring 1979), pp. 65–69

"Language [] represents the medium in which objects meet and enter into relationship with each other, no longer directly, as once in the mind of the augur or priest, but in their essences, in their most volatile and delicate substances, even in their aromata. In other words: it is to writing and language that clairvoyance has, over the course of history, yielded its old powers"

⁴ Jacques Derrida, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. (1962)

⁵ Scientific American, "A Deep Math Dive into Why Some Infinities Are Bigger Than Others," Scientific American, April 2019

⁶ Investopedia, "Slippage: What It Means in Finance, With Examples," n.d.



ARTWORK LIST

Nina Canell
Score for Two Lungs (2009)
Electric heater, paper
Courtesy of the artist & Mendes Wood DM

Moosje M. Goosen
1:1 (Prompt for an Artwork) (2025)
A6 card
Courtesy of the artist
Moosje M. Goosen
1:1 (Paper Score for Two Lungs) (2025)
Two A4 paper sheets, one rehung at 122 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Ilke Gers
Index (2024–ongoing)
Graphite pencil, index cards
Courtesy of the artist

Jaime Gili
A621 (Cuji) (2024)
Acrylic on canvas, 24 × 19 cm
A293 (Atinhar) (2016)
Acrylic on synthetic canvas, 40 × 30 cm
A624 (Culebra) (2024)
Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 25 cm
All courtesy of the artist

Liam Gillick
Happenstance (2024)
A1 (594 × 840 mm)
Courtesy of the artist, Kerlin Gallery and Maureen Paley

William McKeown
Untitled (2009–2011)
Oil on linen, 40 × 40 cm
Blue (2009–2011)
Oil on linen, 48 × 48 cm
Courtesy of Kerlin Gallery, Dublin

Eduardo Padilha
Sleeping Beauty (2000)
Disassembled mattress fabrics,
15×200×80 cm
Slumberland (2000)
Disassembled mattress fabrics,
15×200×80 cm
Untitled (Footballers A5) (2024)
Six A5 vintage photographs, gold-plated chain
(5 microns), seashells with gold thread,
dimensions variable
Untitled (Monument 3) (2024)
Glazed ceramic, 20 × 6 × 10 cm
All courtesy of the artist

Anne Tallentire
Look Over 5 (2025)
Various tapes
Courtesy of the artist and Hollybush
Gardens, London

Lawrence Weiner
Happenstance: All Due Intent (2008)
Text in silver with black outline, approx
20 cm letter height, total length approx
431 cm
Courtesy of a private collection

Grace Weir
In Parallel (2017)
HDV, 17'19"
Courtesy of the artist

Walker & Walker
Between d and o (2013)
Between i and s (2013)
Between i and t (2013)
Between t and o (2013)
Between i and f (2013)
10 mm powder-coated aluminium
All courtesy of the artists

BIOGRAPHIES

NINA CANELL once made a sculpture for ten people that caused the electricity in their homes to go out simultaneously and unannounced once every month for a year. The transfer and distribution of energy has been an integral preoccupation of her work since the beginning, often engaging with situations highly sensitive to spatio-temporal variables. Grounded as much in chance encounters as in close study, her sculptural process foregrounds material agency.

ILKE GERS is a visual artist from Aotearoa New Zealand, based in Rotterdam. She creates site-specific installations and works with text, drawing, and publishing to explore the relationship between the body, movement, and language. Her installations often take the form of ground works made through movement and open-ended processes that respond to spatial conditions, physical interaction, and time. By intervening in normative mechanisms of communication and circulation, her work destabilises the assumed neutrality and fixed nature of the built environment, language forms, and behavioural codes.

JAIME GILI has developed a distinctive style at the convergence of inherited European modernism, Venezuela's historical modernism, and present-day realities. Aware that abstract painting cannot directly depict current events—such as protests or the disintegration of democracy—Gili addresses these issues through tempo and the painting's slow process of becoming. Gradually, and within its own limitations, his abstract work attempts to bridge voids of time and space, ultimately carrying a message of positive futurity.

LIAM GILLICK is an artist based in New York, working across diverse forms including installation, video, and sound. A theorist, curator, and educator as well as an artist, his broader body of work includes published essays and texts, lectures, and collaborative curatorial projects. Gillick reflects on conditions of production within a so-called post-industrial landscape, engaging with the aesthetics of economy, labour, and social organisation. His work critiques the dysfunctional legacy of modernist abstraction and architecture.

when framed within a globalised, neoliberal consensus, and extends into a structural rethinking of the exhibition format. Since the late 2000s, he has produced a number of short films addressing the construction of the creative persona amidst the ongoing mutability of the contemporary artist as a cultural figure.

MOOSJE M GOOSEN lives and works in Rotterdam. Writing and reading are her daily practices—pursued both with and without the framework of “work.” Stemming from her lived experiences of chronic illness and its social environments, she explores language as a life form, a “spark of being” beyond the body, in time and space. Her work occupies a space between disciplines: between literature and art; between different genres or registers of language; between theoretical, literary, and artistic research. In 2017, she received a pair of donor lungs.

WILLIAM MCKEOWN (1962–2011) made paintings, drawings, prints, and installations that captured the openness and life-enhancing power of nature. Guided by a belief in the primacy of feeling, his paintings often took on the guise of objective minimalism and monochrome, but offered much more: nature as something tangible and deeply felt. Each painting is slightly off-square, undermining geometric perfection, and scaled to the size of the human chest, as if mirroring our lungs’ capacity to breathe. Sometimes presented in room installations—wooden structures with wallpaper, windows, and artificial light mimicking a clinical setting—his works acted as windows to the outside world. They offered escape from repression and mundanity into the expansiveness of sky, using subtle tonal gradations to create moments of exquisite beauty. With titles such as *Hope* and *Freedom*, McKeown drew attention to the air around us, capturing our emergence into light and reminding us of our proximity to the infinite.

EDUARDO PADILHA evaluates and processes his relationship to his surrounding environment and how identity is perceived and shaped by this context. Working with found materials, Padilha reassembles them to reflect experiences where private and public domains intersect. Appropriation, deployment, and dislocation of the object serve as points of departure in a search for new modes of signification.

ANNE TALLENTIRE is an artist from County Armagh, Northern Ireland, based in London, UK. Her practice spans moving image, sculpture, photography, installation, spatial drawing, and related performance. Through visual and textual interrogation of everyday materials and structures, Tallentire’s work reveals the systems that shape the built environment and the economics of labour. Her recent work explores geographical dislocation and demarcation in relation to infrastructure. Since 1993, she has collaborated with artist John Seth as part of the duo work-seth/tallentire. She also co-organises the peripatetic event series *hmn* alongside Chris Fite-Wassilak. Tallentire is represented by Hollybush Gardens, London.

WALKER & WALKER work across a wide range of forms and media. Their practice encompasses film, sculpture, drawing, and installation, incorporating materials as diverse as steel, neon, a pearl, and a flower that blooms once a year. Their work is rooted in the elusiveness of language. Drawing inspiration from 19th- and 20th-century Surrealist artists, writers, and poets—such as Marcel Duchamp, Stéphane Mallarmé, and René Daumal—they re-evaluate meaning and lyrical structure. Their words become independent from their original signifiers, generating new ideas through various media and site-specific contexts.

LAWRENCE WEINER (1942–2021) was an American conceptual artist best known for his text-based installations and radical definitions of art. He is recognised as a key figure in the founding of the Conceptual Art movement in the 1960s.

GRACE WEIR is an artist whose work spans film and video art, photography, painting, installation, web-based projects, and lecture-performances. A key feature of her practice is her singular approach to research, grounded in encounters

with specific objects, books, artworks, and sites—as well as conversations with philosophers, scientists, and practitioners from other disciplines. Weir is especially interested in unsettling trajectories of identity formation via our relationships with dominant systems of time and space, and in concepts of memory, record, reality, representation, and our perception of history and the future.

PAUL O'NEILL is an Irish curator, artist, writer, and educator. Paul is the Artistic Director of PUBLICS, since September 2017. PUBLICS is a curatorial agency, contemporary art commissioner and event space with a dedicated library and reading room in Helsinki. Between 2013–17, he was Director of the Graduate Program at the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS), Bard College, New York. Paul is author of the critically acclaimed book *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, (MIT Press, 2012), which has been translated into many languages. Paul has co-curated over 70 shows across the world, and is widely regarded as one of the foremost research-oriented curators, educators and scholar of curatorial practice, public art, and exhibition histories, and most has authored and co-edited numerous agenda-setting anthologies on curating. Most recent co-edited books are: *Not Going it Alone: Collective Curatorial Curating* (Apexart, New York, 2024), and *CURIOUS* (Open Editions, London, 2024).

Paul is editor of the curatorial anthology, *Curating Subjects* (2007), and co-editor of *Curating and the Educational Turn* (2010), and *Curating Research* (2014) both with Mick Wilson, and published by de Appel and Open Editions (Amsterdam and London). Paul is author of *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art* (Amsterdam, Valiz, 2011), co-edited with Claire Doherty and author of the critically acclaimed book *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, (Cambridge, MASS, The MIT Press, 2012). Paul is responsible for the agenda-setting series of three curatorial anthologies, *The Curatorial Conundrum*; *How Institutions Think*, and *Curating After the Global: Roadmaps to the Present*, co-edited with Lucy Steeds, Mick Wilson et al, and published with the MIT Press, CCS Bard College and LUMA Foundation, in 2016, 2017 and 2019.



Situated in the Rotterdam port, renowned for its striking sunsets due to industrial pollution, SHIMMER embodies the paradox of art for social and communal change within the oil-riggers and wind-turbine installers. This changing industrial backdrop inspires our adaptive and transformative approach. Our curatorial style blends collaboration and innovation, redefining how contemporary art is created, exhibited, and shared. Through experimental exhibitions and events, we provide a platform ranging from emerging practices to established artists, focusing on those who challenge art reception conventions in today's cultural climate. Since 2018, Shimmer is directed and curated by Eloise Sweetman and Jason Hendrik Hansma.

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