

TULCA
FESTIVAL OF VISUAL ARTS

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CONTACT

TULCA Festival of Visual Arts
Earlswell Court
Cross Street Lower
Galway
Ireland

www.tulca.ie
info@tulca.ie

GALLERIES

TULCA Gallery | 12.00 - 18.00 | Mon - Sun
Hynes Building, St Augustine St

Galway Arts Centre | 10.00 - 17.00 | Mon - Sat (12.00 - 18.00 Sun)
47 Dominick St Lower

126 Gallery | 12.00 - 18.00 | Mon - Sun
15 St Bridgets Place

Columban Hall | 12.00 - 18.00 | Mon - Sun
Sea Road

The world
was all
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curated by Clare Gormley
4 - 20 November 2022
Galway, Ireland

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elcome to the 20th edition of TULCA Festival of Visual Arts. After two decades of producing contemporary art, it's tempting to indulge in a nostalgic backward glance. Indeed, TULCA has produced important work that has highlighted social inequalities, brought audiences to hidden pockets of our city and county

and opened conversations about how we might address the world in a new key. But, as this edition of TULCA curated by Clare Gormley reminds us, to be contemporary requires accepting the future as abiding yet unknowable.

Making a festival is a very tangible thing, something acutely felt staging an exhibition against a backdrop of inclement weather and spatial squeeze. The future on the other hand *seems* free of these limitations. Rather it represents an expansive vista of mercurial possibility, where apocalypse and perfection are equally close at hand. The effect is a future at once enticing and terrifying, a pressure of possibility that encourages the maintenance of the status quo while we tussle over what 'might be.' This year's festival asks us to break away from these conversations that, like a finely tuned Rube-Golberg machine circuitously return us to an unchanging present.

Instead, it prompts us to interrogate the forces that atrophy talk about the future. What emerges are works that employ a variety of languages to explore the forces that animate the material world. From cartography to dance, poetry to photography, installation and film, artists in the

festival are interested in the unspoken dialogues between nature and its persistent reorganisation in and through language, history, technology and geometry. The celebration of processes and the 'in-progress' here remind us that the future is not some far-flung province. Rather, the future exists in the present moment in the same way that the past reverberates in the now.


If we abandon the prospect of conquering the future (successfully or otherwise,) we are left with a curious alternative. The acknowledgement that the future abides with us, constitutive of the present in the same way as the past. This makes the 'contemporary' a striking mix of historical narrative and unvoiced claims. Accepted as something impossible to objectively know, we learn that; "the life in expectation is our constant present" a reality that there is no objective perspective on either past or future.¹ Far from being a nihilistic claim, the conversations opened in this iteration of TULCA echo an imperative that drives our annual making of a festival. That we should in ways small, surprising, poetic and yes, imperfect, step tangibly into a future of our own (re) making.

On this, our 20th edition, the board of TULCA would like to thank those that help us explore the past and future of our present moment. Our fabulous team and the funders, local businesses, institutions and audiences who help us make this tangible thing. Here's to its future!

Lucy Elvis

(On Behalf of the TULCA Board of Directors)

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer *On the Old and the New* in Gadamer Hans Georg, (2019), *Hermeneutics Between History and Philosophy: The Selected Writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Volume I, ed. & trans. P. Vandervelede & A. Iyer, New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.



berte & harmey


berte & harmey is the collaborative practice of Irish artist Cliona Harmey and Belgian artist Filip Berte. Working from a place of friendship and shared interests they have developed a remote collaborative practice.



Their work, *Nul Punt Wolk* brings together a series of fragments with a connection to aerial imaging, aviation, mapping and landscape demarcation and includes two large sculptural Bare Maps, which show bare earth visualisations of the surrounding environments of two 1917 airfields: Baldonnell in Ireland and Oostakker in Belgium.

Appearing semi-photographic, this type of aerial view has been enabled by the changing technologies of communication, mapping, optics, capture and transit which have ushered in our contemporary globalised world. Viewing the maps, we can't help but think of earlier post-war images and the all too real spectres of conflict today. The *Bare Maps* were created as a space to gather and look at the earth together and reflect on how things might be different.

Image: berte & harmey, *Nul Punt Wolk* installation view. Courtesy the artists



Caroline Jane Harris

Caroline Jane Harris (b. 1987, UK) lives and works in London. Her work hybridises traditional, historic techniques with digital technologies to pursue questions around materiality and perception in the Information Age. Intending to serve peace through meditative acts, her artworks go against the grain of speed and automation as an antidote to our fast-paced world.

Through manual processes, she forges a relationship between paper, interventions and the audience. With a scalpel she intricately cuts-out digital prints in 'bitmap' matrixes, embedding minute traces of the artist's hand, turning two-dimensional prints into three-dimensional layered pictures that index both the human and non-human actors involved in the process.

Chosen subjects are images sourced – from personal archives, online videos, websites, found books and analogue photographs – to collapse and construe time, dimensions and media. The works offer up an arena for a slow, exploratory engagement to examine contemporary habits of seeing through critical acts of looking.

Image: Caroline Jane Harris, *A Stopped World* (detail) 2020

Contributors to
The World Was All Before Them
are artists, filmmakers,
writers and poets:

Anouk Kruithof
Becca Albee
Berte & Harmey
Caroline Jane Harris
Chloe Cooper
Christopher Steenson
Elise Rasmussen
Emily Speed
Esmeralda Conde Ruiz
Judith Dean
Kameelah Janan Rasheed
Michael Hanna
Nicoline van Harskamp
Quentin Lacombe
Tabitha Soren
Tadhg Ó Cuirrín
& The Lifeboat

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Welcome to the 20th edition of
TULCA Festival of Visual Arts,
curated by Clare Gormley under the
title *The World Was All Before Them*.

Constructed in a moment of global change, upheaval and uncertainty, this year's festival addresses the notion of futurity and asks what the political potentials might be in imagining new futures and envisioning new ways of being in this world. Taking its title from the final lines of John Milton's epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, which recounts Adam and Eve's journey out of Eden and into a new, unknown world, the festival seeks to take stock of our current moment and imagine what lies ahead, as we too find ourselves on a precipice: of ecological destruction, humanitarian crisis, mass migration, global pandemics, wars and technological over-saturation. Surely, there has never been such an urgent time to challenge the structures of our current existence, and to seek out visions of future worlds worth living in.

Disrupting traditional western, capitalistic, theistic tendencies to imagine the future as either utopian or dystopian, the festival will instead conjure a vision of the future as inextricably tied to the world we live in now: its inequities, as well as its possibilities. As such, it is less invested in depicting the world we might create, than in questioning how it is we might make our existing world a more liveable place. The intention is to map a more expansive, non-binary, open-ended and fluid conception of what might lie ahead, through an engagement with a form of futurity rooted in a politics of livability, not escapism or mastery.

By-passing and critiquing the notion that technology alone might save us, this edition of TULCA seeks out practices which engage, among other things; civics, alliances, poetics, politics, bodies, dance, movement, language, decoloniality, sociality, connectivity, collectively and the quotidian acts of everyday existence as among the tools of future world-making.

Clare Gormley | Curator

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