

Performances:

Performers:
Sarah Joan K
Ania Kudriavtseva
Makrià Midèn
Ellen Reidy

Performances take place within the listed times below:

Friday 26 May
11am-3pm

Wednesday 31 May
2-6pm

Saturday 10 June
12-4pm

Thursday 15 June
11am-3pm

Tuesday 20 June
2-6pm

Sunday 2 July
12-4pm

Photograph for exhibition poster by
Mandy O'Neill.

List of works:

how far is it? how far is it now?, 2023
Cast aluminium, sand, rock
Dimensions variable

body of work for *aquaspace*, 2023
Glass
Dimensions variable

a stone or a wave, 2023
Glass
19 x 42 x 39 cm, 15 x 44 x 45 cm,
14 x 44 x 44 cm, 14 x 39 x 40 cm,
18 x 36 x 38 cm

prendre corps, 2023
Steel, paraffin, foam, fabric
180 x 35 x 35 cm, 30 x 30 x 120 cm,
35 x 35 x 165 cm

rest to the bones, 2023
Foam, fabric, zip
5 x 12 x 40 cm (12 pieces)

mouth was thinking about eyes, 2023
Steel, glass
Steel length: 150, 200, 235 cm
Glass: 21 x 21 x 47 cm, 21 x 21 x 47 cm,
21 x 21 x 47 cm

*des astres, des outils, de la musique le jour
comme la nuit*, 2023
Brass
5 x 20 x 20 cm, 28 x 9 x 9 cm

sharing skysummer, 2023
Cotton, thread
98 x 150, 70 x 250 cm, 98 x 270 cm

walking, stopping, watching, 2023
Stainless steel
38 x 14 x 30 cm (pair, each),
18 x 13 x 36 cm (pair, each),
21 x 14 x 32 cm (pair, each)

All works courtesy of the artist and Hua
International.

TEMPLE BAR GALLERY + STUDIOS

Fanny Gicquel

breathing with heels, walking with eyes

19 May - 2 July 2023

Fanny Gicquel's tactile and adaptive sculptural environments refer to intimate and natural forms. Their components are dependent on one another, providing resting points where groups of objects and materials harmonise and perform. The serpentine aluminium stripes that delineate the gallery floor share likenesses with the curvature of a body in repose or an undulating shoreline. This alignment between discreet bodily outlines and formations in nature allows Gicquel to explore the touching point between the animate and the inanimate, tracing a moving and transitory landscape.

Language meets materiality throughout the exhibition. Its title pairs two references by David Le Breton, a sociologist and anthropologist who writes about walking as a metaphysical experience. In his book, *Walking Life: A Quiet Art of Happiness*, Breton discusses 'breathing with heels', a Taoist method of consciously engaging with the earth beneath our feet, its energy and connectivity; 'walking with eyes' is an expression by Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969), an explorer and spiritualist who advocated moving through the world by intuition, without following a predetermined path. Comparably, Gicquel's approach to the installation of the exhibition was determined by bringing together many disparate components and materials, and responsively composing their relationships in the gallery itself. For her this transitional approach is an amalgamation between studio and exhibition spaces, and the flow of work is circulatory.

A terrain of aluminium tracks and drifting sandbanks opens up several circuitous routes through the exhibition. *how far is it? how far is it now?* (2023) takes its title from the opening lines of 'Getting There' by Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965), and also recalls a child's excited anticipation on a day trip. The guiding pathways are made by casting directly from the beach itself, Penmarch in the artist's home region of Bretagne. Gicquel inscribed marks in the sand, at times with intent and others more aimlessly, to create spirals, trails and accents that were then filled with molten aluminium, incorporating traces of sand, stones, and flaws from reactions between the liquid metal with saltwater in the ground.

Visitors are encouraged to mimic Gicquel's beach 'drifting' and make decisions about their movements, attentiveness and pace in the room, echoing the motions of four performers who periodically inhabit the exhibition with a combination of individual and collective actions. The integration of choreographed and improvised activations, imagined by the artist and then carefully, yet playfully, enacted by the performers, create a curious sense of self-awareness. Their subtle gestures, which activate Gicquel's installation, include contact, rearrangement and interaction with each other and elemental substances like water, air, vapour, and reflected light.

During her first visit to Temple Bar last year, Gicquel observed the passersby outside the gallery, and how this constant

presence plays an intrinsic role in the exhibitions. Her observations of hurried purposeful movement in the street prompted a response to slow down and move without intention of getting somewhere, within the exhibition. This sensation is integrated into her work through the symbolism of a meeting point, or place of connection. The large glass windows are a visual and light-porous screen connecting inside and outside, just as the beach is the meeting point between land and sea, constituted by the merging of solid and liquid material. Gicquel utilises the window of the gallery as a site of seeing and being seen. The harmony between stillness and movement is also a feature of her installations, particularly resonant in the slow and meditative performances, where gentle concentration prompts close relationships between objects and bodies.

The setting of the beach is bound to leisurely mindfulness, activated by the relaxing sounds of rolling waves and seabirds. It is expansive by its own nature, and Gicquel plays with the associations of horizontal space between land and sea, and the actions that typically take place there, such as lying down and sunbathing. *sharing skysummer* (2023), a grouping of blue and purple fabric banners, hangs at floor level in the gallery creating a horizon. It also resembles a windbreaker that offers protection from the elements and the privacy of enclosure. The banners signify potential for reconfiguration and can be folded, stretched and repositioned like picnic blankets, beach towels or semaphore flags. Gicquel hints at the possibility of a 'living painting' that could shift the backdrop of the exhibition, leaving the installation open to change, through the actions of the performers.

Throughout the installation, the channels of sand indicate moments to pause beside glass rock pools, filled with water

(*a stone or a wave*, 2023), fragments of mirror and blown-glass implements (body of work for *aquaspace*, 2023). The surrounding areas also draw attention to particles of shell, weathered glass, and hand-formed, coloured paraffin balls; shapes that coalesce the natural and imaginary. During the installation, we reflected on Virginia Woolf's short story 'Solid Objects' (1920). One of its many entwined threads is the protagonist's increasing obsession with the discovery of material fragments (glass worn smooth by the waves, a broken shard of ceramic), however his inquisitiveness and childlike wonder about the sand, and its interaction with water, as well as the "half-conscious reverie" in which he increasingly experiences the world, is particularly resonant with Gicquel's exhibition. *

As Woolf describes the 'unmistakable vitality' of figures walking on a deserted beach, Gicquel links the interior and exterior of the gallery, with works that exaggerate and playfully respond to the activity outside and their distance within the protected gallery setting. *mouth was thinking about eyes* (2023), is a trio of suspended glass cones, that reference loudhailers, telescopes, or listening devices that are a direct response to the vibrant and chaotic Temple Bar street, which also create the potential for personal sensory experiences like listening to the sound of the sea inside a shell. Gicquel's use of sand throughout the exhibition avoids a definitive configuration for materials due to its indeterminate positioning, while also acknowledging the links to care and restoration with the beach and sea swimming in the Dublin cityscape.

Three larger sculptures that take the form of disembodied limbs are placed on the floor, or against the wall, their title, *prendre corps*, meaning 'to take shape', draws parallels between the hand-wrought

fabrication of the work, its visualisation as sculptural body parts, and activation by performers. Gicquel has considered the implied vulnerability of the objects' exposed knees, elbows and heels by placing upholstered cushions (*rest to the bones*, 2023) between the skeletal joints and the hard surfaces of the building; another point of connection, which has been considered with care and intimacy.

* "Looked at again and again half consciously by a mind thinking of something else, any object mixes itself so profoundly with the stuff of thought that it loses its actual form and recomposes itself a little differently in an ideal shape which haunts the brain when we least expect it". 'Solid Objects' was brought to our attention by artist Niamh O'Malley, who shared an article written by Margaret Iverson on the work of artists Becky Beasley and Lucy Skaer: <https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-23/death-and-the-found-object>

Fanny Gicquel lives and works in Rennes. Her recent solo exhibitions include Hua International, Beijing (2022) and Berlin (2021); the left place the right space, Reims (2020); Passerelle Centre d'art Contemporain, Brest (2020); and Unworlding, Frieze, London (2021). Recent group exhibitions include Frac Bretagne, Rennes (2022); Beiqiu Museum of Contemporary Art, Nanjing (2022); Art Souterrain, Montreal (2021); Buropolis, Marseille (2021). Gicquel was awarded the Marfa Hostcall Prize, Texas (2022), and the Prix du Frac Bretagne - Art Norac, through a selection process made in collaboration with Frac Bretagne and Temple Bar Gallery + Studios.

The Prix du Frac Bretagne-Art Norac aims to support Bretagne-based artists through annual partnerships with international organisations, which realise a solo exhibition for the awarded artist. The shortlisted artists 2022 were Reda BousSELLA, Clémence Estève, Fanny Gicquel, Valérian Goalec.

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