Isabel Nolan
July 29 to October 2, 2016
B.C. Binning and Alvin Balkind Galleries

Sameer Farooq and Mirjam Linschooten
September 10, 2016 to January 8, 2017
Window spaces
Off-site: Yaletown-Roundhouse Station
and The Museum of Anthropology

Skawennati
August 7 to August 19, 2016
Burrard Marina Field House Studio

Keg de Souza
September 10 to October 31, 2016
Burrard Marina Field House Studio

Opening receptions:
Thursday, July 28, 7–9pm
Saturday, September 10, 3–6pm
The weakened eye of day
July 29 to October 2, 2016
B. C. Binning and Alvin Balkind Galleries

Isabel Nolan

The Contemporary Art Gallery presents a major body of recent work by Irish artist Isabel Nolan. With successive presentations at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Mercer Union, Toronto; and CAG, each iteration sees the project reconsidered and a new version of the same ambitious narrative is made.

Nolan’s work evolves out of consciously erratic enquiries into the aesthetics of a wide range of disciplines, from the close scrutiny of individual literary or artistic works to a broad look at cosmological theories or the writings of a Renaissance theologian. This exhibition takes its title from the English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy’s 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. The show examines how the light of the sun, physically and symbolically, manifests or resonates in our thoughts, preoccupations and pursuits.

From the formation of the planet’s crust to the death of the sun, the enduring preoccupation with light as a metaphor for truth, knowledge and divinity appears here as material instances of the known and unknowable strangeness of the world. Throughout the exhibition individual pieces both seduce and disarm. Framed by the overarching narrative these compelling objects, drawings and stories become opportunities to consider our fixation with light, the contingency of this world and the myriad ways of knowing it. Underpinning this is the artist’s desire to examine and capture in material form charged encounters with artefacts/phenomena/world; those inexplicable and unsettling moments that are marked by heightened awareness. For Nolan this exploration unfolds through the making of things.

Narrative is also an important tool for Nolan. The show begins with a large printed scroll. A myth composed by the artist, Rock founded place (2014) concerns the oldest rock formation on earth. This text, inspired by the Nuvvuagittuq Greenstone Belt of Northern Quebec, describes the depth of geological time and a mode of unconscious existence that occurs at a scale profoundly different to that of a human life. The account posits the formation of the earliest rock as an ur-moment, when the light of the sun first met with resistance. It establishes this dissimilarity as fundamental to the way, mythically speaking, in which a dialogue that oscillates between ‘opposites’ produces meaning.

Across the spaces of CAG, discrete works trace different attempts to understand ‘our place’ in the universe. From Rock founded place we might consider a small-scale, deliquescent, abstract painting such as Dreams of no thing, no time (2014). The diagrammatic steel construction Somewhere between


Work is held in public collections including the Irish Museum of Modern Art; The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin; Allied Irish Bank; Arts Council of Ireland; and various private collections in Europe, Asia, the USA and Canada.

Cover image:
Isabel Nolan
Dreams of no thing, no time (2014)
Watercolour on canvas

Opposite:
Isabel Nolan
Based on my recent observations (1–7) (2014)
From 7 drawings, colouring pencil on paper

Courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery, Dublin
Andromeda and Vulpecula: Sky Atlas (2014) that leans against the wall, considered in tandem with Fourfold sorrows (Jesus you look so sad) (2015), an impressive hand-tufted tapestry/rug, that also connects the vertical and horizontal planes, marks different attempts to make the intangible (infinity or divine mystery) perceptible. These and other pieces such as the constellation of brightly coloured ceramic vessels, Nothing new under the sun (2014), reflect Nolan’s interest in the way colour, form and materials are used to express mythic, spiritual or scientific sensibilities. The intimate, colourful drawings Based on my recent observations (1–7) (2014) are informed directly by contemporary cosmology, wherein scientific technologies afford, articulate and disseminate a rich, visual relationship to the vastness of the expanding universe.

We are finally confronted by The view from nowhen, (a phrase coined to describe the theoretically objective viewpoint from an unlimited, unconstrained and impossible perspective), an enigmatic image of two donkeys photographed in Bully’s Acre — a former public cemetery located in the same grounds as the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Featured in folklore from around the world, donkeys embody different symbolic and practical roles in classical and ancient civilisations and across different faiths and cultures. These donkeys, surrounded by gravestones and the remains of an early Christian High Cross, provide a provocation that cannot be met, a stubborn and inscrutable view from and of a world that can never be fully known.

As with all of Nolan’s oeuvre, the works in The weakened eye of day reveal, through their subjective and intimate nature, the inherent and beautiful absurdity of attempting to tackle the enormity of these subjects through a quixotic process of making. Whether monumental or intimate in scale, they are presented to us as tentative and precarious markers of the experience of our place beneath the sun.
Over the past year Farooq and Linschooten have undertaken a series of cumulative research trips via the Burrard Marina Field House Studio Residency Program toward the development of installations at CAG, the Yaletown-Roundhouse Station and the Museum of Anthropology (MOA). Core to the various commissions are participatory workshops led by the artists with the Native Youth Program (NYP) at MOA, a program for Indigenous youth from Greater Vancouver where students engage in various aspects of working within a museum context, leading public tours, completing research projects and participating in presentations. Farooq and Linschooten invited NYP participants to consider their personal narratives in relation to the anthropological museum’s displays, identifying key elements for examination in the Multiversity Galleries.

Throughout the histories of colonialism and capitalism innumerable cultural objects have entered museum collections around the world detached from the communities and physical bodies they belong to. Ripped from context and trapped behind glass, rearranged and discombobulated, the cultural authenticity, specificity and vitality of these objects are dismembered into taxonomies of otherness.

Within the window spaces at CAG, Farooq and Linschooten consider such acts of ethnographic curation. Reflecting tensions between local communities and their representation in museums, Farooq and Linschooten focus on ongoing cultural forms that persist in contemporary culture. Replicating, yet also subverting, the supposed objective aesthetic of museum vitrines, Farooq and Linschooten have installed a collection of mass-produced cultural objects purchased from shops across the lower mainland, notionally representative of Vancouver’s largest immigrant communities. Display mechanisms such as shelves, hooks and bars are used to disrupt and unsettle the objects, disturbing the meticulous arrangement and suggestive of the uneasy relations between the conserved and custodian, artifact and everyday object, revealing the unintended violence of display.

The interdisciplinary practice of Sameer Farooq (Canada) and Mirjam Linschooten (Netherlands) can be situated as an expanded documentary practice, presenting counter-archives, new additions to museum collections or making buried histories visible. Their work has been exhibited in various countries, including: Belgium, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. Recent projects include The Figure in the Carpet, Blackwood Gallery, Toronto (2015); Faux Guide, Trankat, Morocco (2014); The Museum of Found Objects, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2011); The Museum of Found Objects, Sanat Limari, Istanbul (2010) and Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue, Artellewa, Cairo (2014).
The Visual Art Summer Intensive for youth offered in collaboration with Arts Umbrella and the SFU School of Contemporary Art is celebrating the culmination of the program with an exhibition at the CAG. Participants spent three intensive weeks exploring contemporary art practices with leading artists, curators and educators in Vancouver. Please join us for this exciting presentation of work by young emerging artists.

Projects are generously supported by the BC Arts Council Innovations Program, the Mondriaan Fund and the Hamber Foundation. Farooq and Linschooten’s collaboration with the Native Youth Program is developed in collaboration with the Museum of Anthropology. The project at Yaletown-Roundhouse Station is presented in partnership with the Canada Line Public Art Program — IntransitBC.

At Yaletown-Roundhouse Station, Farooq and Linschooten re-purpose found language from a local souvenir shop highlighting the active commodification of culture. During their time in Vancouver the artists discovered Hudson House Trading Company, a typical tourist store in Gastown selling a plethora of Canadian ‘knick-knacks’ that capitalize on perceptions of Vancouver’s identity via a collection of cultural reproductions for sale. Through the simple act of reproducing the language of the store’s inventory list and applying the names of a selection of items directly onto the station windows, the Canada Line façade operates like an advert exaggerating the wholesale co-opting of culture as currency.

The re-appropriation of found images, objects and language developed into public installations both exaggerate and subvert the ethnographic strategies of representation and implicate such practices into a larger system of commodification utilized to propagate cultural hierarchy, difference and discrimination.
Throughout Summer/Fall 2016 CAG is hosting a series of artists-in-residence, each working toward participatory projects to be realized throughout 2016–2017. The Field House Studio is an off-site artist residency space and community hub organized by the Contemporary Art Gallery. This program moves beyond conventional exhibition making, echoing the founding origins of the gallery where artists were offered support toward the production of new work, while reaching out to communities and offering new ways for individuals to encounter and connect with art and artists.

**Studio Residency Program**

**Skawennati**

**August 7 to August 19, 2016**

Montreal-based artist Skawennati joins us for the first phase of her Field House Residency. In collaboration with the Museum of Anthropology, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and the Initiative for Indigenous Futures, she will be leading an intensive workshop called Skins for youth participating in MOA’s Native Youth Program. This innovative workshop supports youth to tell stories in a new way through machinima, a process of making a movie in a virtual environment such as a video game. The Skins workshop aims to empower Indigenous youth to use new technologies to tell their stories.

This project was made possible through the support of the BC Arts Council’s Youth Engagement grant.

Skawennati is known for her pioneering new media projects that address history, the future and change. They include the on-line gallery/chat-space and mixed-reality event CyberPowWow (1997–2004); a paper doll/time-travel journal Imagining Indians in the 25th Century (2001); and TimeTraveller™ (2008–2013), a multi-platform project featuring nine machinima episodes. Born in Kahnawake Mohawk Territory, Skawennati is Co-Director with Jason E. Lewis of Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC), a research network of artists, academics and technologists investigating, creating and critiquing indigenous virtual environments. This year, AbTeC launched IIF, the Initiative for Indigenous Futures.

**Keg de Souza**

**Preservation, jam making and urban foraging workshop (2015)**

Keg de Souza continues work towards a public project in 2017 exploring food culture as a metaphor for urban displacement. Over the past year de Souza has been conducting research in Vancouver hosting a series of events experimenting with tactics of public engagement.

In 2015, her handmade inflatable dome became a temporary space at the Field House for a public picnic engaging Canadian colonial narratives via a consideration of national food traditions. Meeting with local chefs, food activists and residents de Souza prepared a truly Canadian feast as a source for an afternoon of unfolding dialogue that the artist mapped directly onto the floor of the dome. A starting point for the discussion was the ephemerality of the event itself.

Last summer de Souza hosted a second event, an urban foraging expedition culminating in jam making, experimental mapping and a discussion exploring local foods, cultural preservation and the continuing effects of colonization in contemporary Vancouver. The event featured two local guest collaborators, Lori Snyder, an Indigenous Herbalist specializing in urban foraging for wild, edible and medicinal plants; and Lori’s partner, Steve Snyder, a master jam maker for the last 15 years. This two-day event began with a foraging tour led by Lori Snyder focusing on the native blackberry, the introduced blackberry and other native plants. Participants foraged on the banks surrounding the Field House which are covered with wild Himalayan Blackberries — an invasive, ‘colonizing,’ non-native species in Vancouver. On the second day, Steve Snyder led a jam making session with the foraged berries. While communally making jam, de Souza led a discussion focused on the act of preserving these locally dominant berries, questioning whose culture is in fact preserved and how this can be linked to colonial narratives. This discussion culminated in an experimental mapping of the dialogue.

The Field House Studio Residency Program is generously supported by Vancouver Park Board and the City of Vancouver, along with many private and individual donors. Please visit our website for a full list of supporters. For further details about the program, all forthcoming residencies and associated events visit our website at www.contemporaryartgallery.ca and follow the blog at www.burrardmarinafieldhouse.wordpress.com

For 2016–2019 we acknowledge the generous support for the Field House Studio Residency Program by the Vancouver Foundation.
Public Events

All public events are free and suitable for a general audience.

Unless otherwise stated all take place at the Contemporary Art Gallery.

For more information about public programs at the CAG visit the learning section of our website: www.contemporaryartgallery.ca

Exhibition openings and receptions

Isabel Nolan
Opening reception: Thursday, July 28, 7–9pm

Sameer Farooq and Mirjam Linschooten and Visual Art Summer Intensive
Opening reception: Saturday, September 10, 3–6pm

Join us to celebrate the openings of our new exhibitions.

Talks and Special Events

Artist talk: Isabel Nolan
Tuesday, July 26, 7pm
Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Room 301, South Building, 1399 Johnson Street, Granville Island

Intertextual: Art in Dialogue
Dylan AT Miner:
Indigenous Aesthetics: Art, Activism and Autonomy
Grunt Gallery, #116–350 E 2nd Ave, Vancouver
Wednesday, August 3, 7pm
Join Dylan AT Miner a Wiisaakodewini (Métis) artist, activist and scholar for a discussion of from his book, Indigenous Aesthetics: Art, Activism and Autonomy to be published in 2017. This talk is presented as part of Intertextual: Art in Dialogue, a roving reading group that aims to examine/critique and create/support a community based in text. In addition to the CAG, participating organizations include UBC Press, Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, grunt gallery, SFU Galleries, Vancouver Art Gallery, Museum of Anthropology, Western Front, Presentation House Gallery, Access Gallery, Or Gallery, Charles H Scott, 221A Gallery, Bill Reid Gallery and VIVO Media Arts Centre. For more information about Intertextual: Art in Dialogue, please visit www.facebook.com/intertextualartindialogue

Family Days

Presented in collaboration with ArtStarts on Saturdays. For more details visit: www.artstarts.com/weekend

We acknowledge the generous support of the Hamber Foundation for our Family Day program.

For more details regarding these and all public programs at the Contemporary Art Gallery visit the events page at www.contemporaryartgallery.ca

On the last Saturday of each month, the CAG invites all ages to drop in for short exhibition tours and free art making activities that respond to our current exhibitions.

Saturday, August 27
The Light of the Sun
Responding to Isabel Nolan’s exploration of the sun, create a colourful transparency similar to stained glass to hang in your window.

Saturday, September 24
The Expanding Cosmos
Inspired by Isabel Nolan’s exploration of the cosmos, make a mobile of your own unique solar system.

Photograph by Trasi Jang
Guided visits
Guided visits are open to the public, providing free opportunities to engage with exhibitions and develop new skills for interpreting contemporary art.

We also encourage visits from primary and secondary schools, ESL groups, university and college students and community groups.

For more information or to book a guided visit for your group, contact learning@contemporaryartgallery.ca or telephone 604 681 2700.

Lunch hour tours
First Thursday every month with Maddy Tranter
August 4, September 1, October 6, 12.15–12.45pm
Join CAG Visitor Assistant Maddy Tranter for a midday tour of current exhibitions.

Sunday afternoon tours
Last Sunday of every month with Jocelyn Statia
July 31, August 28, September 25, 3pm
Join CAG Visitor Coordinator, Jocelyn Statia for a tour of the current exhibitions.

Curatorial tours
Jas Lally
Thursday, August 4, 6pm
Assistant Curator, Jas Lally offers an evening behind the scenes guided tour of the current exhibition.

Nigel Prince
Saturday, September 24, 3pm
Join CAG Director, Nigel Prince for a guided tour of Isabel Nolan’s exhibition.

Shaun Dacey
Saturday, October 1, 3pm
Join CAG Curator, Shaun Dacey for a guided tour of Sameer Farooq and Mirjam Linschooten’s project.

Multilingual tours
Mike Bourscheid
Saturday, August 27, 3pm
Join artist Mike Bourscheid for a guided tour in French.

Tommy Ting
Sunday, September 18, 3pm
Join artist Tommy Ting for a tour of the current exhibitions in Mandarin.

Guadalupe Martinez
Sunday, October 2, 3pm
Join local artist Guadalupe Martinez for a tour of the current exhibitions in Spanish.

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Save the date

CAG 28th Annual Gala and Art Auction
Saturday, November 5, 6:30pm
Rosewood Hotel Georgia
Tickets on Sale: Monday, August 1
Join us at this important benefit event for the Contemporary Art Gallery. Your support allows us to continue our crucial role as the only free independent public art gallery dedicated exclusively to engaging audiences with the very best in contemporary art from Vancouver, Canada and abroad.

CAG elsewhere

Liz Magor
The Blue One Comes in Black
Centre d’art contemporain d’Ivry — le Crédac, France
September 8 to December 16, 2016
This exhibition first presented at Peep-Hole Art Centre, Milan, Italy, is organized by CAG in partnership with le Crédac. Supported by the Canada Council for the Arts’ International Touring program, the Province of BC, International Touring Initiative and BCAC Touring Initiative Program.

Gordon Bennett
Be Polite
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Australia
September 17 to October 30, 2016
Developed in collaboration with the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia. A new selection of works will be presented at CAG in summer 2017.

www.contemporaryartgallery.ca