Territory of Strangers

Ruth Clinton & Niamh Moriarty curated by Lily Cahill and Rob Murphy

Broadstone Studios 22 Harcourt Terrace Dublin 2

Opening times:

Saturday 3rd May 12 - 6pm (with late opening reception from 8 - 10pm) Sunday 4th May 12 - 6pm

Oft to the mouldering cliff like a bat I've clung,
Unable to advance, scarce power to retreat,
Whilst in my ear the dreadful surges sung,
And screaming sea-mews marked my doubtful fate

- 'Howth', a descriptive poem by Abraham Bosquet, Dublin, 1787

'Territory of Strangers' is the opening chapter of a long-term engagement with the Howth Peninsula by Niamh Moriarty and Ruth Clinton. Jutting out into the Irish Sea, at the northernmost end of the DART line, Howth evokes romantic visions of retreat, isolation and melancholy endings. Stories of shipwrecks, pirate queens, secret societies and murder mysteries coalesce with latter-day tales of wildfires, rat invasions and poisonous floral sprawl. Join the artists as they willingly surrender themselves to the fog that lingers over the hill, bringing with it a heavy miasma of associations and references, and inducing a kind of seasick nostalgia. They seek to articulate the contradictory and unstable atmosphere found within Howth's microclimate through an intense exploration of its myriad hidden paths. Investigation, for example, of the grounds of Howth Castle: home to a failed luxury hotel and suspended between faded aristocratic order and unruly, teeming nature. Clinton and Moriarty are interested in loss of self and withdrawal, and are listening for a weak signal of resistance that could be broadcast from within the thicket. As though from the castle of Sleeping Beauty, its inhabitants alive but imprisoned in a deep sleep behind a sprawling tangle of briars, there comes a stirring; an invitation to come and visit.

On the first weekend in May, the artists will inhabit various corners of Broadstone Studios- a beautiful Arts and Crafts era, former 'Aged Governess' Home. Visitors are encouraged to sneak around corridors to find the interventions that permeate the building, filling it with an "epidemic distemper... caused by a certain ill constitution of air" (1). Coupled with an off-site event that will coincide with the full moon (details to follow), the artists hope to begin to tell a story that follows countless parallel, diverging and converging paths.

(1) The cause, according to Dr. Thomas Molyneux writing in 1697, of the demise of the Giant Irish Deer, specimens of which have been found on Howth Head.

Ruth Clinton and Niamh Moriarty have been working collaboratively since graduating from fine art at NCAD in 2010. Their practice encompasses performance, video, sound installation and storytelling, along with a detailed research process to convey visions of transience and resistance.

Through fanatic acts of communication and repetition, of resurrection and preservation, we enact humanity's struggle against overwhelming natural forces and ask how we can look beyond our limited perception of infinity. With this in mind, our work has increasingly become an exercise in cross-dimensional movement, using technology as a means of attempting the potentially impossible translation of this world onto another wavelength.

Gallery instructions:

>You have entered a large, red brick building.

>Follow the corridor that leads on from the entrance until you reach a water cooler.

>Stop here.

>There is a set of yellow double doors beyond the water cooler.

>Push through these doors.

>You are in a very large room.

>Follow the path into the centre and back out again.

>Do not walk through the walls.

>Back outside the room turn left and left again until you are in a pink stairway with hand painted linoleum steps.

>Climb until you reach room 120 on the left.

>Enter. (2)

>When you have left the bathroom continue ascending the pink stairway until you reach the top floor.

>Here, turn left down a yellow corridor.

>Walk until you come across room 208 on your right.

>Linger in the hallway outside.

>Listen! (3)

>Now find the stairway with the stained glass windows further down on the right.

>Descend these stairs to the ground floor. (4)

>Cross the hall diagonally, veering slightly to the left.

>Walk down some steps into a space between two rooms.

>Now you may leave.

>Goodbye.

- (2) excerpt from Franz Kafka's 'Description of a Struggle', 1912.
- (3) excerpt from Francis Ford Coppola's 'The Haunted and the Hunted', 1963.
- (4) photograph 18 is by permission of the Irish Times.

In February 2014, Lily Cahill and Rob Murphy were invited to participate in the Broadstone Invited Artists series of projects, by undertaking a residency at the studios. During this time the artists developed projects for exhibition with Ruth Clinton & Niamh Moriarty, and Hannah Fitzpatrick to engage with the Victorian era building. This three part series of exhibitions initiated by Lily Cahill and Rob Murphy will conclude in the final part with an exhibition of new works made throughout their residency at Broadstone Studios.

We would like to express our sincerest thanks to Lily and Rob for their committed patience and support and also extend our gratitude to Jacinta Lynch, the Broadstone Studio artists, Emma O'Sullivan and Tom Moriarty.

Ruth and Niamh are kindly supported by the Arts Council of Ireland. http://cargocollective.com/ruthandniamh

