

So, what happens when four artists who have never met before come together for a month-long residency at the BCA, living under the same roof, holing up together for 24 hours during hurricane Ophelia, watching Withnail and I and playing card games, walking in The Burren, drinking pot still whiskeys in Mac Nails.... while ALSO developing and creating new work. Well, I don't know what happened, but I do know that this is what the work looks like...

**Sarah's** bold and simple pieces, like a hybrid between painting and sculpture - made solely from cast plaster and pigment...

**Ciaran's** landscapes that lure you in with their surface familiarity, but on closer inspection have been created by a mind that likes to mischievously de-construct, simplify and reconstruct to the rules of his own inner architecture...

**Laura's** beautifully crafted non-narrative movie which uses ordinary objects, materials and living creatures to create a piece that is haunting, unsettling and beautiful...

**Helena's** book of photographs, each of which can be appreciated individually on first glance, or pored over to unveil their hidden layers. And her images from The Burren that mimic each other from opposite sides of the room, each set created using completely different printing techniques.

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**Sarah (Wren Wilson)** has to get it right in one go - there is no altering the work after the plaster has been cast. It's a game of chance. Her works asks the question, can you create a painting when there's no paint, no building up of the image, and no chance to alter the result? And though abstract on first glance, Sarah sees this work as more narrative than abstract - narrative personal responses to the barrenness of The Burren.

**Ciaran's (Doyle)** previous work concerned itself with the un-beautiful, the un-heralded areas of Dublin's urban landscape and literally shone light on those neglected spaces. Ciaran has always been fascinated by light, especially that moment when the light shifts in the sky, and the world beneath it shifts, too.

So what happens when this artist is dropped into the rural landscape of The Burren. This is what happens - landscapes that beautifully encapsulate elements of The Burren but ultimately belong to their own world.

**Laura (Mc Morrow)** has studied both experimental and classic filmmaking and it shows in this film. She was inspired by the mythical concept of the lost acre, an enchanted landscape where time holds no sway, and by erratic rock, a rock carried by glaciers to a terrain in which it does not belong. For me her masterful use of soundtrack really adds to the film's eerie edge. Put on the headphones and just get lost.

**Helena (Gouveia Montero)** is a photographer and filmmaker, originally from Portugal, who is interested in both the techniques of early photography and the possibilities made available by contemporary photographic means. The photographs on this wall are printed in the darkroom using no digital procedures, while the mirroring images at the far end of the room are all made digitally. She shot three rolls of film during her residency, shooting spontaneously, and ultimately choosing the two images that resonated with her most.

Helena is also a publisher, and her not-for-profit artists co-op/publishing company Stereoeditions is also the publisher of this, her own book, alongside 11 other book on artists from various disciplines. This book also features images of The Burren taken while she was here at The Burren College of Art, and is being launched right here tonight in a first-run edition of 50.

While the term 'emerging artists' brings opportunity in terms of wonderful initiatives like this one, it's important that the viewer does not allow the word 'emerging' to unwittingly hypnotise them into somehow missing the **maturity**, the **confidence** and the **boldness** of work as excellent as this, work which *also* boasts the promise of even more to come.

In having had the privilege of talking to Sarah, Ciaran, Laura and Helena and seeing them give talks about their work, I am struck by how four strong individuals, who approach the creative process from completely different perspectives, can create a show which hangs so incredibly well together. And they, as individuals, hang so incredibly well together, too, so well that you can almost imagine all four of them walking on stage as a band, plugging in and creating a sound that reflects their work, intellectual, yet accessible and spellbinding. I see Ciaran on drums, Helena on guitar, Sarah on keyboards and Laura on bass guitar and vocals. So, on the count of four, this exhibition is open. 1-2-3-4. Enjoy the show.

David Donohue,

Burren College of Art Gallery, "Barnacle - Emerging Irish Artist Residency Award" 2018.