

PRESS RELEASE

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‘ALL I SEE IS THE PRESENT’ LAUNCHES AT CCA DERRY~LONDONDERRY, A NEW SOLO SHOW BY ARTIST CHRISTOPHER STEENSON

CCA Derry~Londonderry is pleased to announce its summer exhibition by artist Christopher Steenson will launch over the solstice weekend on Friday 19 June 2026, 7–9pm.

For Christopher Steenson’s solo exhibition *All I see is the present*, the artist combines sound photography, installation and archival material to explore the ways in which moments from prehistory can be used as a gateway to the present. The exhibition is the first manifestation of

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the artist's long-term engagement with research exploring the prehistoric past of the island of Ireland.

A centrepiece of this exhibition is a new installation *The Dragon's Teeth* (2026), which takes its inspiration from the Beaghmore Stone Circles and Alignments, located in the heart of the artist's native home of East Tyrone. The impetus for this work comes from the artist's research into the archaeology archives of HERoNI (Historic Environment Record of Northern Ireland). This research unearthed a moment in 1977 when A.E.P. Collins (Senior Inspector of the Archeological Survey of Northern Ireland) invited Archie Thom (the son of then renowned archeo-astronomer Alexander Thom) to conduct an astronomical survey of Beaghmore, to uncover the celestial functions of the site. This moment is used to construct a fictional conversation between Collins and Thom, wherein these two men, in the later years of their life, attempt to discuss the meaning of Beaghmore as a prehistoric site. Inspired by Brian Friel's *Making History* (1989), the work searches for understandings of why we attempt to interpret the past, and how these interpretations are inevitably shaped and informed by the predicaments of the present.

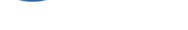
Christopher's interest in teasing apart the tensions between tenses plays out elsewhere in the exhibition with a series of analogue photographs taken while volunteering for the past two years on an ongoing archaeological dig. In these photographs, moments from the excavation resemble a construction site more than a place of study. For the artist, the photographs document the point where objects that have been buried and confined to the past are unearthed and become uncanny participants in the present.

The artist draws parallels between megalith builders and political activists. A film made by Derry filmmaker Vinny Cunningham (1966–2025) in September 1994 shows a group of men moving concrete bollards (sometimes referred to as 'dragon's teeth') from a border road outside Derry. Presented alongside colour photographs of wedge tombs situated along Ireland south-west coast, the acts of dismantlement seen in Vinny's film oddly mirror – what we can imagine to be – the acts of construction used by megalith builders from the island's prehistoric past. The film's sound track is overlaid with a new spatial sound work, titled *The Movers* (2026), featuring voices of people involved in helping to make the exhibition *All I see is the present*.

Suzanne Lyle Head of Visual Arts, Arts Council of Northern Ireland:

"Christopher Steenson's new solo show, All I see is the present, is a great example of ambitious programming, supporting new and emerging artists. This intriguing exhibition allows the artist, via sound, photography, installation and archival material an opportunity to communicate prehistoric and present-day narratives; interrogating and theorising the politics of time and environment."

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"The Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry (CCA) is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through its Annual Funding Programme for Organisations. CCA's work reflects our mission to develop and champion the arts in Northern Ireland through investment and advocacy particularly in the opportunities it creates for the, increasing opportunities for the public to experience innovative, experimental and engaging art. CCA continues to provides an inviting and accessible space for art and creativity in Derry~Londonderry, fostering participation in the cultural life of the city."

All I see is the present is supported by:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Arts Council of Ireland, The Elephant Trust, Northern Ireland Screen Digital Film Archive.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

With a practice that spans sound, lens-based media, text and digital systems, Christopher Steenson's (b.1992, North of Ireland) work bridges historical and speculative narratives to interrogate the politics of time, environment and more-than-human-relations. In approaching these concerns, he seeks to make work through which we can 'listen across tenses'.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *They haven't gone away you know*, mother's tankstation, Dublin (2025); *Breath Variations*, Flat Time House, London (2023); and *Soft Rains Will Come*, VISUAL, Carlow (2022).

Recent group presentations include: *New Contemporaries* at South London Gallery, London and MIMA, Middlesbrough (both 2026); *The Air We Share*, Galway Arts Centre, Galway (2025); *The Sky is Falling!*, Ormston House, Limerick (2024); *mother tongue*, The MAC, Belfast (2024); *inching towards*, Freelands Foundation, London (2024); *Penumbra*, LAVA, Mexico City (2024); and TULCA Festival of Visual Arts: *The World Was All Before Them*, Galway (2022). In 2020, Christopher Steenson presented *On Chorus* a national public sound artwork utilising Ireland's network of train station PA systems. His work is held in the Arts Council of Ireland Collection.

christophersteenson.com

EVENTS

An In Conversation between Artist Christopher Steenson and Historian Dr Brian Lacey moderated by CCA Director Catherine Hemelryk will take place on Saturday 20 June 2026 from 2pm as part of Heritage Month across Derry City & Strabane District.

ENDS

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Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry

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Opening times: Tuesday–Saturday noon–6pm. Free admission

About CCA Derry~Londonderry:

The Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) is a publicly funded space within the historic city walls of Derry~Londonderry. CCA creates opportunities for audiences to experience ambitious, experimental and engaging art and for emerging artists to develop successful careers. CCA fosters a wide range of artistic, curatorial and critical practices through five programme streams: research and production, exhibition-making, public programmes, publishing and residencies.

CCA was a Finalist in the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021, the largest museum prize in the world. CCA was recognised for its resilience and adaptability throughout the pandemic, and their continued effort to support audiences and artists including creating paid opportunities for artists and freelancers when they needed it most.

CCA is a member of Plus Tate: Plus Tate is a network, which comprises 35 cultural institutions – including the Tate galleries – that have strong artistic vision, a focus on contemporary art, outstanding public programming and a commitment to local community engagement through art. Plus Tate aims to support the development of the visual arts across the UK.

Image: Christopher Steenson, *Cnocán an Chuig (break)*, 2026, pigment print on archival photo paper. Image courtesy the artist.

Additional Artwork Credits:

The Dragon's Teeth:

Voice Acting (A.E.P. Collins): Brian Collins

Voice Acting (Archie Thom): Robert Carter

Recording and Sound Design: Pa Lynch (Long Wave Audio)

Installation Fabrication: Nik Taylor

Photograph Printing: Inspirational Arts

Framing: Picture Bloc

Stone Carving: Richard Egan (Egan Engraving)

Metal Fabrication, Stone Collecting: Laura Fitzgerald

Moving Border Bollards (1994) by Vinny Cunningham courtesy of Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive, Northland Broadcast & Tower Museum.

For media enquiries:

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