

PRESS RELEASE

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***STONES FROM A GENTLE PLACE* BY SUSAN HUGHES OPENS AT CCA DERRY~LONDONDERRY**

Artist Susan Hughes opens *Stones from a Gentle Place*, an exhibition of work at CCA Derry~Londonderry. *Stones from a Gentle Place* launches on Saturday 20 January 2024 from 7-9pm and runs until Saturday 16 March 2024.

CCA Derry~Londonderry is delighted to announce *Stones from a Gentle Place*, a solo exhibition with artist Susan Hughes. Susan's practice combines video, audio, sculpture and installation to examine the mechanics and significance of storytelling in Irish culture.

The exhibition follows the artists' encounter with bioluminescence while swimming in the sea at night, and her subsequent observation of how humans throughout history have made sense of natural phenomena, the stories associated with such occurrences, and the physical and cognitive effects on the body.

Susan's research has expanded beyond bioluminescence (microscopic plankton ignited by movement) to fluorescent geology and Will 'o the Wisp (phosphorescence caused by plants decaying in boggy ground). These phenomena are otherworldly, seemingly synthetic in their brilliance, independent combustion and neon colours. Alongside this, Susan has travelled across Ireland, connecting with archivists, storytellers, musicians and mariners, gathering folklore related to this natural phenomena in the landscape.

In the exhibition the artist plays with psychedelic and ambient lights, colours, materials and sounds in otherwise dark rooms. Analog and digital sit aside one another inviting the viewer to submit to a malleability of time, hard fact and fairy tale.

The compass of Susan's traditional fiddle playing has led her to places at the edge of land and sea which have fed the conceptual and visual content of her artistic practice. For the past twenty years, Susan has repeatedly returned to south west Donegal to learn tunes and, more recently, to obsessively search for Áine, a girl from a story who disappeared into a hill in Teelin many years ago. The tiny townland of Teelin has a disproportionately high density of trance-like fiddle music, spectacular natural beauty and seductive supernatural lore and is now a focal location for her research.

Gallery Three is being used as a generative space, bringing aspects of Susan's studio to CCA and presenting a new body of work in progress. Transcripts of interviews, found objects, reference images, posters, books and other research materials are presented in pools of light. The chairs and tables welcome visitors to spend time in the space, and to read and sift through the research materials as well as view early cuts of films and other works by Susan in her examination of folk tales, natural phenomena and south west Donegal.

Stones from a Gentle Place will be accompanied by a programme of public events and schools programme, including *Tunes from a Gentle Place*, a fiddle performance created in response to the supernatural folklore of south west Donegal by Susan, on Saturday 2 March 2023.

ENDS

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 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.

Safety: CCA has a range of safety measures to ensure staff and visitors can enjoy exhibitions with the knowledge that every precaution is taken. This includes hand sanitisers at entrances and exits and heightened cleaning schedules. All who are able to wear a mask are invited to do so and a dedicated isolation room is available in the event of the onset of symptoms.

About the Artist:

[Susan Hughes](#) is from Belfast and is based between the North and South of Ireland.

She graduated with a distinction in her MFA in 2021 from the University of Ulster. She is a current participant of the Freelands Foundation Artists' Programme and is a studio holder at Orchid Studios, Belfast.

She has completed many artist residencies in Ireland and Scandinavia where she has used her fiddle playing as a bartering tool to gain access to local stories. She has been awarded the Centre Culturel Irlandais residency (2023) where she will explore her project looking at the people who travelled from Ireland to France to construct Eurodisney in the 1990s.

Image: Susan Hughes, photo of fluorescent rock from the Natural History Museum of Ireland Archive, Swords, County Dublin (2023). Courtesy of the artist.

For media enquiries:

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CCA Derry~Londonderry is supported by:



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