

**Through the cracks, do  
we upgrade or grow?**





Artist: Steven Maybury

Project title: Through the cracks, do we upgrade or grow?

Work/ medium: Photography print, sculpture/ installation and fold out poster print.

**This research has been generously supported by The Goethe Institut Netherlands, Fingal Art County Council, Dublin and RIB in Rotterdam**



# Through the cracks, do we upgrade or grow?

New fiber optic cables are being currently laid throughout the Netherlands. The Netherlands is preparing to upgrade to the next generation of information sharing, digital media, data loads and ultimately energy consumption. This temporarily visible infrastructure is one of the only signs of this upgrade on a material level to be seen.

The project I am sharing is the outcome of research made in The Goethe Institute Netherlands. While undertaking the investigative residency series in 2023, I honed in on the relationship light has with recorded memory today. Considering how memory is recorded with digital instruments, my attention focuses in on image and photography culture looking at its own material and ephemeral relations. Using a contemporary digital landscape, this work looks at how our memories are made, stored and move further and faster in the context of digital photography and at the new speeds it operates in contrasting what this really looks like.

The foundation of the information era is light and one of the most secure and sophisticated means of transporting this is through underground fiberoptic cables using laser light. The digital world largely uses invisible structures such as different frequencies on the invisible spectrum of light (electromagnetic energy) or infrastructures made to be invisible. A symptom of information communications technology (ICT) infrastructure is that when it becomes successful it disappears only to be reminded of it when it fails. Successful infrastructure becomes invisible. This can be seen in GPS satellites, cloud networks, underwater cables etc, and light is the ephemeral web that links all of this together.

This work is an attempt to reimagining and repositioning relations to these fast paced infrastructures as they remain hidden. This work is inspired by plants, root structures, nature relations and light harvested as a natural resource. Invisible light is foundational in making plants and trees grow, the lungs of our planet. Now that we seemingly have mastered the engineering of light as a species, can we still call our progress growth? Is upgrading the same as growing?

The work exhibited in the *Passage* of the Goethe Institute building uses sculptures and photography to highlight this rare moment of visibility and our relations to it as an important acknowledgment of the kinds of systems that are now integrated into our lives, reframing their position and expectations. This infrastructure can be thought of as the roots of our digital selves, our economies and our surveillances and much like how we handle a a living plant, we must do it with care. The project *Through the cracks, do we upgrade or grow?* Surfaces an attention by looking between the cracks of our buildings and in our pavements and asks questions of what do mediums such as photography today look like and what the infrastructure of digital memory and our information era feels like and what kind of growing is upgrading in todays digital societies?

## Installation in Goethes Passage, Goethe Institute Rotterdam

- Fiber optic cables and modelling clay
- C-Type print
- 2023

### **Proposed 2025 work for Machine Entanglements.**

An installation of my fiberoptic sculptures situated around all ready laid infrastructure, such as cables, water, internet etc. as seen in the Goethes Passage. One C-type print and a new fold out poster collage print to be created and given away.

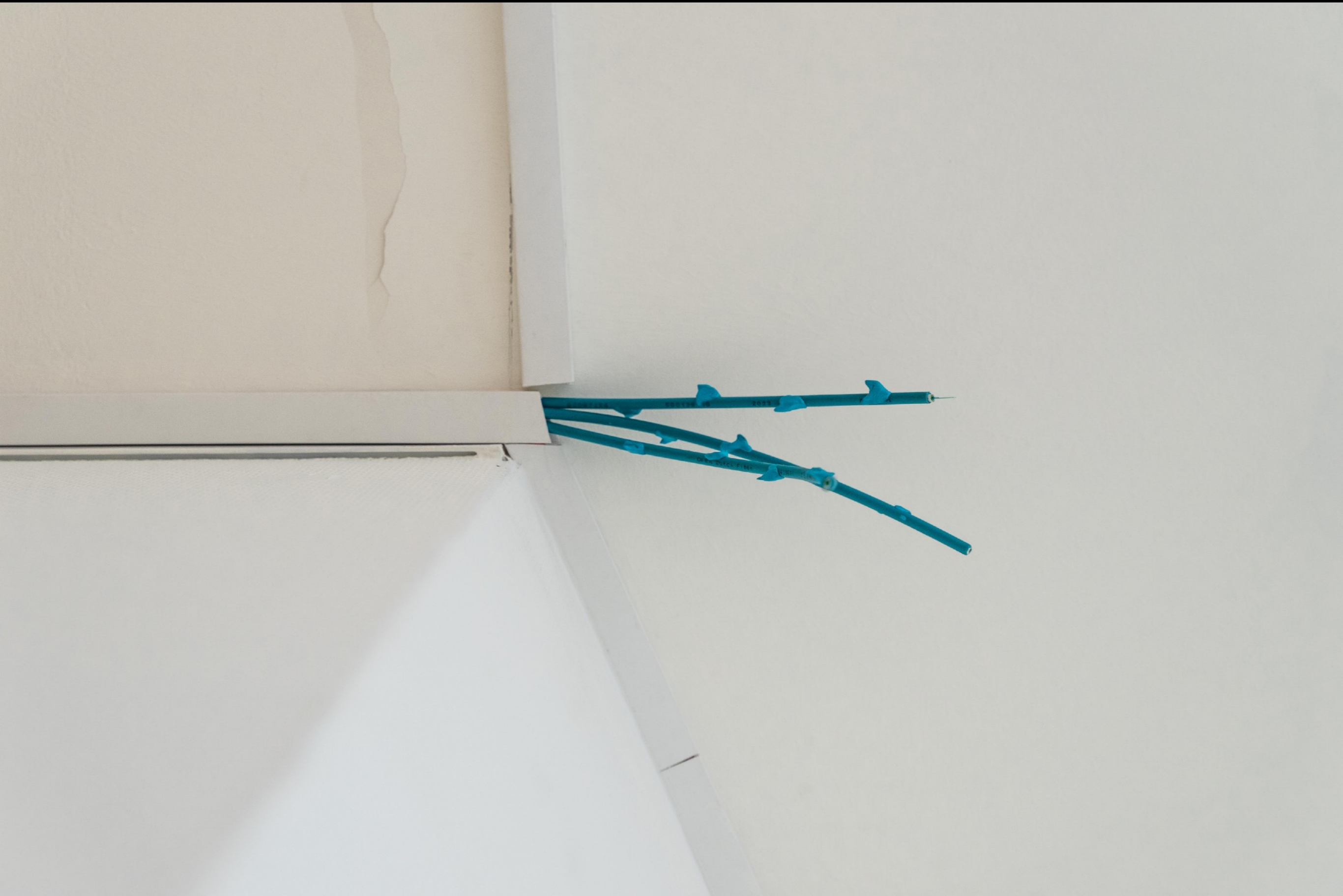


- C-Type print
- 21.5 x 29.7 cm
- 2023





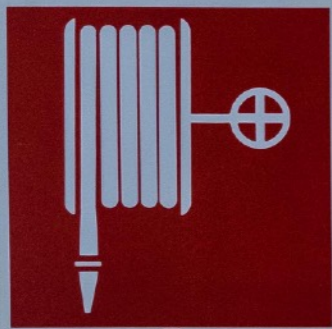






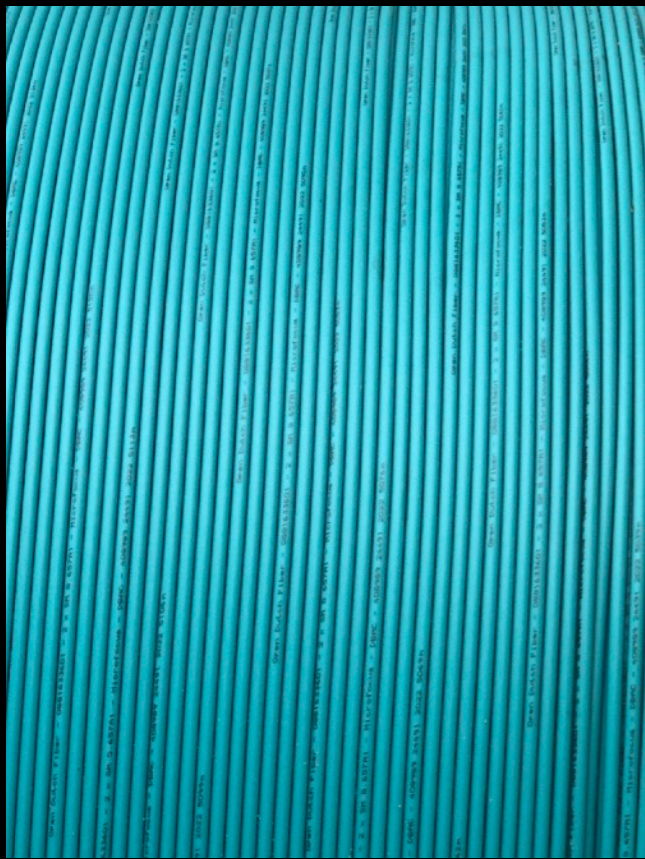






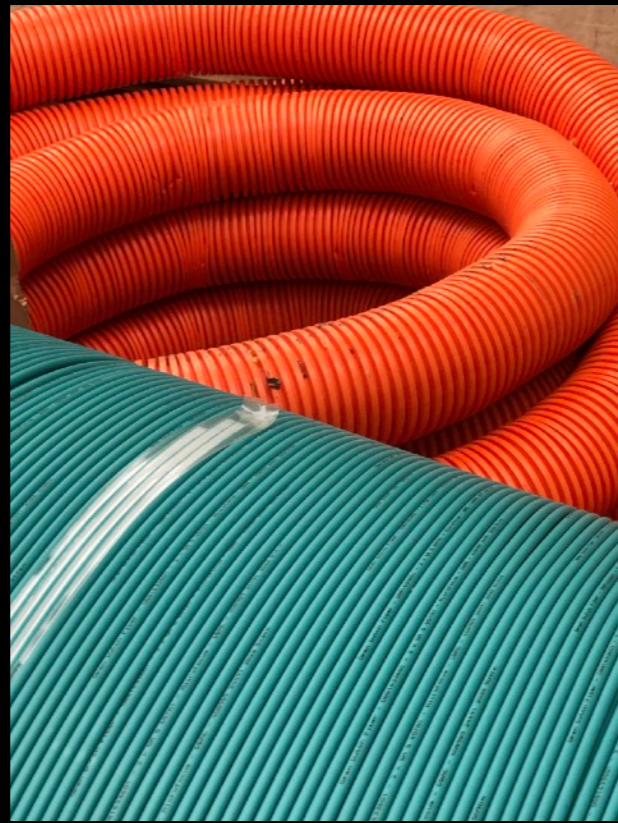
**Examples of collected image research of fibre optic cables found while walking. These images will be apart of the next installation In the form of a collaged print poster to be given away and distributed.**

**(Roughly a collection of 300 images to be selected from)**













## Educational roles:

Current -

Part Time photography tutor in The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) Dublin

Teaching the following departments and across BA and MA years (2018/2025);

-Product design

-Interactive design + MA interactive design

## Part time teaching

- Dublin Photography School - FETAC accredited

- De Rooij Photography School, Rotterdam

## Previous positions

- Head of teaching Dublin Photography School (2010-2019)

- Visiting lecture - New Media college MA program (2016)

- The Library Project, Photobook Library Coordinator, Dublin (2012-2016)

- Camera specialist and educator for companies, photographers and schools

# CV

## Education

2008-10 BA Fine Art, Sligo IT (Transferred to DIT)  
2010 -12 BA Fine Art, Dublin Institute of Technology (1st class honors)  
2019-2021 Piet Zwart Masters Institute, Rotterdam (Merit)

# CV

## 2024

- Featured in the documentary, RASL, re-imagining tomorrow today, (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Laboratory,) WDKA, Code Arts, Erasmus University
- Invited to contribute and attend - RASL Summer Studio. (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Laboratory,) WDKA, Code Arts, Erasmus University
- [Anonyme Zeichner](#), Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin, curated by Anke Becker

## 2022/ 23:

- Interstellar Introspection, Invited artist - Oude Sterrewacht (Old Observatory Leiden), Nacht van Ontdekkingen
- Through The Cracks Do They Upgrade or Grow, solo presentation in Goethes "Passage" Rotterdam
- What Happens When The Lights Go Out, public events in RIB Gallery with Padraic E Moore, Bart Lunenburg, Junghun Kim, Samboleap Tol
- The Energy Show, Solar Ideas, Het Nieuwe Institute, Rotterdam. (September 2022 to March 2023)
- 'You breathe differently down here': Curated by Amanda Coogan, [Draíocht](#), Dublin. (March-April)
- Graduate award prize winner, You Breath Differently Down Here, curated by Amanda Coogan, Draíocht Arts
- RASL Summer Studio. (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Laboratory,) WDKA, Code Arts, Erasmus University
- With Other Matter: Curated by Naomi Draper, [Roscommon Arts Centre](#), (July)
- [Anonyme Zeichner](#), Galerie im Körnerpark, Berlin (June – August)
- [Wild Summer of Art exhibition](#), invited artist (Curators Liesbeth Bik, Jessy Koeiman & Piet de Jonge), Brutus, Rotterdam (July-Sept)
- Piet Zwart Institute Radio performance, Open studios, Rotterdam (audio work)
- Fingal County Council Arts Bursary Award recipient 2022 and 2023

## 2020/ 21:

- Don't Let The Bastards Grind You Down, solo presentation in the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam
- Material Context – MFA graduation project, curated by MAMA Rotterdam, Het Archief
- Lemon Fresh, solo exhibition in the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam
- When Fools Rush In and Connect with the stars, solo exhibition Growing Space Rotterdam
- When Fools Rush In and Connect with the stars, short Film featured in WORM
- Lock, commissioned sculpture and permanent installation in LIFE Rotterdam
- Through the Looking glass – Garage Rotterdam
- CBK Rotterdam, public art works selected artist. Exhibition and publication
- PZI – Open day Radio Performance, Rotterdam
- Hectobar (KUNSTAVOND XL) – TENT, Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art,
- Rotterdam Unlocked/ Reconnected, invited artist by -Garage Gallery, a Dutch cultural institution initiative
- Fingal Artist Bursary award 2020 and 2021

## 2019:

- Draw Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery London. The Drawing Works featured artist.
- The Made in China Project, curated by Viktor Bernik, Slovenia
- Car Boot Art Fair, Russborough House with curators Prendergast and Moor
- Fingal Artist Bursary award

## 2018:

Hermione Exhibition, in Alexandra collage, curated by Aisling Prior  
188<sup>th</sup> RHA annual exhibition  
Fire Station Studios self lead implemented residency  
Art Market Budapest with the Mart Gallery, Budapest, Hungry  
Glasgow School of Art artist presentation in Aberdeen, Scotland  
Cill Rialaig Residency Retreat, Balinskelligs, Co Kerry - Invited  
Imilil, Atlas Mountains retreat Morocco. Self lead residency/ research.  
Destroy These Walls: Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica Studios Los Angeles USA -July

## 2017

- A Rhythm Exposed -Mart Gallery (Solo Show)-May/June
- Destroy These Walls: Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica Studios Los Angeles USA
- July The Drawing Works: Patriot Gallery Edinburgh, Edinburgh Arts Festival, Scotland- August
- May-August Salon show: Eight Gallery, Dublin
- RHA Studio Residency July – August – Invited.

## 2016

- Dukkha - Platform Arts Belfast, (solo show) and Anicca - The Library Project, (solo show)
- The Mundi Project', commissioned by Luciano Benetton - publication
- Ormond Studios, 12x16, (group show)
- RHA Annual, 186th exhibition (group show)
- The Drawing Works, Camden Image Gallery, London (group show) Pallas Project 20th Anniversary Auction (art auction)
- Halftone Print Fair, The Library Project
- VUE contemporary art fair, RHA with the Eight Gallery.

## 2015

- Re-Ignite: Custom House Gallery, Westport, Co Mayo, curated by Moran Been Noon
- RHA annual 185th exhibition (invited artist)
- London/Irish Art Fair, Westminster Hall, London
- 'Glitch' art fair, Rua Red, Dublin (commissioned artist)
- Foundation 15, Tullamore, Kilkenny, Ireland
- 'On Beauty', Roscommon Arts Centre, Roscommon, Ireland (curated by Linda Shevlin, invited artist)

## 2014

- Three solo exhibitions mapping out a city -  
Jigsaws, Combs and Rulers', Eight Gallery, Dublin (solo show) 'Groove Chronicles', Market Studios, Dublin (solo show) 'Radical Line', Pallas Projects, Dublin (solo show)
- The Drawing Suite, European drawing blog(invited artist)
- 'Selection Box' – Talbot Gallery, Dublin
- Tulca Festival Galway, curated by Aisling Prior (invited artist) VUE contemporary art fair, RHA, Dublin
- 'Little Kingdoms' members show, Block T, Catalyst Arts, Dublin

## 2013

- 'Synthesis I', Eight Gallery, Dublin (with Claire McCluskey) 'Synthesis II', Tactic Gallery, Cork, Ireland (with Claire McCluskey)
- Dublin VUE contemporary art fair, RHA, Dublin
- 'We accept you one of us', Market Studios, Dublin
- '40/40/40', OPW EU Presidency touring show, Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin and venues in Spain, Italy, Poland and Scotland
- 'Con.glom.er.ate', Catalyst Arts, Belfast
- 'Abroad', ESC ZinePhotoIrelandprogramme, Eight Gallery, Dublin
- 'One Year, One Day', Most Promising Graduate Award exhibition, Talbot Gallery,
- 'Come as You Go', Crate Studios and Project Space, Margate, Kent

## Residencies and awards

- 2024 RASL Summer Studio. (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Laboratory,) WDKA, Code Arts, Erasmus University
- 2023 Goethe Institute Netherlands, Instruments of Memory, Investigating series residency, 3 months
- 2023 RIB Summery Residency, Rotterdam. 3 months
- 2022 RASL Summer Studio. (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Laboratory,) WDKA, Code Arts, Erasmus University
- 2022 You breathe differently down here': Curated by Amanda Coogan, [Draíocht](#), Dublin. (March-April)
- 2018 CillRialig residency award
- 2017 -Fingal Co Council artist studio award (RHA)
- 2014 -RHA studio six months residency award, Dublin
- 2012 Short-listed for the Most Promising Graduate Award, Talbot Gallery, Dublin
- 2012 CillRialig Art Project, Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry, Ireland
- 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 Fingal Co Council artist bursary award

## Collections

- Office of Public Works (OPW) state art collection , BIC Pen France,
- Private collections: Ireland, England, Switzerland, Spain, USA, Canada, Austria