affairs, but as something that has the capacity to affect and to be affected'. Bodies and weather are, after all, already innately entangled; and always imprinting on one another. I am reminded of the screen-printed slogan on my tote bag, 'Invitation to observe birds', made by a friend's six-year-old daughter in the days after Vladimir Putin's invasion of her home country. A child's innocent note of the movement of birds in our communal garden takes on a powerful political message: that of localised positionality, appreciating the beauties in daily life, and the power of tuning into what is directly in front of us as a way to navigate the otherwise incomprehensible complexity of that lies beyond our vicinity.

If weather is the embodiment of complex entanglements, to practise 'weather observation' can perhaps bridge the imagination of perceived distances: between the body and the weather; between what is known and what is perceived; between now and the future. As the world teeters at the edge of turmoil, can this intimate and embodied observation offer a way forward for our planetary futures?

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'Parklife', installation view

Parklife: Biodiversity in Contemporary Irish Art

Glucksman Gallery, Cork, 8 April to 10 July

As we enter the sixth mass extinction of species, including possibly our own, it is no longer tenable to simply celebrate global biodiversity. We have to learn, to paraphrase EB White, to both savour and save the world. As poet Sean Borodale put it in his lockdown collection *Inmates*, which forensically details the 'harried existence' of insects around him: 'I think *this is it.* / Our babies will be buried ... live colourless ... / With the defect of the future / that will sometimes be furious.' You only have to read Jared Diamond's *The Last Tree on Easter Island* for insight into how a society can annihilate itself by using up all its resources. Palynology, the study of pollens, proves that Easter Island, now barren and birdless, was once covered in giant wine palms and the richest seabird breeding ground in the whole Pacific.

If land is designated as 'terra nullius' or 'unproductive wilderness', it's ripe for development and extraction. Michael Cronin, in *Irish and Ecology*, argues that the partial loss of Ireland's indigenous language helped to enable 'ecological dispossession'. 'The detailed and loving description of place becomes inescapably ethical', he writes, saving the land and its people from what he dubs 'the monocultures of extinction'. In 2019, Ireland had the third highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in the EU (after, not the UK, but Estonia and Luxembourg) and Cronin suggests that with language loss goes loss of folklore, eradicating vital knowledge of irrigation, crop cultivation and medicine, which all nurture a sustainable lifestyle. He cites the Seri people of Mexico whose language pointed to eelgrass as a source of protein. How can art generate and participate in processes of sustainability? How does it help us to absorb the fact that 'the environment' is not something outside us, but constitutes who we are: the greater the biodiversity, the greater our chance of survival.

There is inevitably an aura of elegy in any show exploring biodiversity. In Sean Hanrahan's exquisite photographic series 'Q', 2021–22, the fragility of poppy petals is undercut by the strong lines chasing light has made of their stems. A ragged, pale cornflower seems to float in dark water like a jellyfish. A shot of two peony heads – clumps of pink ruffle against black – does suggest decapitation as an augur. But is it enough? The thinking seems too linear for the mess we're in, just as Amber Broughton's virtuoso coloured pencil drawings of creatures, seen nearby, present a timid archive rather than a warning. What if the colour was programmed to fade or the paper were to disintegrate over the course of the exhibition? I'm not sure that cataloguing the Eurasian Otter, the Banded Demoiselle and Daubenton's Bat suggest that they are going ... going ... gone. Maria Sledmere, co-editor of *the weird folds: everyday poems from the Anthropocene*, argues that 'abundance means living in the anthropocenic time of retroactive futurity: looking back at today from tomorrow. It demands a responsive, planetary imaginary at the level of daily life, work and accordant acts of care.'

Kari Cahill certainly dug out new means to short-circuit that domineering false split between nature and us. Her abstract drawings encourage a mix of handmade pigments, such as Benbulben pigment, made of lichen, limestone, urchin, limpet and bark to interact with scorched seaweed on Japanese Yupo paper (synthetic, smooth, tear-resistant, waterproof, UV lightfast, tree-free, acid-free and 100% recyclable – what's not to like?). The results evoke the movement, spooring and degrading of microorganisms like bacteria that stain, silt and grit the paper. In *Entrusted Things*, 2020, an island shape emerges (or sinks?) from a field of gold, wet dust. Bubbly cream and soft moth brown tell of decay. Others like *Biting into Our For'*, 2020, offer the scars, scabs and dots of the moon, or the black and white enclosure of an ultrasound. This life here is still living, evolving and will persist when our cells are overthrown.

Meadhbh O'Connor's work also stands out. Her 'Biosystems' , 2010–, seem inspired by the 'parcels of pollen' that the artist describes in a poem as 'tiny orbs of life-giving potential'. Made of moss, and air- and soil-thriving plants, six spheres constellate above us. Leafy stalks protrude energetically and air plants' tendrils resist gravity like a waxed moustache, making these expressive, tightly profuse little earths seem both funny and profound. Our transient life is reliant on the oxygen, water and earth creating these mini planets. Their hum reaches way beyond any theory that could threaten to tie them down.

Peter Nash's series 'I Always Thought We'd Have More Time', 2022, is a surprise. What looks like cute, even cartoonish pencil drawings of wildlife ended up pulling this viewer in to read the small, deadpan text: a bird holding a grub in its beak comes with 'letting the market decide'; while an image of several wasps at various stages of hatching from pupae has the words 'we can't fix this for you' scattered around it. The quiet humour is deadly. It is almost embarrassing to be human.

Gabhann Dunne's painting series 'Burren Pines', 2021–22, focuses on the *pinus sylvestris*, the Scot's Pine, that died out in Ireland 1,500 years ago. One of three native conifers, it was later reintroduced from Scotland. The smaller paintings are best at capturing the vital effect of Dunne's swiping brushstrokes and crusty impasto. The artist uses pink, indigo and turquoise to push against the tree's muted green and the tree pushes back. There is an animated and often lush tussle between figuration and abstraction, with some pines looking as though they are caught up in a hurricane, blasted but holding fast, and others resembling dancers whose loose costumes all blow in the same direction. Most are groundless, their branches scribbled signatures that wrestle with the semantics of trees in the Irish landscape tradition. Imagine there are no more trees. These paintings could reconstitute them and leave us in renewed wonder. I'm left thinking of Caleb Femi's poem 'The Six': 'The earth, unbroken horse, / wants us off her back.'

Cherry Smyth is a poet and writer.

Radical Landscapes

Tate Liverpool, 5 May to 4 September

So entrenched in British culture is the word and our imagined relationship to it that when we hear 'landscape' it can't help but evoke a particular type of scene. Predominantly green, there will be trees, maybe a farmer's field and a little brook or other body of water, bubbling along innocuously, the epitome of a green and pleasant land. This is the very thing we encounter early on in 'Radical Landscapes' at Tate Liverpool. It comes in the form of John Constable's *Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River')*, 1816–17. Its inclusion is something of a red herring.

Painted at a time when such rustic nostalgia came to prominence and flourished in the wake of industrialisation, today it serves to represent how things – we, society, expectations – have changed. This exhibition is nothing if not aptly named. It wastes little time in presenting the case that no longer is it enough to naively think of the land as we encounter it as entirely benign, or to present it as such. A key question the show engages with from the off is who has access to this land. Who gets to tread, without fear of prosecution or micro-aggressions, our common land?

Thalia Campbell, *Greenham Common Peace Camp*, 1982

An astutely selected clip from John Berger's seminal 1972 TV series *Ways of Seeing* critiques Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, c1750 – a couple posed amid their rural idyl – thus: 'they have become, not a couple in nature ... theirs is private land ... without a doubt, amongst the principle pleasures this painting gave to Mr and Mrs Andrews was the pleasure of seeing themselves as the owners of their own land, and this pleasure was enhanced by the ability of oil paint to render this land in all its substantiality.' Berger goes on to mention that 'if a man stole a potato at that time, he risked a public whipping; the sentence for poaching was deportation.' Difficult, when contextualised in this way, not to read this as landed gentry rubbing our noses in it.

And at times this does seem like an angry show. Here we see Hurvin Anderson's *Double Grille*, 2008, verdant nature out of reach behind the protective/exclusionary wrought-iron screen of the title. Elsewhere there is a vitrine of ephemera including works on paper and books under the banner of The Festival of Britain, held in 1951 to engender national pride and recovery in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today, its inclusion can be read as a pointed riposte to Brexit and the white elephant of Unboxed (the rebranded Festival of Brexit, which kicked off to no great fanfare in March), and the little Englander attitudes that led us here.

'Radical Landscapes' represents a controlled anger, though – one wielded judiciously. This allows for some smart curatorial choices and juxtapositions. In a section titled Militarised Landscapes, we find Henry Moore's *Atom Piece (Working Model for Nuclear Energy)*, 1964–65, a large sculpture that looks like the warped remains of the head of a gigantic metal god in the aftermath of a nuclear strike. Beyond the sculpture, your eyes land on a pair of lithographs, posters for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, one of which features a human skull and mushroom cloud – a chilling twin to *Atom Piece*. (It is worth noting that, when the CND was launched in 1958, Moore had been among its founder members.) Nearby, our friend Constable crops up again as his 1821 painting

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