



***THIS PLACE
WHERE I STAND***

Amy-Leigh Bird Shaun Fraser Simon Kidd

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AMY-LEIGH BIRD

SHAUN FRASER

SIMON KIDD

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Cover:

Shaun Fraser, **Cold Ground/Oiled Silk I** (2020), Liquid Bitumen & Soil on Board, 44 x 34 cm

Amy-Leigh Bird

Shaun Fraser

Simon Kidd

THIS PLACE WHERE I STAND

No 20 Arts is delighted to present THIS PLACE WHERE I STAND, an exhibition which brings together the work of Amy-Leigh Bird, Shaun Fraser, and Simon Kidd. From the shores of the Thames in London, to the Scottish Highlands and Islands, to Northern Ireland, each artist showcased in this exhibition places themes of identity and elemental links to site at the centre of their work.

Featuring sculptures, paintings, film, and works on paper, the exhibition is accompanied by an immersive soundscape designed in response to the artwork of each artist. Created by LOWT, the soundscape provides a cleansing sensory experience which to discover the artworks of the three artists.

Next page:
Simon Kidd, **Fissure no. 3** (2019), Edition of 5, Slip cast porcelain, 53 x 14 x 25 cm





In a new, specially commissioned short essay, Roddy Murray, Head of Visual Arts & Literature at An Lanntair writes:

The title of this exhibition evokes the *Dig Where You Stand* movement which began in Sweden in the 1970s. Politically, it had a leftist agenda but the principle became a byword and a *modus operandi* for local history projects: to research the past, to find out *who* you are, explore *where* you are. Look down as much as look around.

To paraphrase Joan Miro, “the more local it is, the more universal it becomes”.

A further guiding, unifying concept for the show is the *palimpsest*: a manuscript scraped of its original text and overwritten, perhaps many times. It’s a compelling metaphor for landscapes, which are at the same time, geographical and historical. The skin of the earth, tattooed, scarred, accreted. Storyboarded by agriculture, industry and homesteading. A human narrative in three dimensions.

The metaphor extends beneath the skin to flesh and bone. From the surface debris and litter of the recent past – the Anthropocene’s rush-to-midnight – back and down through ploughing, peat-cutting, quarrying and mining, to a human-free, geological, incomprehensibly Deep Time. The formation of the earth.

It unites three artists engaged with different strata of time and landscape. From geographic cardinal points - England, Scotland, Ireland - urban and rural, these artists have their own process, their own territory, their own maps and motives, simultaneously scratching, digging and collecting, building and re-creating. The place they stand is also a point of view.

Amy-Leigh Bird retraces her childhood steps. Trawls, sifts and mud-larks the Thames shoreline for the river's strewn cargo: its drowned residue, its human detritus. From buttons to bones. It's a kind of resurrection. A means to reclaim a sense of the personal, the timeless individual, as much as the lost city and the churn of life. Her pristine prints recall the desert's bonescape. Beyond the bone is the DNA.



Amy-Leigh Bird, **Topophilia #2** (2019), Edition of 20, Photopolymer Etching, Zerkall paper, 45 x 55 cm



Amy-Leigh Bird, **Ancient Ruins** (2020), Bone, Polystyrene, 35 x 35 cm



Shaun Fraser's footprint is in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, still ringing with the clamour of the last battle on British soil, still wrangling with the cultural aftermath. His oeuvre is peat, moorland, the blanket bog. A cultural sink that contains and conceals - dissolved and preserved - the history of these desolate, cleared spaces. His work in oil, tar and bitumen reimagines and recreates this temporal, empty yet alive landscape, recreated from its own essence. Its textures, its sullen, relentless, primeval chemistry.

Shaun Fraser, **Shifting** (2020), Ink on Panel, 22 x 16 cm

Next page:
Shaun Fraser, Detail of **Sunken Bog II** (2020), Liquid Bitumen, Oil & Soil on Board, 24.5 x 40 cm





In Northern Ireland, **Simon Kidd**'s ceramics are a meditation through petrification on the obstinate, petrified past. On degrees of permanence, from the basalt and granite of Sliabh Dónairt and Murlach to the bog of Dregish he references the dug and quarried past. The chipping and scarring of hammer and chisel on rock, the slice of the peat-iron. Stark and delicate, his porcelain pieces testify to memory, to negative space, absence, removal. Like a script etched into stone.

These new works and objects are born of a past that precedes, recedes and survives us. Washed up, buried, recovered, preserved. They re-present the recent and the ancient in a new context. The place on which we all stand.

Roddy Murray
Head of Visual Arts & Literature
An Lanntair

Previous page:
Simon Kidd, **Fissure no. 3**, Slip cast porcelain, 53 x 14 x 25 cm





ABOUT THE ARTISTS

AMY-LEIGH BIRD

Amy-Leigh Bird graduated from the Painting & Printmaking BA Hons at The Glasgow School of Art in 2017 and in 2019 graduated from her MA in Creative Entrepreneurship with a distinction at The University of East Anglia. Whilst studying Amy-Leigh lived and studied in Jerusalem, Israel at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and has taken part in several group and solo exhibitions including her first solo show at The Anise Gallery, Shad Thames, The Other Art Fair London and at The West End Centre. After her graduation she was selected for Aon's 'Community Artist Award 2017' and awarded the 'Artist in Italy Residency 2018' where she spent ten days walking in the Tuscan landscape collecting inspirational material for her work.

Since graduating, the award-winning artist has exhibited alongside Christian Boltanski at the Apple and the Lust Gallery in Edinburgh, at The Edinburgh Art Fair and at An Lanntair in Stornoway, after taking part in a two-week sailing residency with Sail Britain. This year she focuses on developing her research on the bones found on the Thames foreshore. She is currently living and working in London, developing her research on the psychology of collecting and the emotional significance of objects and place.



Amy Leigh-Bird takes interest in the detritus on the shores of rivers, seas, and lakes, which are regularly ignored by fellow mudlarkers and beach scavengers alike. She strongly believes that the only way for people to dispose the waste in today's world is by investing more value in the materials that we consider as waste. Through art, we can reveal new perspectives by elevating these materials beyond images of neglect.

Previous page:
Amy-Leigh Bird working at her studio in London (2020)

Amy-Leigh Bird, **Re-Submerged** (2020), Edition of 5, Screenprint, Canaletto Paper, 70 x 50 cm



SHAUN FRASER

Having been awarded a Residency at An Sùileachan on the Isle of Lewis in 2016, Shaun's artistic development has drawn on his identity, notions of belonging and connection to his homeland. He has completed further artist residencies in Nova Scotia, the Irish Gaeltacht and sub-arctic northern Iceland.

Shaun graduated from the Bachelor (Hons) programme in Glass at the Edinburgh College of Arts in 2012, and completed a Master's degree at the Royal College of Arts in 2017. He has received awards for sculpture in his native Scotland and his work has been exhibited internationally.



Shaun Fraser, **Untitled I (Landscape)** (2019), Ink & Soil on Paper, 44 x 30 cm

Shaun Fraser, **Untitled II (Landscape)** (2019), Ink & Soil on Paper, 44 x 30 cm



Shaun's work frequently comments upon notions of identity, links to landscape and connections with place. The Scottish Highland landscape in which the artist was brought up is a constant source of inspiration for him. Landscape has always featured heavily as a part of his notion of self. There's a certain sense of fidelity which Shaun attaches to this topography which is elemental.

His work is representative of this, yet sometimes not directly so. The artist's practice questions how the landscapes, spaces and places which we inhabit form us and can be translated through personal engagement, privileging one's own memory as a principal source. Through this Shaun acknowledges that memories of landscape, recalled with clarity when first encountered, can over time shift to become completely obtuse and non-linear, they become part-remembered-part-imagined places. In particular, much of the most recent work has been evidence of him attempting to recall through visual means a fleeting sense of a specific place and time.

SIMON KIDD

Simon Kidd graduated from Central Saint Martins in London in 2018 where he studied Ceramic Design. During his studies he began making work which responds to different locations in Ireland. Now working from his studio in South London, this body of work has continued to be his focus.

Simon's work now explores three locations in Ireland; Sliabh Dónairt, Dregish and Murlach. The pieces which make up these three projects use these physical locations as catalysts for reflection, allowing his objects to become physical manifestations of thoughts, feelings, and ideas the country evokes.

The places Simon explores are chosen not only for their physical presence and beauty, but also for their cultural, political, and symbolic importance.



