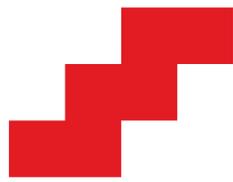


Marlborough Contemporary

Laurence Kavanagh — 'May'

Laurence
Kavanagh
'May'

Marlborough Contemporary London 2014



**Laurence
Kavanagh
'May'**

**Marlborough
Contemporary**







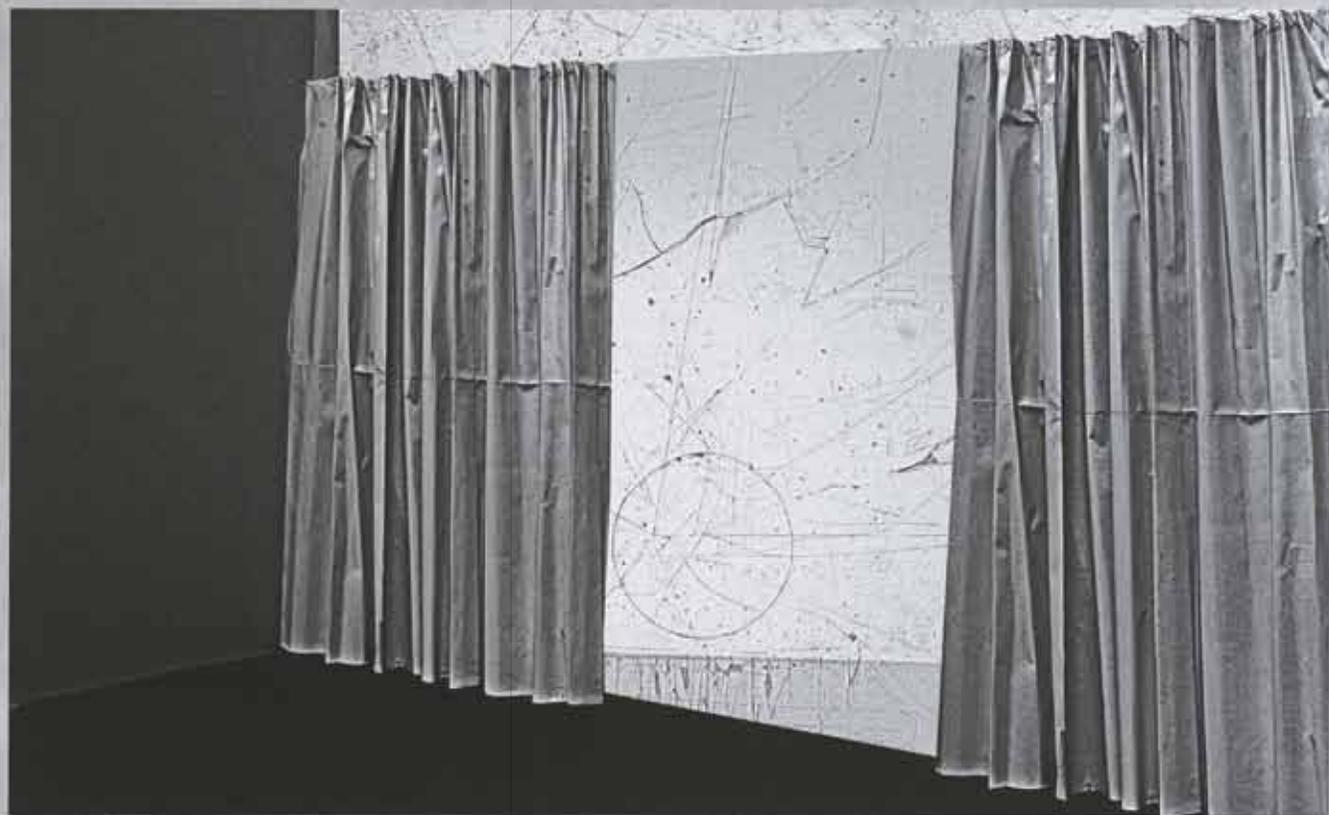
May (Mirror)

2013

Giclée print, bible paper,
graphite, household gloss
paint, card

60 × 80 cm





Previous page
May (Segue)
2014

Paper, graphite,
giclée print
134 × 222 cm

This page
May
(Drinking Glass. Fire)
2013

Paper, graphite,
household gloss paint,
giclée print
26.6 × 53 cm

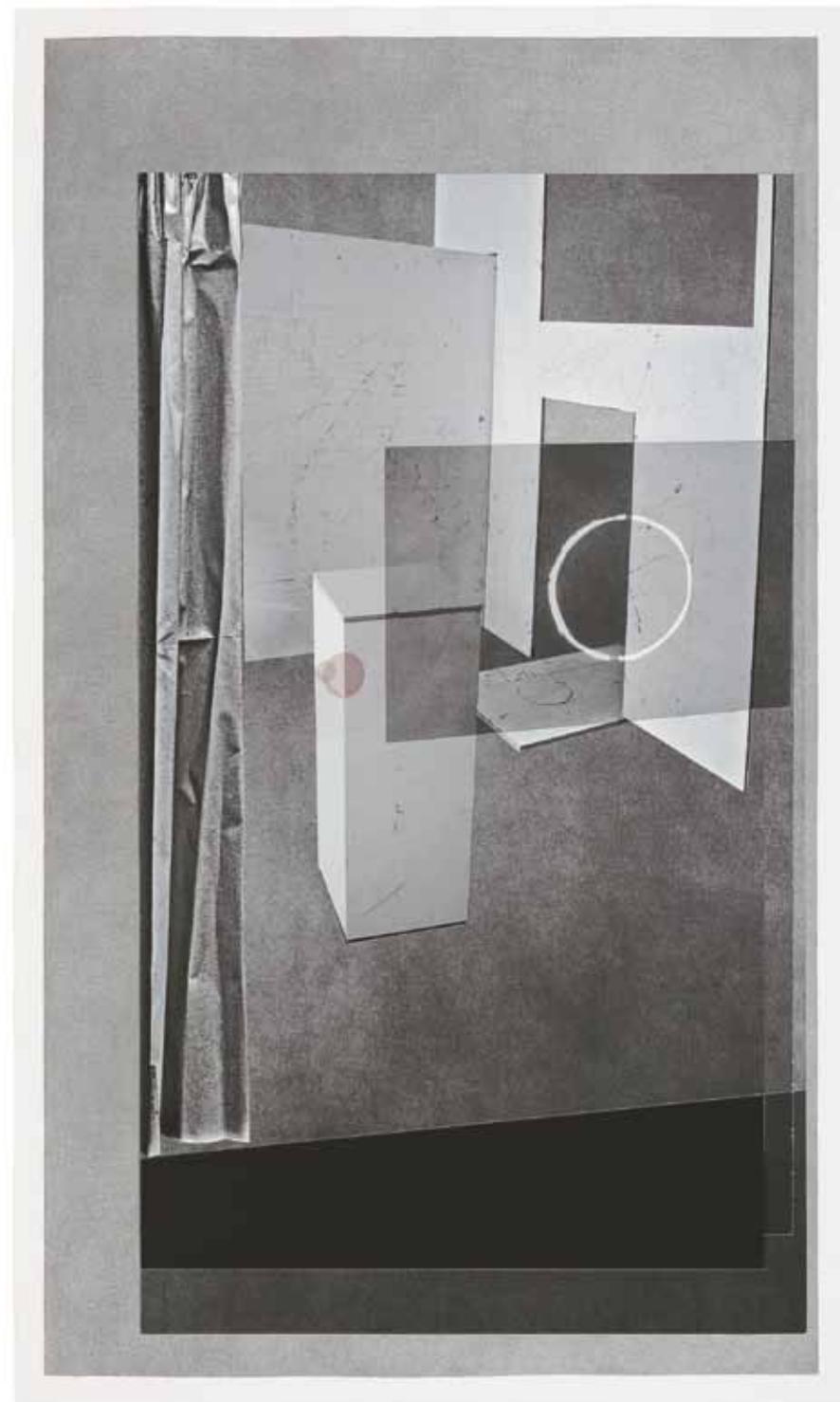


May (Impossibly Now)

2013

Paper, graphite,
giclée print

190 × 122 cm



This page
May (Morel)

2014

Graphite, resin, giclée
print, household gloss paint
90 × 45 × 72 cm

Following page

May (Morel) (Detail)





This page

May (Calendar)

2013

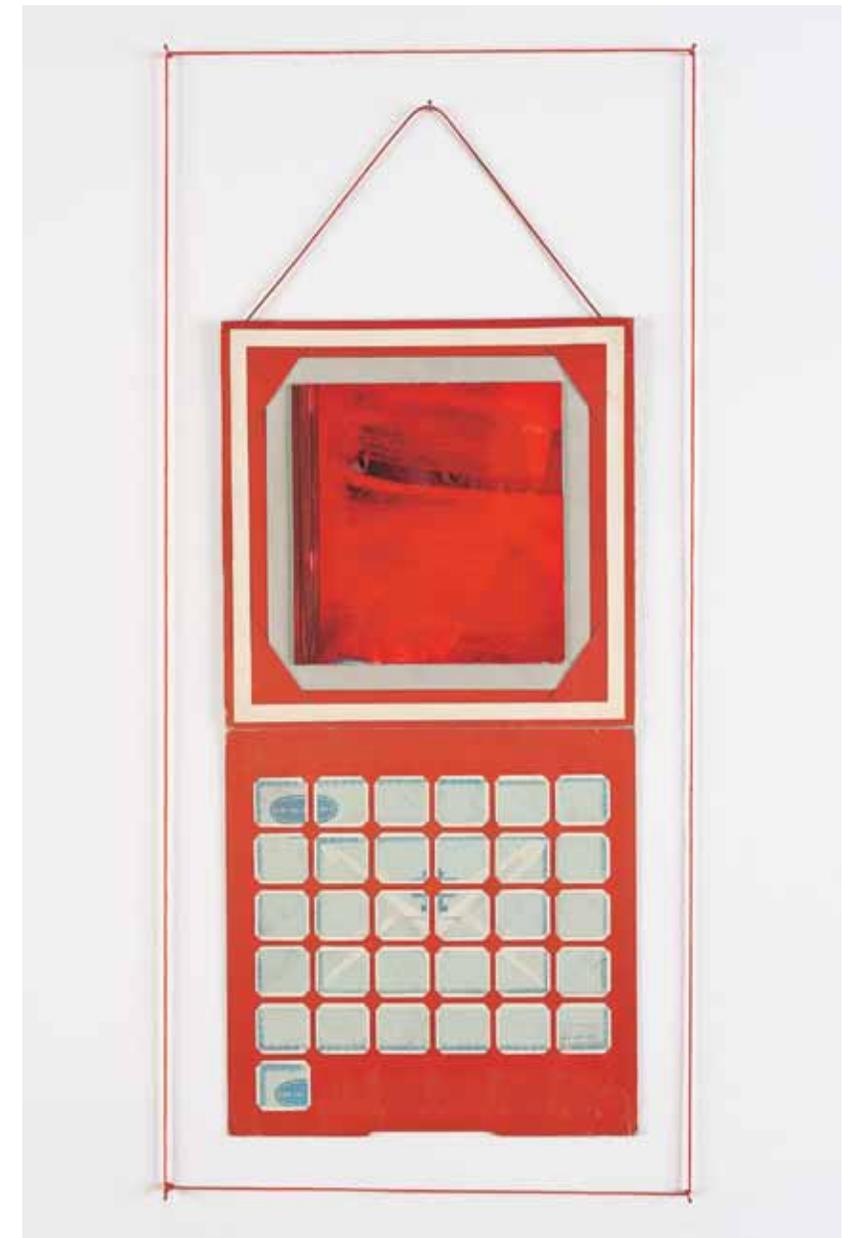
Airmail envelope,
LP cover, string, pins,
household gloss paint
85 × 40 cm

Following page

May (A...)

2014

Paper, graphite,
lithographic plate, resin,
giclée print, card,
household gloss paint
84 × 221 × 202 cm







Previous page
April (Segue)

2014

Paper, graphite, giclée
print, process yellow ink
134 × 222 cm

This page

May (MacGuffin)

2013

Graphite, resin, brass,
string, red gloss enamel,
giclée print
20 × 19 × 11 cm

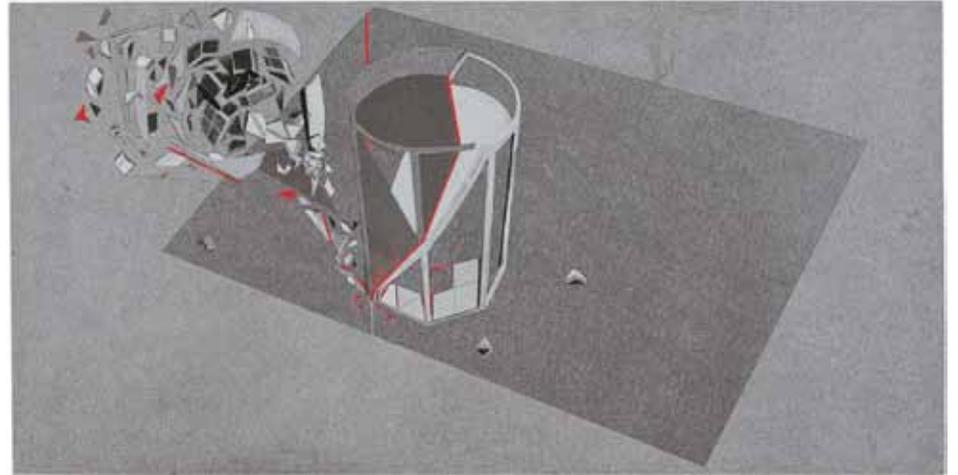


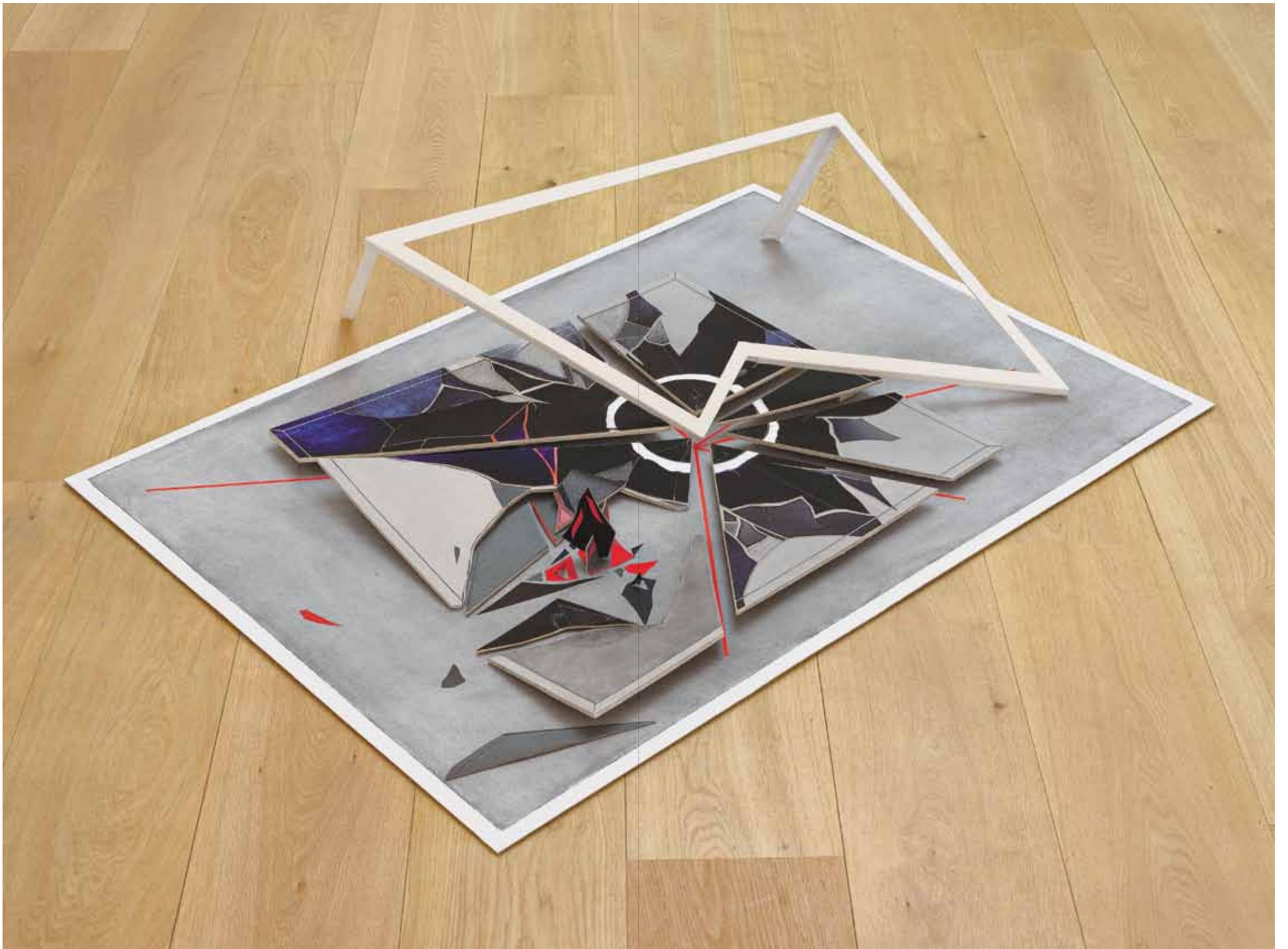
May
(Drinking Glass. Tornado)

2013

Paper, graphite,
household gloss paint,
giclée print

26.6 × 53 cm





Previous page

May
(Reverses Nature)

2014

Paper, graphite,
lithographic plate, resin,
giclée print, card,
household gloss paint

32 × 140 × 32 cm

Dialogue

'The Act of the Cut' Laurence Kavanagh and Cliff Lauson in conversation

Cliff Lauson

Let's start with the exhibition's title 'May'. Following on from 'April', this is your second body of work to use the calendar month as a unifying motif, and both series include a collage work made out of a modified calendar. How does this unit of time frame the new body of work?

Laurence Kavanagh

The motif of the Gregorian calendar is at once an object, an image and also a marker of time. As a marker of time the calendar is purely representational, it is never able to absolutely indicate a precise moment of the here and now because a slippage of time is inherent to its system. Once every four years is a leap year; time is adjusted to be in the present. I am interested in exploring this slippage of time within an overall body of work I have titled 'The Calendar Series'.

I was interested in creating sculptures and wall-based works that reflected what was immediately surrounding me in my studio, to my mind trying to explore the complexities of representing the 'here and now'; slippages in perception between hand and eye; cinematic image and sculptural object; imagined and real.

CL

The unit of time is also made visible by the use of a predominant colour that runs through the sculptures and collages – yellow in 'April' and red in 'May'.

LK

A single, unmixed stock colour was selected for each month. I liked the idea that in the case of 'April', the name of the colour of ink, 'Process Yellow', could represent a time of day – in this case for me the light from my studio at 4pm in April; and also indicate through its name the importance of specific processes used within my work. Throughout the sculptures and collages in 'May', I selected the colour 'Traffic Red' in household gloss paint. Held within this colour and paint type are ideas of the interior space, and a signal of alarm. The colour red also has a long-standing use within my earlier work as a representation of transformation, including **The Lonely House** and **Jealousy**, and in this case, as a symbol of fire.

CL

Your work always begins with cutting, with taking apart the object or surface, before reconstructing it. The method is collage, but rather than use this technique to create visually jarring effects, the works appear to be more coherent in their new forms. Can you elaborate on the relationship between deconstruction and reconstruction in your practice?

LK

As a genre, collage often brings together juxtaposing elements taken from a constellation of pre-existing objects and images found within the world to create something other, something that speaks through the codes and the values that we attach to these objects and images.

For the duration of the making of any one work, an element that contributes towards the final collage or sculpture – an eclipse, for example – could have existed as a temporal shadow sculpture that is photographed,

digitally manipulated, printed, cut, folded and reprinted or cast. The act of the cut is the one singular constant that happens at every stage in the making of an artwork, as the selected element passes between the constructs of these illusionistic and material realities. The cut at once de-stabilises and unifies: the sculptural object into image, the projected image into object.

CL

You just mentioned some of your techniques and processes, and your works are often made up of layers and layers of different processes and materials, some which are not always evident. In the collages, for example, you cut, draw, rub, and fold, but also photograph the results and digitally print before cutting again. The sculptures often involve quite laborious casting techniques using Jesmonite or graphite which is then painted over, concealing the substrate.

LK

I recently moved into a studio within a still functioning print works that started up their business in 1903. The idea of using the printing process developed alongside my existing casting process that was attempting to petrify a moment in time through material and image. The fabric of my studio building, purpose-built for printing and largely unchanged in over 100 years, took on a great importance as marks accrued during the process of making the artwork fused with the studio itself: score marks created during the cutting of materials to make artwork, drips of paint / Jesmonite / resin etc. on the floor, graphite marks left over from wall rubbings...

CL

Those accumulated traces of production combined with the meticulous attempts to replicate entropic states –

the drip, the spill, the shatter – give your works the look as though they have been frozen in time.

LK

What developed with the floor based sculptures such as **May (Reverses Nature)** and **May (Morel)** is a way to control the value of time on an individual element e.g. a drinking glass, a letter, a chair or an eclipse. The relative time that an element is held in stasis within the work can be controlled and its value consequently either compressed or expanded. A recurrent motif used throughout the exhibition is the smashed drinking glass initially made by me in card. This stage of making happens very quickly in order to keep the period of time between my memory of a drinking glass (something seen in a film) and its physical manifestation as short as possible. From this point onwards I can then choose various processes of petrification in order to capture the drinking glass; an exacting duplicate by casting and making a still life object; capturing the drink itself spilling and dripping to imply movement in the present time; providing a fixed POV (point of view) and lighting through photography, print and collage.

CL

All those steps to toward petrification seem to me to be analogous to slowing down a film in order to achieve something like a composite still. Much of your previous work has explicitly referred to mid-century cinema, for example to films by Alain Robbe-Grillet, Roberto Rossellini, and Michelangelo Antonioni. They have also been installations, almost life-size sets, whereas this body of work does not have a specific filmic reference and is comprised of independent but related sculptures and wall-based work. Yet 'May' clearly makes use of cinematic devices: cutting, cropping, lighting, framing, and film

aspect ratios, to name a few. How does the cinematic figure in your current work?

LK

It can take various forms in my work, however over time I have found that there are three constants: the parallels between phenomenological perception in film and sculpture; the role of time and symbolism within objects and images; and spacial constructs of interiors and landscapes.

My specific interest in Robbe-Grillet's work in film and literature has been the phenomenological construct created by very sculptural means: surface, light, architecture, overlapping multiple POV, object. In an interview with Daniel Soar in 2011 at the French Institute in London, Tom McCarthy describes of Robbe-Grillet's work **Jealousy**: 'He wants to see the mechanism behind the real.' Events are objectified and layered to create a memory within the mind of its audience. McCarthy in his essay 'The Geometry of the Pressant', states that 'the ultimate blind spot just might be the reader.' 'May' compresses visual frames of information; the sculptures and collages work as opposites and equals. The collages offer a singular viewpoint of a constructed environment (interiors or landscape), which upon inspection de-compresses, indicating that the overall image is an illusion comprised of sculptural objects I make, residual marks made in the studio from sculptural processes, and sculptures used to create shadow projections. I use the cinematic cut literally, physically cutting my own sculptural objects and turning them into fire, manipulating them towards self-destruction.

CL

A lot of the objects in 'May', both real and depicted, do imply a history or story beyond their stasis. These objects seem allegorical or metaphorical, but are silent witnesses, enigmas without frames of reference to anchor their narratological significance.

LK

The first work made for the exhibition was **May (MacGuffin)**. The sculpture consists of two interlocking filmic devices: a drinking glass often used as a social prop and also when smashed as representation of memory, and a bar of soap cast in brass that represents the act of cleansing of the soul. 'MacGuffin' is a word coined by Alfred Hitchcock and used in a story to illustrate the power of the filmic drive specifically relating to objects. I felt a parallel with his belief that an object does not need any other rationale to exist in narrative other than for its own sake. A non-humanist perspective. A character's irrational compulsive drive to a given object takes us – the viewers – with them.

CL

Countering that non-humanism is a dark and brooding emotional atmosphere running through the works. This is generated by the way that you use light in relation to interior spaces and also through the recurring symbols of the sub-conscious: fire, destruction, the colour red, the eclipse. How much are the works a collective psychodrama; does the viewer become the actor or protagonist?

LK

The potency or potential of a work of art on a viewer resides in the relationship between both the formal language and sub-conscious elements of a piece being held in a state of flux. The intention is that neither

dominates. In a number of projects I have been testing out how the viewer can be positioned as voyeur, protagonist, or as the 'I' of the camera (to use a cinematic term) as ways of perceiving sculpture.

The positioning of the works within the gallery implies an interior space populated by objects and symbols associated with the domestic and the sub-conscious. These works are formatted as landscape, portraiture and still life. A set of geometric and perspectival relations (visible and non-visible) exists between the works in the gallery space and also within each of the individual works. The constant of this geometric mapping is the use of the cut, physically and metaphorically. Within my language, the cut is a passive-aggressive act: a means of unifying surfaces and spaces but also rupturing a surface to expose what is behind ie. a window and beyond. There is a conscious transference of this passive-aggressive state into the atmosphere of the work through raking light and cast shadows (two opposing forces reliant on each other); lack of explicit reason for the cause of an action (ie. a broken object); use of natural phenomena (such as the tornado or eclipse) as a representation of a force inverting perception.

Positioned within this formal structure are trigger points for the viewer: symbols of the sub-conscious (the window, the shattered mirror, the fire, the eclipse etc.) often taken from my memory of a turning point in a film. My work investigates the connections we have with these symbols and utilises them as vehicles to explore our relationship to consciousness through material and process. These props, being neither functioning objects nor purely sculptural objects, exist more as an illusion, an outline of a symbol.

CL

Not only are the collages cinema-format – they are also physically very large. In viewing, their scale encourages a ‘window to the world’ illusionism (also implied through the depiction of drawn curtains) shared by both cinema and history painting. This immersion into depicted space is frustrated by the spatial inconsistencies introduced by your collage techniques. A kind of withholding or deferral seems to be at work in ‘May’, perhaps related to the petrification discussed earlier.

LK

I was interested in inverting the traditional relationship of collage to material, that is to say that the source material is usually designed to be held in the hand and therefore the scale is that of miniaturisation of real worlds. By setting a cinematic landscape frame of 1:1.66 to these collages, I enter into a pre-existing and accepted POV logic to the reading of what is held within. The sizes of the collages are then adjusted and scaled up or down, as in the small interior still lives including **May (Drinking Glass. Fire)**; in the monumental landscapes **April (Segue), May (Segue)**; and in **May (Impossibly Now)** – a portrait format work.

May (Impossibly Now) is the final piece made for the exhibition. At the centre of the image is an empty plinth housed within an interior space. A representation of an eclipse floats in the middle of the collage. A lens flare indicates that the eclipse is a projection onto a window that is sitting between the illusionary space of the artwork and the real space of the viewer, in this case the gallery. The plinth and the space around it were constructed out of the pin board that I found on the wall of my studio – a board previously used by the printing company and an architect’s office. Score marks from the scalpel

and pin marks created in the making of every work in the exhibition can be seen on this pin board. The role of the physical object of the plinth and interior is inverted; real space and illusionary space passing over one another to create the floating image of an eclipse.

May 2014

Biography

Laurence Kavanagh

Born
1973, Liverpool, England

Lives and works
London, England

Education
1994–98 University of Newcastle upon Tyne: BA Fine Art / Art History.

Selected Solo Shows & Group Exhibitions

- 2013 More Than I Dare to Think About, group show, Marlborough Contemporary, London
New Positions, Art Cologne 2013, Cologne
- 2011–13 Transmitter/Receiver, The Persistence of Collage, Arts Council Collection touring show: MIMA, Middlesborough; The Lightbox, Woking; The New Art Gallery, Walsall; Usher Gallery, Lincoln; Aberystwyth Arts Centre; and Tullie House, Carlisle
- 2012 Laurence Kavanagh: April, Gerald Moore Gallery, London
Lights, Camera, Action! Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (curated by Mary Cremin)
Jealousy, The Print Room Theatre, London (choreographic work)
Group show, Pilar Corrias Gallery, London
- 2011 Mostyn Open, Oriol Mostyn, Llandudno (winner, selected by Richard Wentworth)
- 2010 a place for everything and everything in its place, group show, Worksetting Gallery, Huddersfield (Laurence Kavanagh, Charlie Koolhaas, Langlands & Bell, Vittorio Messina, Thomas Newton, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Jaume Plensa, Superflex, James Turrell, Dom hans van der Laan, Lawrence Weiner)
- 2009 Claremorris Open, Claremorris, Ireland (winner, selected by Tom Morton)
[Un]Representative House, group show curated by Mobile Studio, UCL, London
Laurence Kavanagh: Volta, Irish Museum Modern Art, Dublin (residency solo show)
- 2008 Laurence Kavanagh: The Lonely House, Hill House, London
- 2007 The Shandy Collection, Now and Then, London
Group show, Museum 52, London
- 2006 Transit 1, group Show, British School at Rome, Rome
- 2005 the music of the future: Kate Davis, Dee Ferris, Laurence Kavanagh, Ian Kiaer, Colin Lowe, Andrew Mania, Lucy Skaer, Mark Titchner, Gasworks Gallery, London
- 2004 European Biennale of Visual Arts of La Spezia Golfo Prize 2004, Centro d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, La Spezia (nominated by Andrew Nairne and Susanne Cotter)
Wider than the Sky: Shahin Afrassiabi, Kate Davis, Kaye Donachie, Michael Fullerton, Des Hughes, Richard Hughes, Laurence Kavanagh, Rob Kennedy, Ian Kiaer, Andrew Mania, Mark Titchner, Martin Westwood, London
- 2003 Corpa Nova: Bernd Behr, Matt Calderwood, Kate Davis, Mark Dean, Alex Frost, Michael Fullerton, Richard Hughes, Laurence Kavanagh, Andrew Mania, Darren Marshall, Lucy Skaer, Emily Wardill, London
- 2001 Gate 13: Martin Westwood, Matt Calderwood, Dan Coombs & Laurence Kavanagh, London

Residencies

- 2010 Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- 2009 Irish Museum Modern Art, Dublin
- 2008 Scottish Sculpture Workshop
- 2008 Cocheme Residency, University of the Arts, London
- 2006–07 British School at Rome Residency (Derek Hill Fellowship)

Awards

- 2011 Oriol Mostyn (winner, selected by Richard Wentworth)
- 2009 Claremorris Open (winner, selected by Tom Morton)
- 2006 Derek Hill Award, British School at Rome
- 1994 & 95 Achievement Awards, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Other Projects

- 2013 Curator, Victor Pasmore presentation for Marlborough Fine Art, Frieze Masters, London
- 2012 Irish Film Institute, Trans Europ Express (talk and film screening)
- 2005 Curator, the music of the future, Gasworks Gallery, London
- 2005 Museum of Modern Art Oxford (artists talk)
- 2004 Co-curator with Lizzie Carey-Thomas, Wider than the Sky, Spitalfields, London
- 2003 Curator, Corpa Nova, Spitalfields, London
- 2001 Curator, Gate 13, London

Collections

Arts Council Collection
Artist Pension Trust

Marlborough Contemporary

Laurence Kavanagh
'May'
7 May – 20 June 2014

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