

STONEYMOLLAN TRAIL

Charlotte Prodger

Guest Curated by Linsey Young

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I feel as if I'm channel-hopping. From the green-grey blur out a car window. To trucks, trees, tower cranes. Only there isn't any remote control. This is a single film pieced together with footage from an assortment of formats spanning sixteen years of the artist's past. A patchwork film crafted according to the traditions of quilting, in order to make the best use of left-over fabric. Each scrap from a different source; some inexorably fraying faster than others, as certain scenes are fraying too. Pixelating, crumbling apart. From oil rigs to rooftops to mountain goats, to the music of monks chanting, seagulls shrieking, voices reading aloud. These might be excerpts from anybody's past. Anybody could have filmed this snow, this gutter pipe, this cross-street. But this is no YouTube, and anybody didn't; only the artist chose to place these certain excerpts together in this certain sequence. And so I must think like a detective, searching for clues.

Back through centuries, to the real Stoney-mollan Trail – a Scottish heritage path along which Christians wielding wooden boxes trudged to reach the consecrated ground where their dead could be buried. Perplexing phenomena are associated with such paths. There's a story about a ball of light called a coffin candle which materialises in the dead of night. Hovering, glowing.

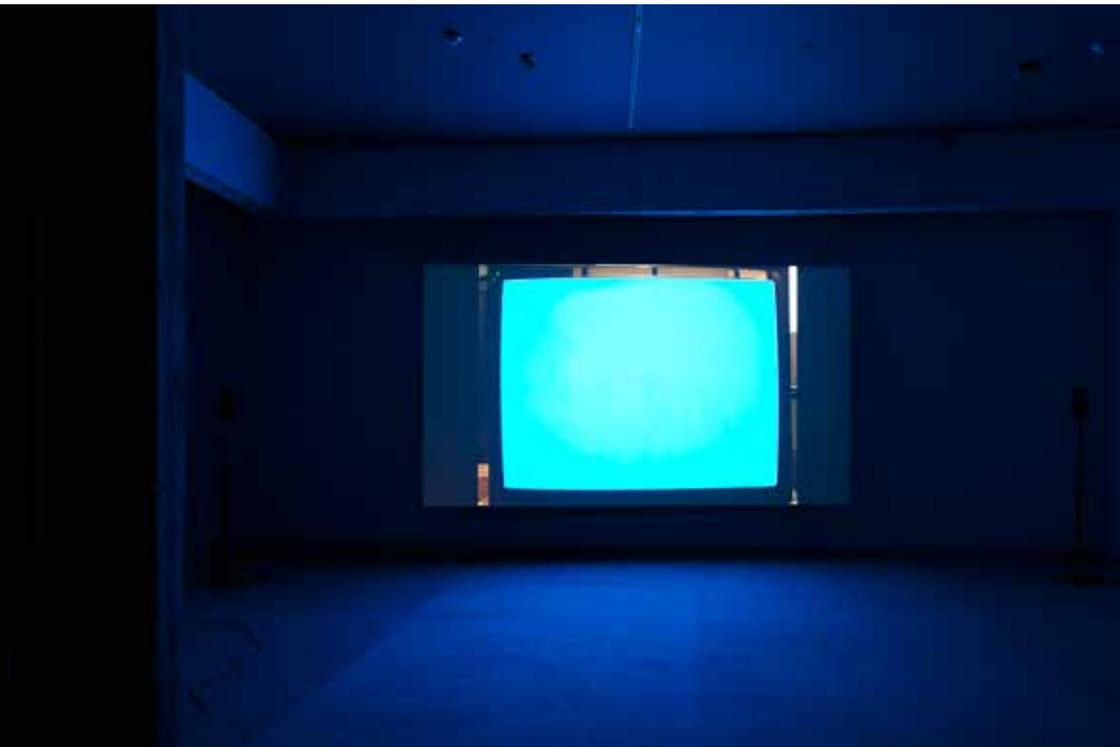
Channel-hopping. To a desert in Utah, where there are more balls of light in the dark. Dappling the inner concrete of four monumental passageways, their roofs punctured in the configuration of constellations. These are Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels*, a masterpiece of Land Art. The voice is quoting from an essay by Holt, but in the next hop, it's describing a Sign Language class, a set of strange rules for communicating, while the footage shows what looks like a judo lesson - figures in white robes on the floor. Rolling, grappling.

'I meant to tell about a story – we all have stories...'
Nina Simone said, between songs, at Montreaux Jazz Festival in picturesque Switzerland in 1976, and here in this film, it is said again. But on the screen, there is no stage, no Simone. Instead, a pebble shifts, tripping across its rubble surrounds, down an unsound rock face.

Was the shift of that pebble a clue? The tinkle of goat bells? The artist reflected in a blank TV screen? Two clocks, softly illuminated, the second hands moving in eerie sync. Surely that one must be a clue?

Or perhaps there's never any case-closed; perhaps there's only quilting, channel-hopping. The artist's trails – and the trails they take us on. The crunch of trodden snow, the ripples in a quarry pool, the wisps of smoke from a coffin candle.

Sara Baume







TBG+S Writing Commission 2015

The logo for Temple Bar Gallery + Studios is a black right-angled triangle pointing towards the bottom right. Inside the triangle, the words "TEMPLE BAR", "GALLERY +", and "STUDIOS" are stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif, uppercase font.

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios (TBG+S) aims to support artists to make new work and to introduce new audiences to contemporary art. As part of this aim, TBG+S is pleased to launch the first year of the TBG+S Writing Commission. The aim of the commission is to both support the work of an emerging writer and to explore different approaches to writing about art for a variety of audiences and media.

In the pilot year of the commission, TBG+S has commissioned author Sara Baume to write a response to each of the five programmed exhibitions in the 2015/16 gallery programme. This series of short essays will be available online, in the gallery and broadcast on RTE's 'Arena' radio programme. At the end of the year, TBG+S will publish a small booklet of the collected essays.

Sara Baume studied fine art and creative writing, and has published both criticism and fiction. In 2014 she won the Davy Byrne's Short Story Award, and in 2015 she won the Hennessy Award for New Irish Writing. Her debut novel, *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*, was published by Tramp Press in February 2015.

You can hear a recording of Sara Baume reading her essay for RTÉ Arena, Radio 1, on the TBG+S Soundcloud page soundcloud.com/templebar-gallery-studio