

You might be here, at first.

The cold light of a pixelated sun quavers on a small LED box placed high on the ceiling. A speck of a bird flicks past. Your eyes might catch its glare bounce unevenly off the strips of glass that hang on the wall, or roll off the uplifted slant of burnt grey limestone sat on the floor, polished to a dull glow. There is in this room an initial insistence on presence, a feint on the present tense: your reflection in muted wisps embedded in the glass, your shadows hungrily swallowed by the dark grain of the slender birch and beech woods that intermittently mark the space.

And yet. A set of squared brackets on the wall punctuate your presence, as if the things happening here might be a parenthetical — an aside, an additional note, or sidestep to the regular statements and flow of the world outside. That what is going on in this room is just part of a larger sentence.

I might suggest that Niamh O'Malley's work is grammatical: a particular arrangement of discrete elements, which combine to shape the tone and rhythm of your experience. This grammar could be said to consist primarily of sculptural installations; sentences, and their attendant punctuation, made up of wood, stone, and glass.

Though something is missing here. These materials are accented by a pragmatic, structural alignment — an attunement to systems of extraction, you might say infrastructure, keyed into the elements that invisibly shape your

Chris Fite-Wassilak

placement here. And, like the uncertain sun, throughout O'Malley's work is the spare, steady use of observational moving images, as an invocation of your always enclosed, filtered mechanisms of seeing. Encounters with her work are sculptural sentences, but ones inflected with a particular lineage of aspects: an admixture of the framed stagings of formalist cinema, and the designed encounters of architecture, with the synaesthetic persuasions of abstract painting. Often, O'Malley's work has been framed as a reflection on experience, its mediated nature and ever-deferred knots of attention.

But here, things might lead elsewhere.

The objects in this room outline details of a proscribed, almost domestic space: a small shelf, pieces of glass propped on it leaning languidly against the wall like mementos; the frame of a large window that stages an impossible patio. While you are most definitely positioned here, that here is wavering, drifting away from a now: the tense doesn't feel like the present. This parenthetical fragment of a sentence is directing you elsewhere — through a hazy, indefinable vapour that might

escape down gaps in the stone drain that weighs down the room, out beyond whatever outside might sit past these apertures, glazed by the wistfulness of an ersatz sun.

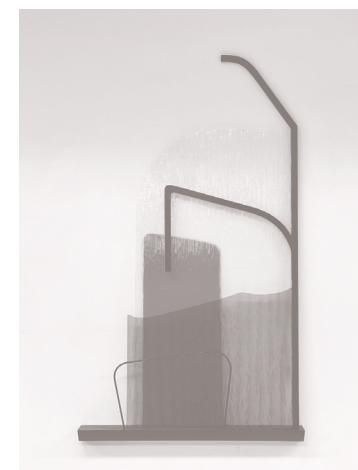
While two of the wooden brackets here pair off, completing their parenthetical to hold you in this room, there is a third that sits alongside — which then suggests an absent companion bracket hovering an undefined elsewhere. What I might say, then, is that O'Malley's work here quietly undermines its own presence, and yours, to indicate possibilities to come. The tense here is waveringly conditional, hovering in the tension between what is and what might be, uneasy speculations gesturing towards the rest of a hypothetical unsaid.



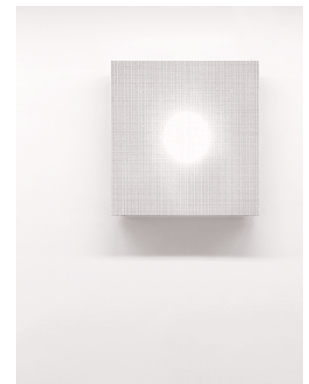
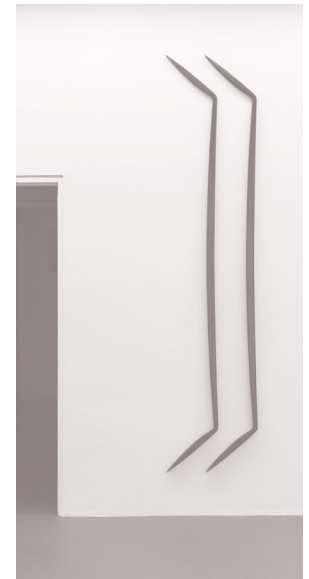
Drain, 2022
Limestone
30.4 x 155 x 120 cm (12 x 61 x 47 1/4 ins)



Blind, 2023
maple, birch, glass, coloured glass, oil paint, steel
219 x 119 x 53 cm (86 1/4 x 46 7/8 x 20 7/8 ins)



Shelf (heidi), 2022
beech, textured glass, coloured glass, steel
130 x 75.05 x 10 cm (51 1/8 x 29 1/2 x 4 ins)



Opening 1 June, 6–8pm

2 June – 14 July 2023

Niamh O'Malley

Niamh O'Malley was born in County Mayo in Ireland (1975). In 2022, Niamh O'Malley represented Ireland at the 59th Venice Biennale in the solo exhibition, 'Gather'.

After its success in Venice, her work travelled across three institutional locations in Ireland in the spring of 2023: Temple Bar Gallery & Studios, Dublin (2023); The Model, Sligo (2023); Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast (2023).

Recent solo institutional exhibitions include Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, IE (2019); John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, UK (2019); Lismore Castle Arts, Lismore, IE (2019); Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, AT (2018); Bluecoat Liverpool, UK (2015); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, IE (2017).

O'Malley has been recipient of multiple residencies and awards, including Funen Art Academy, DK (2014); HIAP, Helsinki, FI (2008); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IE (2008); Firestation Artists Studios (2005–8); International Studio Programme Residency at PS1, MoMa, USA (2003/04); and the Northern Irish Fellowship at The British School at Rome, IT (2000).

Niamh O'Malley's work is included in numerous private and public collections such as the The Hugh Lane, Dublin City Gallery; Irish Museum of Modern Art; the Arts Council of Ireland, Office of Public Works, Ireland; Stefan Stoltzka Collection, Graz; FRAC Méca-Nouvelle Aquitaine, France and Galleria Arte Moderna, Turin.

Niamh O'Malley

Open Wednesday to Saturday
11am–6pm

Vardaxoglou Gallery
7 Royalty Mews
London W1D 3AS

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Parenttheses, 2023
Stained and polished beech
3 parts: 254 x 30 x 4 cm (100 x 13 x 1 5/8 ins (each))

Sun, 2023
HD digital video on LED screen
10 min 23 sec looped, silent, 50 x 50 x 6 cm

Parenttheses, 2023
Stained and polished beech
3 parts: 254 x 30 x 4 cm (100 x 13 x 1 5/8 ins (each))