

The Soft

Fall of Land

Large text

exhibition guide



**BLACK CHURCH
PRINT STUDIO**



**funding
visual arts**



**Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council**

Black Church Print Studio presents

the soft fall of land

5 – 27 September 2025

The Library Project, 4 Temple Bar, Dublin 2

**Curated by Ciara Hickey with the support of
Black Church Print Studio.**

**This exhibition is supported by Dublin City
Council and the Arts Council.**

Artists:

Bassam Issa al-Sabah, Sighle

Bhreathnach-Cashell, Chloe Brennan, Aisling

Conroy, Grace Ryan and Soft Fiction Projects.

Opening hours:

Monday: closed

Tuesday – Friday: 11 am – 6 pm

Saturday: 12 – 6 pm

Sunday: closed

**Black Church Print Studio is delighted to present
The Soft Fall of Land curated by Ciara Hickey.**

**This exhibition brings together *new work* by
Bassam Issa al-Sabah, Sighle
Bhreathnach-Cashell, Chloe Brennan, Aisling
Conroy, Grace Ryan and Soft Fiction Projects. It
considers the idea of Utopia and examines the
pursuit of this imagined, impossible and
aspirational state from a range of perspectives.
The artworks in the exhibition oscillate between
escapism and activism, fantasy and instruction
for creating an alternative, better world. Sighle
Bhreathnach-Cashell and Bassam Issa
al-Sabah have each made a new series of prints
directing us into dense, imagined worlds,
created from a personal lexicon of symbols**

drawn from the artists' history, experience and critical response to the humanitarian, social and ecological issues pervading contemporary life.

Al-Sabah's monochromatic prints, made during his Process Residency at Black Church Studios, evoke imagery from his moving image works and installations, where sublime, seductive digital landscapes offer speculative worlds in which dystopian and utopian scenarios meet and intersect. Bhreathnach-Cashell, known for her immersive installations and activist work has created a new series of aquatint etchings, 'Ulster Cycles'. The work translates years of the artist's unseen drawings and depicts mimetic figures using Celtic, biological and architectural

imagery, conjuring contemporary fables and cautionary tales.

For Grace Ryan and Chloe Brennan, two studio members at Black Church Print Studio, the invitation to think about Utopian ideals led them to a close examination of the natural world.

Ryan will create a sculptural composition in the gallery based on Ikebana—the ancient Japanese art of flower arrangement rooted in balance, asymmetry, and the harmony between humans and nature.

Chloe Brennan's current work is focused on the microcosm of an orchard in Carlow that is located beside her family home. Originally

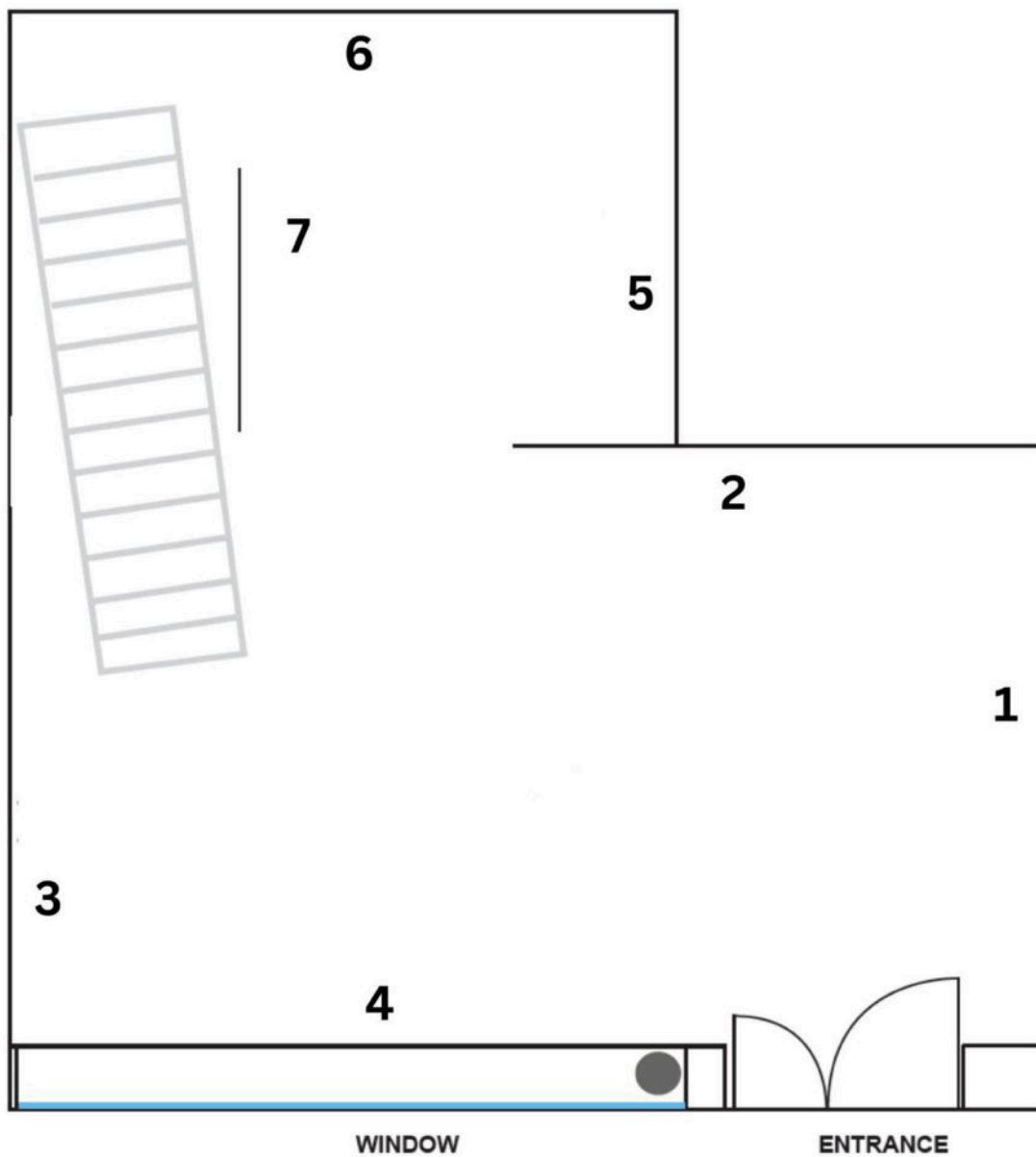
created as a colonial project to order and control the land, the orchard is now overgrown, the traces of colonial past are muted by the unabatted growth of weeds and shrubs over decades. The artist has used Super 8 photography to mark the process of observing the orchard and acknowledging the small changes and diversity of plant life as dictated by time, climate and chance. Brennan's work in this exhibition represents the first and last frames of a roll of film on which she photographed the orchard, the edges of which are singed, capturing the moment that an image is simultaneously created and extinguished.

Black Church Print Studio member Aisling Conroy continues her exploration of sound and cymatics, the study of vibrational phenomena. This new work comprises a grid of 40 prints representing the 40 Chladni plates, a methodology developed by Ernst Chladni in 1787 as a visual manifestation of sound vibrations, looking at the patterns produced by sounds on flat plates made by a bow. The work offers an invitation to think about the invisible forces that shape our reality and consider the possibilities of new languages and systems for understanding and grappling with the unknown.

Soft Fiction Projects (Alessia Cagnelli and Emily McFarland) are an initiative that produce

printed and digital matter to explore archives of underrepresented voices, oppositional histories and geopolitical narratives. For the exhibition they have produced a free print that can be taken by visitors. The print is based on Women's News, a Belfast collective-run publication active between 1984 and 2011, who used the medium of print matter as a method for generating common ground, sharing experiences and encouraging community building. This leaflet uses DIY approaches to archival material, collected from MayDay Rooms, as a way to reimagine and revisit this history.

Gallery Map - List of works



1. Chloe Brennan

Inversions, 2025

Series of 4 photographic (digitised super 8mm film frames) prints on photo rag and text

50 x 29.5cm (each)

2. Sighle Bhreathnach–Cashell

Hand I: Ulster Cycles, 2025

Etching with aquatint on Fabriano Rosaspina paper

30cm x 21cm

Edition of 10.

Price: €480 (unframed €300)

Luddite: Ulster Cycles, 2025

Blind deboss on Fabriano Rosaspina paper

30cm x 42cm

Edition of 5

Price: €350 (unframed)

Reap: Ulster Cycles, 2025

Blind deboss on Fabriano Rosaspina paper

30cm x 42cm

Edition of 5

Price: unframed €350 (unframed)

Luddite & Reap as pair: €1200

Hand II:Ulster Cycles, 2025

Etching with aquatint on Fabriano Rosaspina paper

30cm x 21cm

Edition of 10

Price: €480 (unframed €300)

3. Aisling Conroy

FREQUENCY, 2025

**Digital print and monoprint on Hahnemühle 308
gsm**

Edition 1/1

4. Grace Ryan

Hothouse, 2025

Photo etching on chine collé handmade paper.

**Frame: Burnt pine, wood stain, shellac,
galvanised steel, glass, screen print**

77.5 x 53.5 x 17cm

Edition of 5

Price unframed: €630

Price framed: POA

5. Bassam Issa Al-Sabah

Seek the hollow in my heart, 2025

Tyobo photo intaglio

67 x 50cm

AP

NOT SO MONUMENTAL AFTER ALL, 2025

Blind embossed Tyobo photo intaglio

67 x 49cm

AP

6. Bassam Issa Al-Sabah

I refuse the light, 2025

Tyobo photo intaglio

50 x 67cm

AP

7. Soft Fiction Projects

Women's News, 2025

Printed on FAVINI Alga Carta

Edition of 100 free leaflets

Biographies

Ciara Hickey is a curator based in Belfast.

She is Co-Director of Household, an arts organisation that supports the production of high quality art that connects people and place. Recent projects include Red Sky at Night, a night time festival of international commissions across the city of Belfast and UPHOLD; a commissioning platform for selling contemporary art.

Ciara was curator of the Freelands Artist Programme through PS2 and co-curated the exhibition mother tongue with Alissa Kleist at the MAC Belfast in 2024. She was previously

curator of Belfast Exposed Photography where she worked on new commissions with artists including Bertien van Manen, Martin Parr, Michael Hanna and Jan McCullough and also initiated Belfast Exposed Futures, a programme for early career artists.

From 2008–2010 Ciara co-organised the art Space Delawab in her home, and has continued to pursue an interest in the domestic space as a site for contemporary art including the exhibition House Taken Over in 2019 (with Nora Hickey M'Sichili). She recently received a curatorial research grant from Paul Mellon to explore art production in the domestic space in Belfast 1968 – present day.

Bassam Issa Al-Sabah is a visual artist working with digital animation, painting, sculpture and textiles. Often building installations that interrogate the intersection of fantasy and trauma, employing speculative worlds as a lens through which to explore the mechanisms of memory and identity formation. Frequently drawing on the visual lexicon of video games, anime, and popular culture, constructing alternative realities that function as both a means of escape and critical commentary.

Bassam Issa Al-Sabah works across digital animation, painting, sculpture, and textiles. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions at FACT (2025) Transmediale (2024) The DHG (2022–24) Solstice Arts Centre (2019), the LAB (2018) and

with the Glucksman as an offsite installation (2021). Group exhibitions include Golden Thread Gallery (2020), the Dock (2021), Queer Embodiment and Social Fabric at IMMA (2021–2022) and Futures at the RHA (2018). His work has also been shown internationally, including solo exhibitions at Gasworks (London, 2021) and the De La Warr Pavillion (UK, 2022), and group exhibitions and screenings at Transmediale (Berlin, 2021), EX-IS (South Korea, 2021), Jeu de Paume (Paris, 2021) and the Barbican (London, 2022).

Sighle Bhreathnach-Cashell is a multi-media artist based in Belfast. Using print, installation and film, her work explores how our environment (physical/social/fictional) affects our behaviour and sense of identity.

Sighle studied Environmental Art at the Glasgow School of Art and completed her MFA at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. She is a member of the Belfast Print Workshop. She often works collaboratively and has organised and created works for immersive, site specific events like 'PROCEDURE' (RUC Station, Belfast) and 'GAMES NIGHT!' (Glue Factory, Glasgow). Sighle has previously been a co-director of organisations Household, Platform Arts and residence. In 2023

she initiated 'LENA' a series of workshops and artist residencies in a cottage in County Down.

She is part of the artist duo DUNCAN (Richard Martin, Glasgow) and a member of the Array Collective (Turner Prize, 2021). The Array Collective were recently commissioned to make new work for 'Self-Determination: A Global Perspective' at IMMA and their upcoming shows include De Appel, Amsterdam and the Irish Arts Centre, New York. Their work is in the collections of National Museums NI, Arts Council Ireland, Arts Council Northern Ireland and IMMA.

Chloe Brennan Through a combination of moving image, photography, sound, publication and text, Chloe Brennan's practice explores the porosity of the body and its indivisibility from its environment. She is interested in how forces are registered and measured – both experientially and materially – in human and non-human bodies, exploring the possibilities of alternative and expanded modes of sense making and attunement. Informed by feminist and new materialist epistemologies, works often involve close and careful examinations of the poetic haptics of daily life and processes on the edge of perception that call into question boundaries between bodies, environments, intimate spaces and wider structures of power.

Selected exhibitions include Solstice Art Centre, Navan; VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow; The Douglas Hyde Gallery (online screening series), Dublin; The Library Project, Dublin; Periphery Space, Wexford; Galway Arts Centre; Catalyst Arts, Belfast; The Estonian Museum of Applied Arts and Design, Tallinn; as well as in print at Dublin Art Book Fair; Tokyo Art Book Fair, Japan; and I Never Read Art Book Fair, Basel.

Selected projects include an artist residency at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2023); Welcome to the Neighbourhood, Askeaton Contemporary Arts, Limerick (2022); and Landscape, Ecology and Environment Research Residency (LEER), Leitrim Sculpture Centre (2022).

Aisling Conroy is a multidisciplinary artist using painting, print, sound and experimental film. She graduated from The National College of Art and Design with a BA Hons degree in Fine Art Print, 2009; and a Master of Fine Art postgraduate degree, 2011. She has worked in the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) at NCAD, on numerous archival, digitisation, research projects (2012–2017), and in the audio–visual sector on TV and film productions since 2017. Conroy has been the recipient of Arts Council Funding, Laois Arts Funding, a Creative Ireland Bursary and the Centre Culturel Irlandais Bursary.

Conroy's practice intertwines several aspects of metaphysics and the healing arts by incorporating meditative and sound healing modalities to deepen the conceptual and sensory dimensions of her work, while also engaging with the experiential intersections of art and healing. These practices extend beyond the studio into workshops and events, creating participatory spaces that explore introspection, health and wellness, embodiment, and expanded states of consciousness.

Conroy's work is represented in collections such as the The Press Up Group, Dublin; The Office of Public Works, State Collection; Laois County Council; Axa Insurance; Irish Independent; International Centre for Contemporary

**Printmaking, US; The National Council of
Bioethics; and private collections around
Ireland, Spain, UK, the U.S and India.**

Grace Ryan is a multidisciplinary artist based in Dublin. She graduated with a degree in Fine Art Print from the National College of Art and Design in 2023. Since graduating, she received the Agility Award 2024, the Black Church Print Studio Graduate Award and now resides there as a full-time member. Ryan has participated in numerous exhibitions, including the RDS Visual Arts Awards at IMMA and Unlimiting the Edition at The Library Project. She has also undertaken international internships and residency programs at PADA Studios in Lisbon and Quint in Vienna. Her work is held in the private collections of the Office of Public Works and Business to Arts.

Ryan's practice explores historically gendered materials and their entanglement with female subjectivity, symbolism, and mythology. She utilises the hybrid as a vessel for transgression, her work recontextualizes the fetishization of unrealistic ideals, through processes of mutation and transformation.

Soft Fiction Projects is an initiative run by artists. Alessia Cagnelli and Emily McFarland. They are based at PS2 in Belfast, dedicated to producing digital and printed matter on film and artist moving image culture. The printed project acts as a forum for presenting new collaborations, artworks, research and writing from invited artists and contributors. Revisiting recent history in moving image practices, Soft Fiction Projects research focus is an exploration of underrepresented voices, oppositional histories, geopolitical narratives underpinned by intersectional feminist perspectives which challenge and reframe dominant hegemonic power structures.

**Recent projects include; All My Dreams Have
Come True [with Edy Fung], screening at
Marabouparken, with films from FilmForm,
Stockholm, 2025; Long time we've been working
/ Tamall fada atá muid ag obair, Belfast Feminist
Film School x Project Arts Centre, Dublin, 2023;
Gintlíocht, Ulster Folk Museum, Belfast, 2023;
UPHOLD New Commission, Belfast, 2021; TULCA,
Galway, 2020; Working Document, Catalyst Arts,
Belfast, 2020; MAKING SPACE, Guest Projects,
London, 2019; SHOP, PS2, Belfast, 2019;
KNOWLEDGE IS MADE HERE, curated by Sara
Graevu and Andrea Francke, Derry, 2019;
URGENCIES, CCA, Derry, 2019.**

Access

Accessibility is at the core of this exhibition and is prioritised through utilisation of audio guides, large text exhibitions guides, and handheld magnifiers. Artwork in the exhibition will be hung at a lower accessible height. Sanitising measures will be in place. A relaxed atmosphere is provided with comfortable seating, and filtered water.

The exhibition venue is the ground floor gallery, The Library Project, located under the Black Church Print Studio. Located in the heart of Temple Bar in Dublin 2. The entrance is off a concrete footpath that is stepped up from a cobbled street. The exhibition space itself is

step-free. There are a number of accessible parking spots located close to the gallery, and it is also easy to get to by public transport. Guide dogs are welcome.

Physical Access

- **Accessible parking spaces near the gallery entrance.**
- **Step free access to gallery.**
- **Step free bathroom facilities (with 800mm bathroom door width) for use by exhibition staff & participating artists.**
- **Nearest accessible public toilet for visitors:
Irish Film Institute (IFI), 6 Eustace Street
Temple Bar, Dublin 2. 160m from the gallery.**

Sensory Information

- **Designated a low lit and quiet area within the gallery.**
- **Basic drawing materials.**

Language Accessibility

- **Audio guide will be provided: this can be accessed via headphones/media players in the gallery or a QR code.**
- **Large text versions of all printed materials and online text for visitors who may require them.**
- **Handheld magnifiers.**
- **ISL interpreter can be organised for exhibition events upon request and advance notice.**

Safety Measures

- **Availability of masks for visitors throughout the exhibition.**
- **Availability of hand sanitising stations at multiple locations within the gallery.**
- **Disposable headphone covers for visitors who would like to use the headphones provided in the gallery**
- **High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter installed to maintain clean air quality.**