

# Circadian Rhythms

Contemporary art and biological time

Artists: **Maarten Baas, David Beattie, Suki Chan, Tehching Hsieh, Jitish Kallat, Caoimhe Kilfeather, Barbara Knezevic, Michael Landy, Rivane Neuenschwander, and Michael John Whelan**

Curated by **Chris Clarke** and **Fiona Kearney**

in association with **APC Microbiome Centre Ireland, SFI Research Centre, UCC**

All life on earth operates to a daily 24-hour cycle through rhythmic patterns of activity that are known as circadian rhythms. In partnership with APC Microbiome Ireland, the Glucksman is pleased to present an exhibition of Irish and international artists who explore circadian rhythms through reflections on time, the cadence of working life, and sleeping patterns, as well as through the impact of modern technologies on biological life.

The disruption of the circadian clock through shift work is evoked in Maarten Baas' *Real Time: Sweeper's Clock*, a 12-hour film documenting two handyman sweeping refuse in lines that function as hour and minute hands. Rivane Neuenschwander's clock perennially shows a time of 00:00; each time the figures flip over they again reveal 00:00, perpetually deferring an anticipated future event.

Jitish Kallat's drawings, suggestive of astronomical charts, present chance formations of rain water captured during the monsoon season, while *Glyph* is an imposing cast concrete mattress that metamorphoses into a motorway bridge, collapsing rest and travel into a single contradictory object.

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## Changing Times

All life adapts to cycles of light and darkness, seasons and climate. Barbara Knezevic combines a range of natural and artificial materials to explore human, material, geological and ecological durations. Candle sculptures flicker. Liquids evaporate silently. The stems of *Monstera deliciosa*, the quintessential house-plant, gradually unfurl to reveal tender, pale green leaves that progressively become darker and tougher. In Michael Landy's *Nourishment* series, weeds, or 'street flowers' as Landy prefers, become a metaphor for rehabilitation, with drawing serving as a way to start, literally, from scratch. Landy collected specimens and brought them back to his studio, where over several months he nurtured and observed them for as many hours as there was daylight.

Jitish Kallat's *Covariance (Sacred Geometry)* resembles a rock, anthill, fallen meteorite or ancient fossil. Carved on its surface are a number of small eyes modelled on different species, from mammals and birds to reptiles and fish.

## **Keeping Pace**

The hectic tempo of modern life offers few opportunities for rest and contemplation. In Suki Chan's impressionistic and lyrical study of London's diverse population, the movements of people on their way to and from work are contrasted with their individual efforts to enjoy free time. Groups of skaters, unimpeded by traffic, move freely and intuitively, mapping the twilight city. Nigerian security guards gatekeeping a deserted high-rise office block compare the 'freedom' of London with the rhythms and aspirations of their former lives.

Michael John Whelan's sound work is one of a series of field recordings from the darkest outdoor locations in the world. Captured at sites that offer the best conditions for viewing the night sky, far removed from light pollution, it presents 'night' as experienced through another, non-visual, sense.

## Dawn to Dusk

The disruption of the body's natural internal clock by enforced patterns of activity is captured in a seminal work by the performance artist Tehching Hsieh: *One Year Performance (1980-81)*. For the duration of the year, the artist punched a time clock in his studio every hour, day and night, photographing his appearance, and noting down any reasons for missing this self-imposed and relentless constraint. As daylight gives way to night, our bodies adapt to the environmental changes of our surroundings. Michael John Whelan's photographs are almost monochromatic. The images portray the darkest locations in the world; their details almost indistinguishable from the pitch darkness.

Caoimhe Kilfeather evokes the ephemeral, ambivalent nature of the twilight hours through black-and-white photographs of forest landscapes, a tapestry woven from copper and steel, a darkly gleaming orb of carved coal. David Beattie makes visible the ongoing impact of light on our physical surroundings. His installation uses a solar panel to power a nearby bulb, getting brighter and dimmer depending on the available daylight while *Falling Light*, a diptych of polyurethane foam, gradually changes and discolours over the course of the exhibition as it is exposed to light.