map forces and flows. Rather than picturing landscapes, McNally's topographies are describable as 'setting-up worlds' (borrowing a formulation from Martin Heidegger) or acts of world-making.

That notion of art as 'setting-up a world', alongside its pendant of 'setting-forth the earth' (essentially, the making explicit of something's materiality) provides a compass for mapping McNally's and Billy's work. Billy thematises worldhood, especially the conversion of world into resource. *Spirit Level (Trace)*, 2019, is a blown-glass object shaped into an oil canister; marking its interior are dark stains left by sump oil that was once contained within but has since evaporated, leaving a still-fluid residue. In the form of indexical traces, processes of extractivism and waste are signalled: oil from beneath the world's surface is fed through the car's engine, becoming discarded by-product before being encased within glass and eventually disappearing. *Whiplash*'s sliced tyre has a similar ecological resonance insofar as tractors are industrial machines for transforming land into utility. Resembling a marine skeleton hanging from the ceiling, *Fishbones*, 2021, made from recycled PET (polyethylene terephthalate) continues this theme. The skeleton is a trace of a previously living creature, and its being composed of plastic (rather than bone) highlights the synthetic material's burgeoning presence in the ocean's ecosystem.

Environmentalism, then, is present in 'Time Spirals' and benefits from subtle handling. Such concerns, moreover, are strengthened by being engaged through meditation upon material thinking. In this way, Billy and McNally interconnect the shift from medium to materiality that happened under Postminimalism and Arte Povera, for example, with the neo-materialist philosophy espoused by Karen Barad and Jane Bennett amongst others. Art discourses regarding process, therefore, become or conjoin with notions of vitalism and Bruno Latour's actants. Such matter is conceptual from the get-go (it is not a question of adding theory to brute stuff), but neo-materialism comprehends vitality as part of any object's ontological state and enjoins us to be more receptive towards it. Hence, all artworks as material things already evince that vitality – it is part of their ontology. Crucial to the fascination of Billy's and McNally's work is its refusal to merely assume vitality; instead, materialism is acknowledged, unfolded and demonstrated in its relation to thought.

Materialism is perhaps more obvious in Billy's practice, being a feature of the works already discussed and in smaller pieces such as the shimmering and patinated bronze surfaces of *Refresh, Refresh (Half Squeezed Mould)*, 2021. Yet drawings are undoubtedly material objects, too, and McNally deploys a plethora of strategies that relate matter to force. The comparison facilitated by the art historian's twinned projectors thus plays a role in disclosing the comportment towards materialism and its significance that Billy and McNally share. Also disclosed in that comparison is the possibility of a productive mutual interference in which Billy's sculptural works approach the condition of drawing, while McNally's *Choral Fields* approach the condition of sculpture. Such possibilities emerge not so much from the interaction of the works in the exhibition context as from the hitherto unseen 'intraction' (to use Barad's term) that preceded their display.

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Hayley Tompkins, *The Shirt Says I Feel III* and *IV*, 2022

Hayley Tompkins: Far

Fruitmarket, Edinburgh
22 October to 29 January

Pinks, purples and neons skid across the smooth, hard wooden surfaces of the ten equally sized paintings that make up part of Hayley Tompkins's exhibition 'Far'. These works, which one might even describe as 'proper paintings', are unusual in this optically rich exhibition that coheres and disperses across found objects and videos. Tompkins has regularly broken the identifiable traits that define painting throughout her work, and here again some of her paintings similarly migrate onto the surfaces and structures of a variety of everyday objects, her questioning approach meshing with titles that riff on evocative words such 'spell' or 'speaker'. Yet Tompkins's more regular and rectangular works do share a formal and, perhaps more importantly, material vocabulary with her more idiosyncratic substrate choices. It is this latter quality that gives these works their edge. Tompkins typically uses a slippery and wet painting process, one that encompasses swift-brushing styles, as well as slips and stains of colour. In these paintings we see the artist both filling up space with irregular and speedy passages of punchy new-wave colour and translucent earth tones, and then letting dark and decisive over-painting and the haphazardness of drips work against her hand and her deliberate orchestration.

Two of her paintings are coupled with a painted object: a standard carpenter's mallet completely covered in purple paint in *Mallet*, 2022, and a pair of aviator sunglasses swiped in metallic grey and peach acrylic that reveals a haptic tenderness of touch in *No Title*, 2008. Through their placement, both objects further complicate, via their everyday literalness, the seeming straightness of the paintings they have been coupled with such that the conceptual and material dialogue between the two painted objects is an act of care rather than one solely concerned with decoration.

Upstairs are two white shirts that have been drenched in a variety of dense purple and orange acrylic paint. In the pocket of one is a small painted twig – a rogue piece of nature in this exhibition (the artist has worked with painted sticks before, displaying them pinned to the wall with great precision, as Richard Tuttle might).

In the downstairs galleries Tompkins has created two theatrical installations. In one semi-darkened room are chairs painted with washes of colour and

vigorous grids and stripes. Several galvanised metal buckets, arranged as if to catch leaks from the ceiling above, are sparsely populated with small assemblages, while five short films are each projected onto sketchbook-sized hanging screens. When seen together, these separate works reveal the artist's preoccupation with the smallness of daily life. Tompkins's running motif of identical wooden chairs lends a certain practicality – you can sit on them, watch her films and imagine how they might work in a domestic space. Although they do not quite have the material exuberance of the works upstairs, the chairs, with their loose and colourful grids, echo in a flat-pack low-tech way the desire by some modernist artists, such as at Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant's Charleston Farmhouse, for painting to be absorbed into all aspects of daily living.

The films are similarly low-tech. Each captures a succession of short point-and-shoot clips that the artist has made with her iPhone. In one, we have only frames of colour. In another, spreads of fashion magazines are slowly scanned, focusing on the spatial emptiness that frames the models. In another, coloured acetate is held in front of the camera lens as if to reorient things that have caught the artist's eye: micro scenes such as a view through a window or objects from her living spaces. Individually the films feel marginal, but considered together they take on a stronger presence. The gallery space is unified by the shared soundtrack of her phone's digital shutter 'clicking', generating a random metronomic score akin to someone cursorily flicking pages in a catalogue or animating an e-book.

Nearby is the room-sized installation *But I don't even think it's you*, 2022. Five painted paper bags and a painted cardboard box are displayed on a brightly illuminated, slightly raised yellow floor that blocks the entrance to the gallery. Looking into this tableau from the restricted angle of the entrance, we are overwhelmed by the intensity and artificiality of the floor's colour, one that is seemingly at odds with the delicacy in which Tompkins has painted her assembled objects. It is this juxtaposition that resonates with classic painterly 'push and pull' that is dramatic and that enhances the quiet subversiveness held with fragility in Tomkins's project as a whole.

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Mairéad McClean, *Dialogue*, 2022, video

Mairéad McClean: HERE

Belfast Exposed, Belfast, 6 October to 23 December

Writer and experimental filmmaker Marguerite Duras wrote that the creative process was 'a matter of deciphering something already there, something you've already done in the sleep of your life, in its organic rumination, unbeknown to you ... I'm in the middle and I seize the mass that's already there, move it about, smash it up'. This approach of decoding, rearranging and mashing it up defines Mairéad McClean's survey show that features film, video, drawing and installation from 1994 to 2022. Originally from County Tyrone, McClean has lived in England since going to the Slade in the 1980s and much of her work uses family albums to reintegrate fragmented and often traumatic memories of growing up in Northern Ireland during the peak of the Troubles.

McClean's mesmerising new dual-screen work, *Dialogue*, 2022, twins the astounding video *No More*, 2013, with *Broadcast*, 2016, to further complicate and intertwine the personal, intimate narrative with the public, social one that determined her family's life when her father was suddenly arrested under internment in 1971. For nine months, Paddy Joe McClean, a community activist and school teacher was held without trial, leaving nine children to be cared for by their mother. *No More* borrows archive black-and-white footage of Ryszard Cieslak, a collaborator of theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, who believed in the ritualistic power of enacted gestures to release collective pain. Cieslak, wearing only black shorts, performs a series of postures that twist, distort and stretch the body's endurance to a drumming, thudding soundtrack. His hands measure an unseen mass, pull against an opponent in a tug-of-war and jerk and jab something away. The spilt screen introduces a tracked-down ABC News interview with McClean's mother who answers questions such as 'What did you talk about when you last visited your husband in Long Kesh internment camp?' and follows the children to their classroom. To the sound of Nina Simone's protest song 'Mississippi Goddam', McClean intercuts text from her reading book, 'Come and play, John', with grotesque contortions by Cieslak that begin to suggest the confines of a cell and the psychological torture enacted on the filmmaker's father. While the Unionist prime minister of Northern Ireland argues for the legitimacy of internment, McClean freeze-frames Cieslak's face squashed against the floor, denoting the devastating failure of brutal British policies to quell the Troubles. It's painful to watch and impossible to turn away from.