

ÁINE MCBRIDE

point of fold

28 October – 4 December 2021

sets of [approximate] accruing episodic texts

Episode i

Never be confined by the footprint... [piloti]

In advance of Áine McBride's forthcoming, second solo show at mother's tankstation, Dublin, *point of fold*, we are sitting in the gallery office talking through potential ideas. As Áine opens a laptop, the screen idles on a famous photograph of the German modernist architect and designer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, seated in one of his MR10 chairs, smoking a cigar in his 1964 Chicago apartmentⁱ. It's a man'sⁱⁱ photo of a 'real' man's man, in the time of men, which even fifty seven years later... is still predominantly a mans' world – its hard to escape or overstate the backwards draw, the societal undertow, of Afghanistan... We are seated in 'Eames' chairs, LCW's to be specific, around a Molded Plywood Coffee Table (wooden legs) – one can sense McBride absorbing 'plywoodness' - all of a certain vintage that their identifying labels only bear a male name – "Designed by Charles Eames" - and with absolutely no mention of the crucial input of his constant partner, wife and collaborator Ray (Bernice Alexandra Kaiser), until her death, ten years after him in 1988. When did Vitra and/or Herman Miller begin to properly split the credit for their work, I wonder?ⁱⁱⁱ Google doesn't easily provide me with the answer. Plenty of nice, shopping opportunity photos though.

What ignominy women face, have faced, will continue to face: Presently news carries the incredibly disturbing reporting of the murder trial of Sarah Everard, the Me Too movement, Wokeism^{iv}, has progressed awareness, remarkably the Irish women's football team have successfully negotiated the same terms of pay as the men's... Little by little – never be constrained by the footprint, pilotis^v allow the free circulation of air after all. It's Áine McBride's intent to try and do something, little by little, something subtle, about the male hegemony inherent to architectonics... Think of the incredible supine line of the MR10, without its relationship to male creation, perhaps... 'femininity' would be only that? A perception/an observation of curves. It makes perfect sense that the last article published on McBride, should be in a rather dry and rather manly [another stereotypical cliché] architecture magazine, rather than a softer/more female conscious art journal (?). The article on the EVA^{vi} commission nestles amongst schematic drawings of municipal buildings, drainage systems, photographs of award-winning neo-modernist homes and ads for architectural products and services. Like the artwork itself, an adapted access ramp to a building and a modified hoarding, it is so particular, exacting, specific, that you could entirely miss it as conspicuous 'art'. Essentially, this expresses pretty well what McBride's work is and does – it is both finicky and relaxed at the same moment, at many times almost invisible.

There's a space, while we attend Frieze, London.

On return, installation has now begun and there is an evident set of relationships to plug sockets, two concealed, one has been accrued as an element of the sculptural composition. A floor work sits purposely opposite a fourth – that's all of them accounted for. The tonalities of the floor assemblage are almost those of Braque and Synthetic Cubism (more maleness – but less than Picasso's)... We are talking...Áine stands in the space, slightly distracted, looking up at the odd bits of our architecture – the junctions of things. We are after all, for those unfamiliar with the anatomy of the space, a converted, former light industrial building, constrained by its footprint. They are knocking down the grumpy building opposite, so the environment is permeated, coloured by drilling, the noise of unspecified machines. The large wall work [mirrors] is currently covered in brown paper while the wall is repaired around it.

I still cannot find any photos of Eileen Grey or Charlotte Perriand smoking. TBC.

NB: In an attempt to follow Áine McBride's approach to process, increment and the establishment of approximate 'sets' of objects, moods, tones, purpose, as well as a proposed understanding the artist's ongoing [process] participation in the Douglas Hyde Gallery project; David Lunney, Áine McBride, Katie Watchorn, *From Here to There: Art in Process*, (20.09.21 – 05.02.22), a series of short texts, mounted weekly will build to a complete essay around the experience of the planning, installation and aftermath of the *point of fold* exhibition. It has, however been pointed out to me that plans are one thing, but they will have to be followed.

ⁱ Coincidentally, the text for Áine McBride's 2019 solo show at mother's tankstation, London, sort-of ends with both a quote from Mies Van der Rohe and a mention of cigars... "If architecture is a language, when you are good at it you can be a poet." <http://www.motherstankstation.com/exhibition/set/text/>

ⁱⁱ Photograph of Mies Van der Rohe by Werner Blaser.

ⁱⁱⁱ We have a later piece that still ambiguously simply says "Designed by Eames"

^{iv} **Wake:** Old English (recorded only in the past tense *wōc*), also partly from the weak verb *wacian* 'remain awake, hold a vigil', of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *waken* and German *wachen*; compare with watch.

Woke: contemporary/urban; 'being woke means being aware... knowing what's going on in the community...'

^v The essay '*Les Cinq points d'une architecture nouvelle*', 1926, by Le Corbusier focuses on questions that are raised within architectural design. The five points are as follows: pilotis, the roof garden, free plan, free façade, and the horizontal window. The first point is the *piloti*, which are columns or piers that elevate a structure off the ground. The fact that the structure is lifted provides many functional advantages; it allows circulation beneath the house, which frees the building site, and allows a driveway, parking space, or a garden to be placed beneath.

^{vi} **and/or land** – *On the intersection between art and architecture*; Banbha McCann MRIAI, Architecture Ireland, no.318, July-August, 2021. pg.92-93