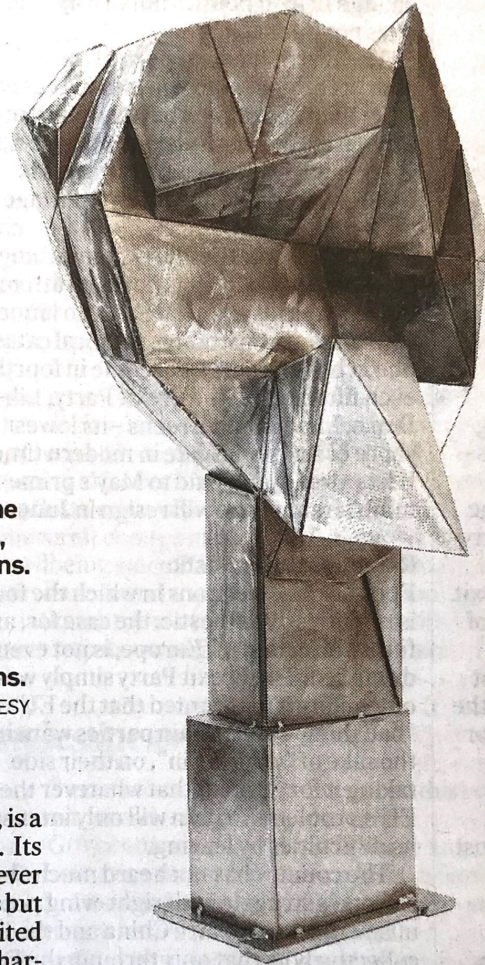


ibbons: An unusual pairing that works



■ Left: On the Slids (2013), by Lary Poons. Right: The Magician (2018), by John Gibbons.

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The Invention of Memory (Curated by Julia Gelezova) ★★★★★
Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin
Until May 30th, photoireland.org

Although it is now whitish on the outside and pared back to a relatively basic structural form, Rathfarnham Castle is emphatically not a white cube exhibition space. Internally, it comes with considerable baggage of atmospheric, historical layers. The alterations and gaps and additions have been exposed rather than disguised during remedial works, so that the interior is a temporal patchwork. And all the better for it.

The Invention of Memory, a photograph-

ic exhibition curated by Julia Gelezova, is a good fit in this highly charged space. Its underlying idea is that the memory is never an objective recollection of myriad facts but a partial, selective and pointedly edited version of events. She cites the Borges character who could remember everything, which is, in a sense, nothing, as no meaning forms around a sheer, limitless miscellany.

In their work, the collaborative partnership of Benedetta Casagrande and Leonardo Falascone explore the invention of St Mary Magdalene. Maria Di Magdala stems from the medieval legend, which transports the penitent from the biblical lands to the French Camargue, usefully co-opting a region of southern Europe by means of

identity, bound up with cherished mystical and spiritual values. That is, she does not diminish or denigrate the experiences or beliefs of the women in her family, her “cousins, aunts, grandmothers”, but she keeps sufficient distance to recognise the limitations of static, separatist ideas of identity, offering her own experience as evidence.

Clare Lyons shows a subtle body of work that makes up a haunting installation in a room of its own overlooking the parklands. The accompanying note says that she “explores themes of trauma, memory and her personal struggle with mental illness”. Her folded images have a sculptural quality; in fact they are a form of origami, beautifully made. The fragmentary images we glimpse have a dated appearance, as though they are old family snapshots, which indeed they might be. Their content is anodyne: snatches of backgrounds, pathways, garden gates, driveways, bland house-fronts, that sort of thing. But the folding mostly obscures and only slightly reveals, so we are left to speculate on what is hidden. This withholding is probably all the more effective when we have become accustomed to ubiquitous visibility.

Yvette Monahan’s Beyond the Ninth Wave is a series of lumen prints – that is images produced by arranging objects on light-sensitive photographic paper, usually organic in nature, and exposing them to sunlight. This work was specifically made for Matt Packer’s 2017 Tulca Festival in Galway, which took the controversial 1970s Atlantis commune in Donegal as its overall subject. Monahan collected sods of turf on the island where members of the commune practised primal scream therapy. The pieces of turf produce strange, ghostly oblongs. Arranged in a room where several layers of the castle’s inner skin are stripped back, the effect is all the more eerie.

speculative, even magical narrative, the promise of material relics and the inspiration of pilgrimage. Their fascinating project would surely find its ideal expression in the form of a book – and perhaps it will.

Lucie Khakhoutian’s source is her own multicultural background, encompassing Armenia and France. She treads a delicate line, mingling humour with an exploration of the more sacrosanct elements of