



Spring/Summer 2023 Exhibitions Launch: Friday 26 May

Esker Foundation Presents
Pulse of the Planet
by Australian Internationally Recognized
Artist Mel O'Callaghan



Mel O'Callaghan, *First Sound, Last Sound* (performance), 2022. Installation view, *All is Life*, 2022, Carriageworks, Sydney. Photo by: Zan Wimberley.

Pulse of the Planet is a major solo exhibition by Paris/Sydney-based artist Mel O'Callaghan that synthesizes several years of collaborations and ways of knowing.

27 MAY–27 AUGUST 2023

OPENING RECEPTION & PERFORMANCE: FRIDAY 26 MAY, 6-9PM.

CO-CURATED BY PETA RAKE & SHAUNA THOMPSON

For the last twenty years of her practice, O'Callaghan has explored resonant objects, spaces, and tools—namely how they affect, codify, and connect bodies. By working alongside experts in other fields, O'Callaghan seeks to pose new questions through her artistic practice, to highlight the natural synergies between disciplines, as well as to focus attention on how highly curious researchers reciprocally approach complex questions about our human existence.

The works in this exhibition convene transdisciplinary creative research—from oceanographers, physicists, microbial ecologists, psychologists, and musicologists, among others— that converges around the most urgent problems of our time, including planetary shifts, the viral age, climate futures, interspecies living, and which lifeworlds we must be attentive to and why.

The exhibition brings together a chorus of works including durational performance, sculpture, film and soundworks, that begin at the planet's very depths; at a site from which all life is said to have emerged kilometres below the surface of the ocean. O'Callaghan's collaborators recently made a hydrophone recording at the Axial Central Caldera, East Pacific Rise—a site on the floor of the Pacific Ocean at the boundary of diverging tectonic plates—which captured vibrations beneath the planet's surface, a phenomenon often referred to as the Earth's heartbeat. Previously, these vibrations were emitted at a constant low frequency of 7.83 hertz, but in recent years scientists have witnessed an increase to 8 hertz. This acceleration reinforces the complex planetary changes that are currently afoot. We might understand this shifting, pulsing vibration as a bodily connection with all life, both on a microbial and an immensely geologic scale, that underscores a universal resonance that transgresses global borders.

First Sound, Last Sound

At the centre of the exhibition is a durational performance, *First Sound, Last Sound* featuring two large-scale tuning forks installed on a resonant chamber. When played, the tuning forks emit a fundamental note that creates a sympathetic call and response, which on a cellular level is in solidarity with the heartbeat of the Earth. During a series of performances performers and audience members become conduits for sympathetic sound and are called into awareness of their own somatic rhythms.

This durational performance will continue throughout the run of the exhibition with the following schedule:

SATURDAYS: 2–2:30 PM - 27 May, 24 June, 22 July, 12 August

THURSDAYS: 6–6:30 PM - 15 June, 6 July, 24 August

<https://eskerfoundation.com/press-release/pulse-of-the-planet/>

BIOGRAPHY

Mel O'Callaghan was born in 1975, Sydney, Australia. She lives and works in Paris, France and Sydney, Australia. O'Callaghan's work explores human behaviour in relation to notions of resistance, endurance, and transformation. Recent solo exhibitions include, Carriageworks, Sydney (2022); Samstag Museum, Adelaide (2022); University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane (2020); Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers (2019); Artspace, Sydney (2019); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2018); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017). Group exhibitions include, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; 19th Biennale of Sydney; Seoul Museum of Art; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila; Serralves Museum, Porto; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Gillman Barracks, Singapore; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam.

Notes for Editors:

1: Exhibitions Launch: Friday 26 May, 6-9pm, free.

Esker Foundation, 4th Floor, 1011 9th Avenue SE, Calgary. Cash bar.

2: Special Event: Saturday 27 May, 2-3:30pm at Esker Foundation, free.

First Sound, Last Sound – Performance, Artist Talk & Tour with Mel O'Callaghan with co-curators Peta Rake and Shauna Thompson.

3: *First Sound, Last Sound*

FREE Live Performance throughout the run:

SATURDAYS: 2–2:30 PM - 27 May, 24 June, 22 July, 12 August

THURSDAYS: 6–6:30 PM - 15 June, 6 July, 24 August

4: Exhibition Tours, free:

Take a Deep Breath: Exhibition Tour with Naomi Potter

Thursday 8 June 6–7 PM

Deep See: Exhibition Tour with Shauna Thompson

Thursday 20 July 6–7 PM

Ritual and Resonance: Exhibition Tour with Elizabeth Diggon

Thursday 10 August 6–7 PM

Esker Foundation presents an extensive range of free online programs for all ages. Developed in response to our exhibitions they are designed to increase accessibility and to encourage participation in contemporary art.

Visit www.eskerfoundation.art/program/current to find out more and to register.

About Esker Foundation

Esker Foundation is a privately funded contemporary art gallery located in Calgary, Canada. The gallery connects the public to contemporary art through relevant, accessible, and educational exhibitions, programs, and publications. Esker Foundation reflects on current developments in local, regional, and international culture; creates opportunities for public dialogue; and supports the production of ground-breaking new work, ideas, and research. Founded in 2012 by Jim and Susan Hill, Esker Foundation is a new model for institutional relevance, curatorial focus, and audience engagement. Find out more at www.eskerfoundation.art or follow us at @EskerFoundation.

Hours: Wednesday to Friday: 11-6pm - Saturday & Sunday: 12-5pm

ADMISSION IS FREE

Accessibility: the gallery is barrier-free

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<https://eskerfoundation.com/press-release/pulse-of-the-planet/>



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