



## Urban Mountain 2

### Date

2011

### Primary Maker

Lawler, Gillian

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Description

Urban Mountain 2 has been shown in numerous venues throughout Ireland and abroad including Limerick City Gallery of Art, the RHA Gallery, Pallas Projects Periodical

Review, Molesworth Gallery, Wexford Arts Centre and the HDLU, Centre for Croatian Arts in Zagreb in 2018. This painting was originally made to be part of the Difference Engine touring group shows co-founded and curated by myself, Wendy Judge, Jessica Foley and Mark Cullen. There are intangible realities which float near us, formless and without words. In this new series of paintings, Gillian Lawler explores culturally-ingrained conceptions of a futuristic 'sublime'. She references Edmund Burke's use of the word 'sublime' in an art-historical context, where a work elicits the strongest of emotional responses in the viewer. Burke wrote that 'whatever is in any sort terrible or is conversant about terrible objects or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime'. Burke had in mind the epic battle scenes popular in 18th Century history painting and JMW Turner's stirring depictions of the violent power of the sea. Lawler extrapolates this interpretation of the sublime into a vision of the future that is daunting and formidable. In doing so, she presents her own unreliable recollections of futuristic, free-floating, anthropomorphic habitats that recur in popular culture. The use of abandoned places as backdrops, empty and laid bare, creates a vista which allows her to imagine an alternative timeline or dimension and a perspective of nature, reconstructed as a series of indefinite structures: systems in-flux, uncertain and reduced to conceptual visions of space, time, and existence. Lawler's previous exhibitions at the gallery were inspired by her visit to Centralia, an abandoned mining town in Pennsylvania. The work obliquely documented its despoiled post-industrial landscape and the forced relocation of its inhabitants to a nearby borough. Sinkholes, smouldering ventilation systems, remnants of abandoned homes, overgrown streets and barren inaccessible areas became re-imagined elements within the work. Her new work explores related ideas which surfaced while negotiating the grief she experienced upon the death of her mother in 2017. She re-visits her use of platforms and scaffolds and incorporates new forms based on paper air planes, diving boards and the bones of architectural structures. These forms are at times grounded, moving, suspended, tethered, hovering, unfolding and at other times standing apart from the surrounding landscape. They capture an ephemeral quality, a fleeting moment which bears witness to a momentary leap of faith. They invoke their ghostly inhabitants and act as sentinels, observing at a distance, travelling

perhaps to another place, appearing conspicuous at times or camouflaged by elaborate patterning, adding a surreal, dreamlike sense of discomfort, where what appears to have been planned according to a perspectival logic is withheld and subverted. At times the canvas is split into two territories with a boundary line providing a means of transition and transformation. For the artist, these territories resonate with the passing of her mother. Gillian Lawler received a BA in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, in 2000. She has exhibited extensively throughout Ireland and has had international exhibitions in America, England, Wales, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Holland and Italy. She has won numerous awards including the Graphic Studio Dublin Print Award Residency 2019, the overall winner of the Open Selection Exhibition Award at the Eigse Arts Festival in 2009, the Hennessy Craig Award, RHA Gallery Annual exhibition in 2007, the Whytes Award, RHA Gallagher Gallery in 2007. Other awards include a Kildare Arts Services Award 2018/2015/2013/2011/2009, an Arts Council Bursary Award 2009, and Culture Ireland Award 2011/2017/2018 and a studio residency at the RHA Gallery in 2009. She was shortlisted for the Beers Lambert Contemporary, Thames and Hudson publication, 100 Painters of Tomorrow in 2013, the Celeste International Art Prize in 2012 and a Merit prize from the Golden Fleece Award in 2013. Recent solo shows include The Weber and Weber Gallery, Turin, Italy, curated by Valeria Ceregini (2018), The Molesworth Gallery, Dublin (2018/2016), Pallas Projects, Dublin (2015), Galway Arts Centre, (2014), the Fenderesky Gallery, Northern Ireland (2007/2010), The Dock Arts Centre, (2009) and Draiocht Arts Centre, (2007).

### **Dimensions**

Object: 102 × 104 cm