



# RUSHES | LUCHAIR

30 & 31 JANUARY 2026

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Lisa Fingleton, 2026, *Lovelochán*

# Rushes | Luachair

An Seanchaí - Kerry Writers' Museum, Listowel joins Maynooth University and the Heritage Council for a specially commissioned celebration of Imbolc | Féile Bríde in 2026. **Rushes | Luachair** celebrates women's moving image art practice and features selected work by Lisa Fingleton, Laura Fitzgerald (project curator), Bláithín Mac Donnell, Lorraine Neeson, and Mieke Vanmechelen.

These artists explore the idea of rushes/luachair and the marshy land associated with them, both of which have long acted as metaphors for peripherality, liminality and edginess. These themes are expanded further in a series of interactive and collaborative workshops/meithleacha that respond to the work and explore the interaction between contemporary arts and intangible heritage in the fields of film, analogue and digital media.

**Rushes | Luachair** opens on Friday, 30 January 2026 at 6pm with an outdoor screening by Lisa Fingleton, a reading by Laura Fitzgerald and performances by Bláithín Mac Donnell and Cormac Mac Gearailt. The participatory event follows on Saturday, 31 January, starting at 10.00am.

**All are welcome, admission free.**



Lorraine Neeson, 2026, *Frequencies (After Light / Near Dark)*.

## Exhibition | Taispeántas

### Friday 30 January 2026

Timed and themed to coincide with Imbolc | Féile Bríde, this exhibition deploys the metaphor of rushes/luachair and the title plays with an association between rushes as shorthand for marginal and marshy land and rushes as a legacy term for a first glance at film footage shot. The five artists selected work in rural contexts and engage with ideas of peripherality, productive liminality and geographic interstices through moving-image artwork.

**Lisa Fingleton** projects on to the walls of Listowel Castle a film of the making of a new, land-based artwork titled *Lovelochán*, which features the construction a heart-shaped pond on the land she farms with her wife Rena Blake.

**Laura Fitzgerald** brings two new video pieces, including *The other's Other*, a moving-image piece that centres on the relationship between a woman and a megalith. She weaves collages and a new publication into the Maurice Walsh and Bryan MacMahon displays.

**Bláithín Mac Donnell** creates collages that speak to pieces of land shaped by hand, fields that are carved out from mountains. Along with a photographic slideshow and a camera obscura, she will perform *The Road Cuts Through* at the opening.



Mieke Vanmechelen, *Bits of Me*

## Exhibition | Taispeántas

**Lorraine Neeson's** moving image work *Frequencies (After Light / Near Dark)* captures nocturnal animal activity in close proximity to her home as part of her exploration of the peripheries of identity, landscape, and time. She includes a neon installation *Here*, which references 'writing' in the museum.

**Mieke Vanmechelen's** film *Bits of Me* speaks to the passing of time marked within moments of exchange between family within her home landscape of the Caha Mountains, filmed over a five year period.

Curator Laura Fitzgerald frames the exhibition as an exploration of the hidden value of work that exists on the margins or in the twilight and is sometimes overlooked in the studio; edits sidelined, drafts paused and other work that is part of ongoing process and, so, operates on a different register of practice to finished pieces.

**Rushes | Luachair** brings these works back into play for revisit and reflection in a site-specific way. Fitzgerald provokes the artist and viewer to look again by reframing the work with Kerry Writer's Museum. She has the exhibition "traverse the museum's rooms to bring attention to the liminal and the hidden, the unnoticed aspects of spaces like a return in the stairs, corners and drawers".

# Exhibition | Taispeántas

All five artists engage with the way land is linked to identity and destiny, an idea wrapped in the possibility of a provocative art that embraces marginality in the face of global existential challenges. Thematically, **Rushes | Luachair** is grounded in the marshy pieces of land that encompass a softness underfoot, where increased flooding registers climate change with each passing season.

Accordingly, Fitzgerald configures the exhibition to generate a sense of a local floodplain - land and wetness in a specific locality that has, potentially, more ecological than commercial value. "Within this local framing" Fitzgerald says "the works reach out from their local making, connecting to a delicately balanced global ecosystem. The practice of care is embedded in many of the artist's works and include the emotional strata of both landscape and art practice".

At the opening bilingual spoken word poet Cormac Mac Gearailt, will invoke Imbolc | Féile Bríde with a performance of *She weaves the rushes*.

**Rushes | Luachair** opens on Friday, 30 January 2026 at 6pm with an outdoor screening by Lisa Fingleton, performances by Bláithín Mac Donnell and Cormac Mac Gearailt, and a reading by Laura Fitzgerald.

The workshop follows on Saturday, 31 January.

## Luachair and the Lovelochán

### Sunday 1 February 2026

**A partnership event with Kerry Visual Artist in Residence Lisa Fingleton  
(Supported by Kerry County Council)**

Welcome to The Barna Way a wildlife sanctuary and creativity hub just outside Ballybunion. Visit the lovelochán and create Brigid's crosses from the rushes on the land with Kerry Visual Artist in Residence Lisa Fingleton (participating artist).

Commences at 12 noon on Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>. Due to wet ground conditions it is essential to wear walking boots/wellingtons and warm clothes.



# Workshops | Meithleacha

## Saturday 31 January 2026

Sarah Arnold and Carolann Madden work together on projects engaged with amateur filmmaking and the development of metadata schemas and archival practices that foregrounds women's contribution to amateur filmmaking. They led a filmmaking workshop - Super 8 and 16mm - at Kerry Writers' Museum during Heritage Week 2024, where they met Lisa Fingleton, Laura Fitzgerald and Lorraine Neeson. That sparked the idea of an event that became the **Rushes | Luachair** project.

Given the Imbolc | Féile Bríde timing/framing, the workshop is modelled on a traditional meitheal of women filmmakers and will be a hands-on exploration of the work in the exhibition, community filmmaking and the management of analogue and digital media heritage assets - old, new and liminal.

As such, the symposium constitutes the terminus for a two-year R&D journey at Kerry Writers' Museum, which the Heritage Council funded. That journey will continue. The conversations that happen during the meitheal | workshop will be summarised in a manifesto inspired by and engaged with the work on show.

In a nod to old fashioned modernism, the **Rushes | Luachair** manifesto will rally practitioners and researchers active in the rapidly growing field of legacy media practice, community filmmaking and analogue/digital assets management in the arts and heritage sectors.

# Workshops | Meithleacha

## Programme

10.00	<b>Exhibition opens</b> , curator and artists present.
11.00	The gathering: tea, coffee.
11.00 - 11.45	<b>Welcome</b> from Cara Trant on behalf of KWM, Heritage Council and Maynooth University. Laura Fitzgerald introduces the artists. Sarah Arnold and Carolann Madden introduce the workshop / meitheal scheduled in the afternoon.
12.00 - 13.00	<b>Play, Rewind, Fast forward</b> Fiona Brennan and Paul Dolan / Brian Nolan facilitate a discussion on managing collections and building an analogue/digital media time machine.
13.00-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.30	<b>Rushes   Luachair Roundtable</b> Exhibiting artists make presentations followed by responses from invited artists El Putnam and Louise Manifold. Chaired by Sarah Arnold.
15.30-15.45	Break
15.45-16.30	<b>Making a Manifesto</b> A workshop facilitated by Sarah Arnold and Carolann Madden with the aim of setting out a programme of work in relation to future practice in the rushy field of filmmaking, archival practice and heritage management.

### Sunday 1 February

12.00-13.00	<b>Luchair &amp; the Lovelochán</b> A visit to the Barna Way, Ballybunion to see the Lovelochán with Rushes participating artist and Kerry County Council Artist in Residence Lisa Fingleton. <i>Due to wet ground conditions it is essential to wear walking boots/wellingtons and warm clothes.</i>
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