

PRESS RELEASE



IEVA EPNERE ON WATER, WIND AND FACES OF STONE

FOGO ISLAND GALLERY

June 22 to October 28, 2018

Exhibition Opening and Concert:
Friday, June 22, 6:00-8:00 pm

FOGO ISLAND GALLERY
Fogo Island Inn
210 Main Rd, Joe Batt's Arm
Fogo Island, NL

GALLERY HOURS
11:00AM – 6:00PM daily
Free

fogoislandarts.ca
fogoislandinn.ca
shorefast.ca

The Fogo Island Gallery presents *On water, wind and faces of stone*, a commission of new works by Riga-based artist Ieva Epnere. Her first solo presentation in Canada, the exhibition stems from Epnere's residency with Fogo Island Arts in Fall 2017 and features photographs, projections, works on silk and organza, and a series of collaborative gestures that explore community as an open, cumulative process.

In Epnere's multidisciplinary practice, encounters with people and places, stories, and ritual expression form the basis of a larger consideration of tradition and collective identity. During her time on Fogo Island, Epnere was struck by the rugged landscape, the immensity of the sea, and the unpredictable weather—ultimately, the sheer force of nature in shaping peoples' lives. Photography became a way for the artist to mediate her experience, while the texture, colour and shape of local stones became a source of material exploration in her work. Equally significant was the differentiation of certain stones by name as place markers and holders of knowledge. (The boundary-drawing *Devil's Rocking Chair* was so named to prevent children from falling into the ocean). Local history and insight are thus embedded in the landscape.

In parallel to these physical markers are stories told and preserved through oral traditions, music and art. Epnere incorporates these within the exhibition by inviting local musicians to perform regular concerts in the gallery, and artists to contribute a work of their own, honouring customs that perpetuate personal experience and collective enjoyment.

Having documented the landscape through photography, Epnere had these images printed onto organza and silk, imbuing the translucent delicate fabrics with earthier textures of stone, lichen, and rippling water. Some of these fabrics are suspended freely in the space of the gallery, while others are reoriented toward more practical roles. Inspired by traditions of creative use and reuse of materials that is common to island communities, such as rug hooking and quilting, Epnere created a patchwork quilt out of silk. With individual squares printed with stone textures, the quilt 'makes use' of the immediate environment rather than material objects at hand.

Similarly, swaths of fabric showing lichen-covered rock, geological seams and water have been made into clothing. Like wearable landscapes, these costumes make tangible our connection to place as experiential knowledge, an embeddedness in our surroundings. Epnere invited local children between the ages of nine and fourteen to have their portraits taken, some wearing the costumes, and to reflect on their relationship to Fogo Island. She asked them simple questions about their favourite place on the island as well as how they see their future unfolding. Their responses are incorporated in the exhibition as text projections. Inspired by the NFB's 1967 film *The Children of Fogo Island*, Epnere's aim was to document the current generation of children, much smaller in number than in the 1960s, as well as their relationship to the island. The costumes themselves, once worn and photographed in the landscape, create multiple layerings of environmental and personal experience, and open the possibility of forming new traditions or rituals.

With contributions from local artists, musicians, and children, Epnere's exhibition privileges participation and acknowledges the formation of community as a collaborative process. *On water, wind and faces of stone* draws from cross-generational experiences and stories of Fogo Island, as well as the specificity of life lived in close proximity to the sea, to reflect on tradition and the potential of collective identity in constant evolution.

The exhibition is curated by Alexandra McIntosh (Director of Programs and Exhibitions, Fogo Island Arts) and Nicolaus Schafhausen (Director, Kunsthalle Wien and Strategic Director, Fogo Island Arts).

Accompanying the exhibition, a selection of Epnere's films will screen regularly at the Fogo Island Inn cinema:

Extreme Fugue for One Voice. Laima, 2013, 5 min.

Renunciation, 2014, 20 min.

Four Edges of Pyramiden, 2015, 20 min.

Es m̄cēju danci vest. (I know how to dance), 2018, 18 min.

Artist's Biography

Ieva Epnere (b. 1977) lives and works in Riga, Latvia. She creates photographs, video works and films where personal, private stories are the starting point for artistic reflections on identity, traditions and rituals. Recent solo exhibitions include *Hybrid Identities* (2018), Galéria HIT, Bratislava; *Sea of Living Memories* (2016), kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, and Art in General, New York; *Pyramiden and other stories* (2015), Zacheta Project Room, Warsaw; *A No-Man's Land, An Everyman's Land* (2015), kim? Contemporary Art Centre; *Waiting Room* (2015), Contretype, Brussels. Recent group exhibitions of her work include the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2018); *Portable Landscapes. Exhibition of Latvian exile and émigré artists* (2018), Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga; *Belonging to a Place: An Exhibition by Fogo Island Arts* (2018), Art Gallery of the Embassy of Canada, Washington, DC; *Nordic-Baltic Contemporary Art Exhibition: (In)visible dreams and streams* (2017), Gallery Augusta, Suomenlinna B28, Helsinki; *Contemporary Landscape* (2016), Cēsis Art Festival, Latvia; 61st and 62nd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2015, 2016), Germany; *Identity: Behind the Curtain of Uncertainty* (2016), Ukrainian National Art Museum, Kiev; and *Something eerie* (2016).

About Fogo Island Arts

Fogo Island Arts is a residency-based contemporary art venue for artists, filmmakers, writers, musicians, curators, designers, and thinkers from around the world. Since 2008, FIA has brought some of the most exciting emerging and renowned artists of today to Fogo Island, Newfoundland, to take part in residencies and to present solo exhibitions at the Fogo Island Gallery. FIA also presents programs in cities across Canada and abroad, including the Fogo Island Dialogues interdisciplinary conversation series, as part of its international outreach. FIA is an initiative of Shorefast, a registered Canadian charity with the mission to build economic and cultural resilience on Fogo Island.

Fogo Island Arts graciously acknowledges its Patrons, including members of the Founders' Circle, FIA Partners and FIA Friends for their essential support of residencies, programs and exhibitions.

Fogo Island Arts and Ieva Epnere are grateful to Kingman Brewster, John Bourne, Wanda Brown, Kay Burns, Dace Cipola, Aaron and Ivy Cobb, Kevin Coffin, Earl Cull, Leah Cull, Peter J. Decker, Lillian Dwyer, Lucija Epnere, Kristaps Epnere, Marc Fiset, Luke Foley, Sean Foley, Leander Ford, Kym Greeley, Dale Keane, Janet Langdon, Linda Osmond, Malorie Osmond, Winston Osmond, Laila Piterniece, Jason Penton, John Penton, Andrew Pike, Brianna Reardon, Brad Rowsell, Andrew Shea, Angie Shea, William Shea, Harry Sheppard, Scott Schillereff, Anna Torrance and staff at the Fogo Island Inn.