

KAELYNN MALONEY

Oscail an doras.

Dún an doras.

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As the lazy Susan rotates around the heavy oak table, her gaze remains downcast. Her attempt is futile; the heavy oak round table is not a friend to those who wish to hide. An uncle seeking to rouse debate provokes her with some hot-button political issue. She fumbles her wording and while the sentiment is there, she has already lost. Five others back the uncle. She, once again, directs her gaze downcast at the heavy oak table; she scours caramel colored wood grains hoping to find some new spot to investigate. A grandmother defends her but explains that she will soon understand the world after she becomes a real member. She finds an interesting oak vein as the hum of conversation continues around and through her.

I integrate personal narratives into pre-existing cultural webs, exploring the relationship between objects with imposed histories and personal artifacts. Currently my work is inspired by the geometry, themes, and structures within the illuminated manuscript, *The Book of Kells*. A medieval product of monastic devotion and an object whose lore I cannot quite place, *The Book of Kells* is famous for its extravagant and complex illustrations. Using pages or folios from *The Book of Kells*, I appropriate what I believe to be compelling geometric elements on each page. Image transfers of my own family photos are often camouflaged, or at least partially hidden within the composition. Informed by geometry and patterning in this illuminated manuscript, I impose constraints by taking line, form, and pattern from the *Book*. Weaving my background into elements of this artifact transform my relationship with said object. The simultaneous ambiguity and ubiquity of history propel my desire to marry past and present. I find *The Book of Kells* to be both ambiguous and ubiquitous, as are many historical objects. I can study this *Book*, know how it was made, who produced it, what it contains; however, I cannot know what is missing, the experience of making this object, among other mysteries. I think our personal histories are similar to the histories of objects; only those who experienced events first-hand can understand the full sensory scope. We can try to understand each other through dialogue, but experience is the only intimate lens. New forms of social media further distort past and current histories. It is increasingly difficult to trust sources for information. I witness frequent family arguments regarding “scholarly” articles posted on sites such as *Facebook*; a space that collapses the global with the personal, a laundry line of displacement and recontextualization. I often find myself sitting at family gatherings, unable to focus on a single conversation and instead perceiving this hum of activity.

My practice of appropriating geometry from *The Books of Kells* and layering it with family artifacts aims to form a different sort of relationship with cultural and personal histories, neither fully “opening or closing the door” on these legacies. *Oscail an doras. Dún an doras.* (Open the door. Close the door.) is an exploration of familial and cultural histories and mysteries. “Oscail an doras, dún an doras,” is a Gaelic phrase my maternal grandmother taught me during childhood, echoes themes within the exhibition.

1, 2015, Mixed media on stretched canvas, 60 in x48 in







3, 2016 , Mixed media on stretched canvas, 60 in x48 in

Tidings, 2016, Mixed media, each 5 in x 7 in



Tidings, 2016, Mixed media, each 5 in x 7 in
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1, 2015, Mixed media on stretched canvas, 60 in x48 in





2, 2016, Mixed media on stretched canvas, 60 in x48 in

