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By Slight Ligaments

by Aideen Barry, Limerick: Limerick City Gallery of Art, Ireland 16 December 2021–13 February 2022. <https://www.aideenbarry.com/byslightligaments>

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a yellow vinyl record playing on a bright red turntable is amplified by two slick red lacquered speakers. Barry located this behind a specially designed Schüfftan wall by master carpenter Charles Perpoil, inspired by Eugen Schüfftan's (1893–1977) cinematic special effects process. An angled circular opening channels immersive sound, bringing it into conversation with the *Monochapsis* drawings. In the Irish language *béal* means mouth, and the stereo equipment acts as tongue and voice box, prompting contemplation of contagion, isolation and our implicit desire for human connection. The joining together of analogue and digital technologies carried throughout the exhibition alludes to the hybrid futures we must imagine for ourselves.

Self Portrait, a dislocated body across nine flat screens, plays with the cropped view of the body offered by video-conferencing adopted during the pandemic. As the body inhabits rooms in a cardboard house, it overwhelms the structure meant to offer respite. Barry's dark humor seeps into the work, her breasts appear in the kitchen while in the sitting room a small couch rests on her buttocks. In *Self Portrait*, the body made strange cleverly articulates embodied experiences of this type of digital technology and it simultaneously evokes that what is lost and gained as we fathom our new post/pandemic realities.

By Slight Ligaments prompts questions about how the body inhabits place from the micro to the macro. The collaborative element at the heart of this exhibition signals the need for a critical re-thinking of society's interdependency with the wider eco-system. It is precisely in times of crisis brought on by disease, war, food and energy shortages that art is needed to help us grapple with the critical and moral implications of the Anthropocene. Work from *By Slight Ligaments* will be included in Format Festival, Derby, UK (16 March – 9 April 2023) and in a solo exhibition at Salzburg Kunstverein (Salzburg, Austria, July 2023). Barry's work asks us to consider the transformative possibilities of collaboration for imagining our hybrid futures but it comes with a warning: the future is not far off in the distance - the future is now.

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