

# SEANKELLY

Rubio, Lorraine. "artnet Asks: Isabel Nolan," *artnet news*, September 12, 2014.

**artnet**news

## artnet Asks: Isabel Nolan



Isabel Nolan. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Isabel Nolan's artwork utilizes textiles, steel rods, and primary colored paint to approach questions of anxiety, current events, and the human condition. Her work has a particularly erudite quality, with materials teased and propped to mimic symbolism and images in literature, historical texts, science, and art. Nolan's work has been exhibited throughout her native Ireland and wider Europe, including at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the Musée d'art moderne de Saint Etienne. With her first solo exhibition in the United States fast approaching, artnet News caught up with the scholarly artist to hear about her early diagrams of brains and ideas she is currently entertaining for her next body of work. Nolan's first US solo exhibition and showing of new work, *An Answer About The Sky*, is on view at [Sean Kelly Gallery](#) from September 13 through October 18, with an opening reception tonight, September 12, from 6 to 8 p.m.

### **When did you know you wanted to be an artist?**

In my early/mid-teens I figured out that enjoying drawing diagrams of brains was not actually an indicator that I was in any way cut out to be a brain surgeon or the state pathologist. In the same time period, I gradually realized artists were not dead, semi-mythical beings, and it might be possible to be one. Once that dawned on me, I never considered doing anything else.



Isabel Nolan, Answer About First Thing (2014)  
Photo: courtesy of the Artist and Sean Kelly Gallery.

**What inspires you?**

Working. And if I'm awake, the hours between 4 and 6 a.m.



Isabel Nolan, Prometheus Rock (2014)  
Photo: courtesy of the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery.

**If you could own any work of modern or contemporary art, what would it be?**

I have it. It's a very straightforward and simultaneously unfathomable painting by Stephen McKenna that hangs opposite my bed. It brings me an inordinate amount of satisfaction, puzzlement, and space for thinking. What I don't have is anything by Paul Thek, a painting or drawing would be just amazing. I do love Dwarf Parade Table, though, for very many reasons, it doesn't belong in a terraced cottage in east Dublin.



Isabel Nolan, Harbinger (2014)  
Photo: courtesy of the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery.

**What are you working on at the moment?**

In my mind, I'm brewing a book that will be about the sun, light, and metaphor—it's to accompany an exhibition *The Weakened Eye of Day* that is finishing soon in IMMA, Dublin, and traveling to CAG, Vancouver, and Mercer Union, Toronto between 2015 and 2016. As part of the project, I wrote a piece of 'speculative' fiction "The Three Body Problem." I recorded it with actors, and it is an online audio work. I'm toying with the idea of extending it or making an animated version of it. But I have been in making mode for quite a long time, so, chiefly, I am anticipating reading a lot in the next few months.

**When not making art, what do you like to do?**

I try to be relaxed. In very ordinary ways.

Isabel Nolan "An Answer about the Sky" will be at Sean Kelly Gallery from September 13 through October 18.