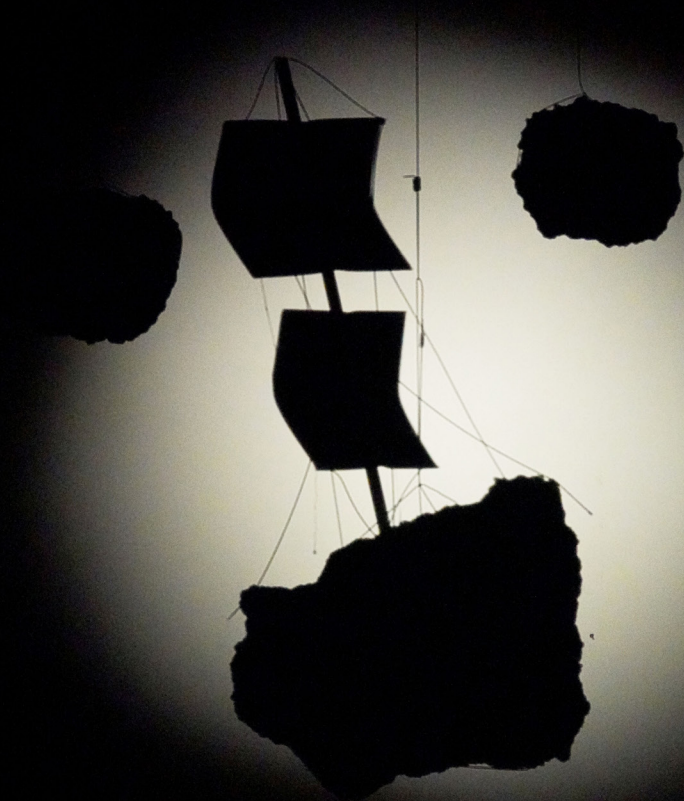


IN THE LIGHT OF A SHADOW

GLENN KAINO



MASS MoCA





In the Light of a Shadow is inspired by the connection between global protests from all around the world. Two events in particular stand out. On March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, John Lewis and Hosea Williams led 600 protestors in a march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in a nonviolent action intended to spotlight civil rights violations, while also demanding voting rights. Known as Bloody Sunday, the peaceful protestors were attacked by state troopers, leaving marchers beaten and hospitalized. On January 30, 1972, 15,000 people marched from Bishop's Field in Derry, Northern Ireland, in protest of violations of civil rights by the British government, also known as "The Troubles." British military opened fire, killing and injuring dozens. In Ireland, this date is also referred to as Bloody Sunday and has been memorialized by the 1983 U2 song of the same name.



Two Minute Warning, police confront John Lewis in Selma, Alabama, on Bloody Sunday © 1965 Spider Martin

By making evident the parallels between these events, Kaino reminds us that the struggle for equality is universal, as we have seen from numerous uprisings by people of every nation and generation, fighting to have their voices heard. Kaino's exhibition, *In the Light of a Shadow* is a meditation on the perpetual motion of change. It is a metaphor for the spirit of insurrection in the face of oppression, and an access point to the promise of the future, built on the memories of our collective past.



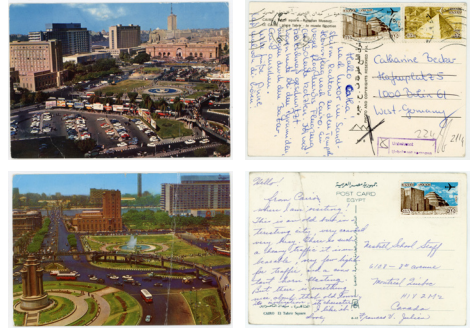
Glenn Kaino, *Power, To Overcome, The Police, We Shall, Make Love, Over Profits*, 2020. Wood, paint, urethane resin, ultrasonic atomizer, lights, water, residue of tears of multiple protestors

This immersive exhibition begins with fire, or the illusion of such. As visitors enter Building 5, their view of the space will initially be hidden by a small room containing a sculpture that is seemingly alit. The allusion to fire is one that holds many reference points at the present, from the burning forests of California as a result of climate change to the fires of Ferguson, Missouri, in protest of police violence. But fire is also regenerative. Kaino's bonfire is a contradiction, as there is no heat; instead the flames are created by the very matter that is used to extinguish them: water. The fuel is made from sticks of wood, which are carved with fragments of phrases found on protest posters, such as "overcome," "the police," and "continues." These seemingly burning remnants form an eternal flame as the sticks that once held the posters smolder for eternity.

As viewers emerge from the entry room, the football field-sized space comes into view, including an elevated pathway nearly 200 feet long spanning nearly the whole length of the gallery. This pathway provides a viewing platform that bisects what appears to be a levitating galaxy of rocks floating in the darkness. This composition is at once an asteroid field and a meteor shower; it recalls rocks thrown in protest, but in a suspended state that Kaino sees as potential energy, whereas a rock on the ground is inert, and a rock in the hand is not guaranteed to be released. The center of the galaxy is formed

by a monumental sculpture inspired by the form of the *Shadow V*, the fishing boat in which Queen Elizabeth II's second cousin Lord Louis Mountbatten was assassinated by the IRA in 1979, a dramatic terrorist event that hardened lines in the Northern Ireland "Troubles." This ship, however, contorts into the shape of an ouroboros — a snake eating its own tail — and crashes into itself. Referencing the cyclical challenge of revolution and protest, it also speaks to the cycle of life and our human condition.

This galaxy contains more than meets the eye, for, under closer inspection, a number of the rocks contain miniature sails — each fashioned out of found postcards — turning them into a fleet of ships, and transforming street detritus into vessels guided by provisional maps. For Kaino, these postcards symbolize both memory and promise — encapsulating our idea of an experience, as well as our recollection of it — ideas that propel humans throughout history. The rocks come to life as lights in the room project shadows across the walls, revealing a series of vignettes that create an imaginary tableau wherein we are all connected by our efforts in the fight for equality and human rights. This dynamic composition, scored by musician Dave Sitek (TV on the Radio), is an epic story of connection between time, place, and intention that inspires the



In the Light of a Shadow (detail)

viewer by creating space for them to be included in these shadows of history. A dynamic presentation of choreographed sound, sculpture, and light creates a unique immersive presentation of mixed media in the gallery.

The walkway dead-ends into a large replica of a wall in Derry, Northern Ireland, where Bloody Sunday took place. The original, former remnants of a burned-out building is now a monument to the tragedy and has painted on it the phrase "You Are Now Entering Free Derry." Kaino's counterpart is mirrored, doubling the size of the already enormous space, but that also creates conditions for the viewer to become part of the universe they just explored, reflecting upon the history held within. The surface of the wall is pocked with liquid-like dents rippling the surface, remnants of rocks thrown at it by the artist. The experience in this large room is reminiscent of literary critic and philosopher Hannah Arendt text *On Revolution* (1963), in which she states: "The word *revolution* was originally an astronomical term which gained increasing importance in the natural sciences through Nicolaus Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres*. In this scientific usage, it retained its precise Latin meaning, designating the regular, lawful revolving motion of the stars, which, since it was known to be beyond the influence of man and hence irresistible, was certainly characterized neither by newness nor by violence."



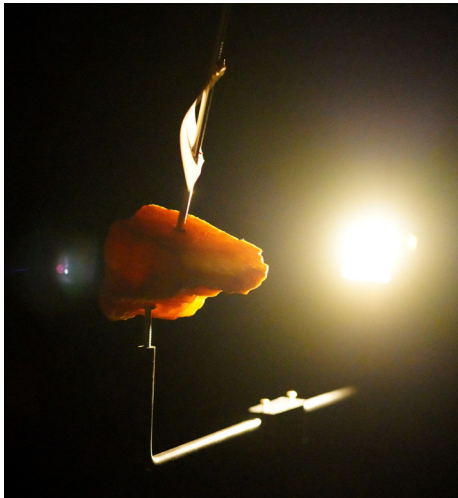
Free Derry Wall, Derry, Northern Ireland. Photo: Denise Markonish



In the Light of a Shadow (detail)

In the Light of a Shadow continues in Building 5's lower mezzanine gallery with a sculpture titled *Revolutions*. For this work, Kaino created a circular structure made from metal bars, each of which is discretely sectioned into varying lengths and tuned to play a specific musical note when hit with a baton. Struck in sequence, the bars play the melody from U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday." This sculpture conjures the intimidating structures often used in contexts

of political suppression and border divisions, yet, through the creation of this sculpture, Kaino transforms a barrier into an instrument, one that gives voice rather than suppresses it. The sculpture wraps around the central column line, forcing a circular path around the space, also a form of revolution, and is accompanied by a cinematic piece that Kaino created in which he brings the U2 song into the 21st century.



In the Light of a Shadow (detail)

The film chronicles the events of May 30, 2020, when Deon Jones, a long-time collaborator and team member of Kaino's studio, was peacefully protesting in Los Angeles after the death of George Floyd. While attempting to leave the protest, Jones was shot in the face with a rubber bullet by a police officer at close range. Jones' doctor told him that if the bullet had hit him one inch lower, he would have lost his hearing, and one inch higher, he would have been dead. Standing in the center of the sculpture for most of his performance, Jones sings: "I can't believe the news today. I can't close my eyes and make it go away." He vocalizes the refrain again and

again: "How long must we sing this song?" Historic footage of John Lewis during Bloody Sunday in Selma is juxtaposed with footage from the protest marches in Derry. In the room, Kaino has embedded a key, connecting us more directly to these moments — the cipher informs us how many revolutions around the sculpture it would take to match the dedicated protestors crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge (1,248 feet, or 16 revolutions) or the Bogside in Derry (3,698 feet, or 48 revolutions) where both Bloody Sunday events took place, aligning this moment and the current Black Lives Matter movement with the lineage of civil rights efforts globally.

Lastly, in the gallery's upper mezzanine, Kaino grants us a moment for the contemplation of hope and a path towards recovery and regeneration, in the form of a Zen garden that seemingly levitates off the floor. Sitting within the platform is a series of cloud chambers — devices that create the optical conditions for invisible cosmic particles to be seen by the naked eye — as well as more rocks. This time, though, the rocks are not thrown in protest nor are they ships, or shadows. Instead, almost impossibly, these rocks are the vessels from which plants grow out of the crevices of these inert stones. Growth, hope, and seeing the invisible are suddenly possible in the light of the shadow.



Sunday Bloody Sunday, 2020. Featuring Deon Jones with Jon Batiste and Glenn Kotche; directed by Glenn Kaino; produced by Butch Vig; cinematography by Larry Fong.

Glenn Kaino's work spans an extraordinary range of media and creative activity. As a visual artist, he was chosen by the U.S. Department of State to represent the country in the 13th Cairo Biennale and was included in the 2004 Whitney Biennial, the 12th Lyon Biennale, and Prospect.3 in New Orleans. He has had solo exhibitions at the High Museum of Atlanta, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, The Andy Warhol Museum, Performa 09, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. Kaino has created various platforms for the production and dissemination of art and culture; he is co-founder of Deep River Gallery, a founding board member of LAXART and The Mistake Room, and is a current board member of Los Angeles' the Hammer Museum, Fathomers, and The Music Center. Kaino recently released on Starz the documentary co-directed by Afshin Shahidi, *With Drawn Arms*, about his work with Olympian Tommie Smith, executive produced by John Legend and Jesse Williams.

On view from April 3, 2021, through September 5, 2022
Curated by Denise Markonish

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Cover: *In the Light of a Shadow* (detail)

Interior Flap: *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, 2020. Featuring Deon Jones with Jon Batiste and Glenn Kotche; directed by Glenn Kaino; produced by Butch Vig; cinematography by Larry Fong.

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