

Gyre & Gimble



*A publication of selected Photographs from the
Sarkis Sundial Collection of Photographic Prints & Ephemera*

Assembled by Jesse Marcelo Sarkis

Featuring:

*A New Kind of Sun
by Rowan Lynch*

© Jesse Marcelo Sankis, 2023

© Rowan Lynch, 2023

Published on the occasion of Exuberance!—a group exhibition featuring Casimir Ernest Gasser, Jeremy Jansen, and Esther Sibude at Pumice Raft from July 30 to September 3, 2023.

First Edition

Published by The Centre for Experiential Research, 2023



































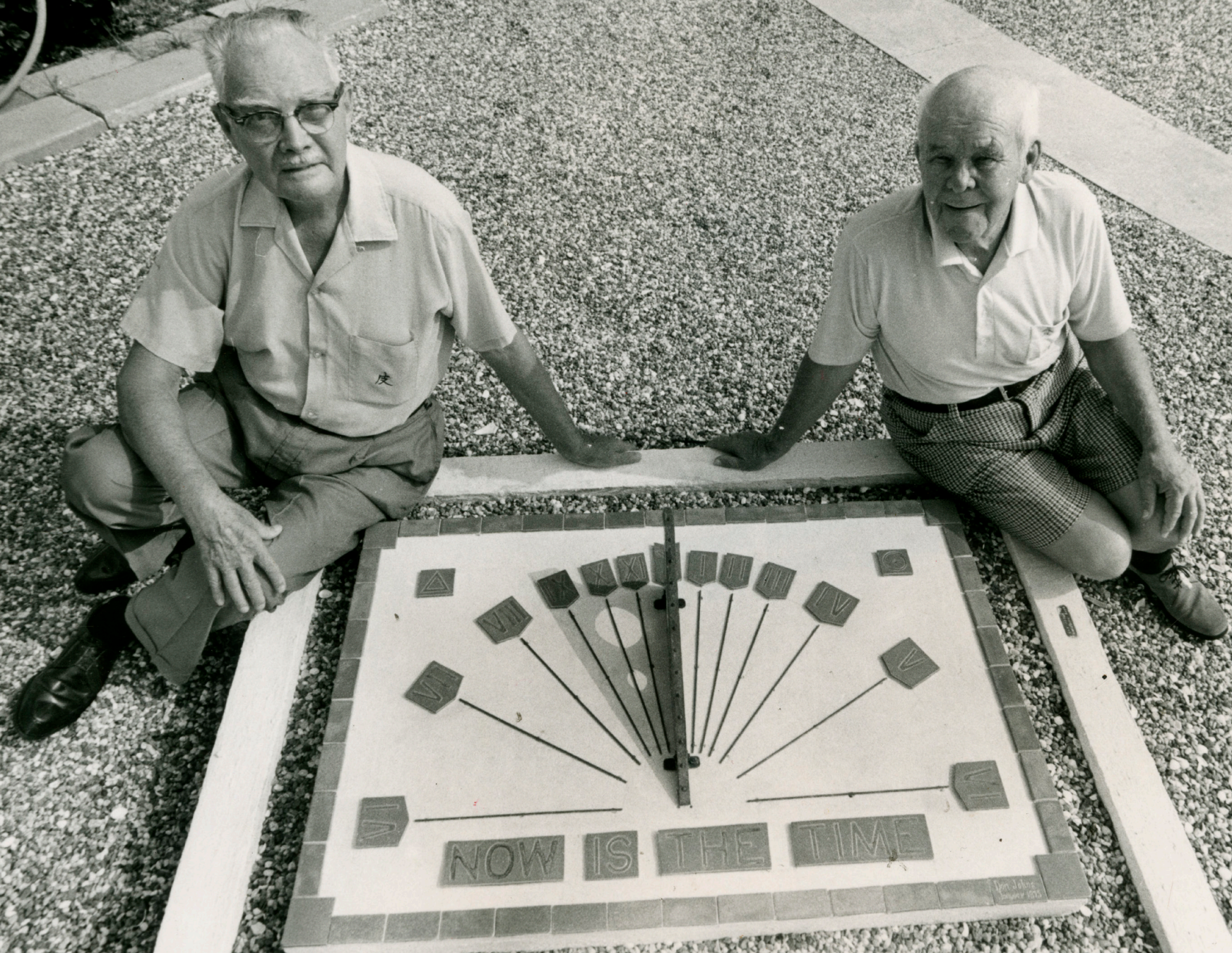


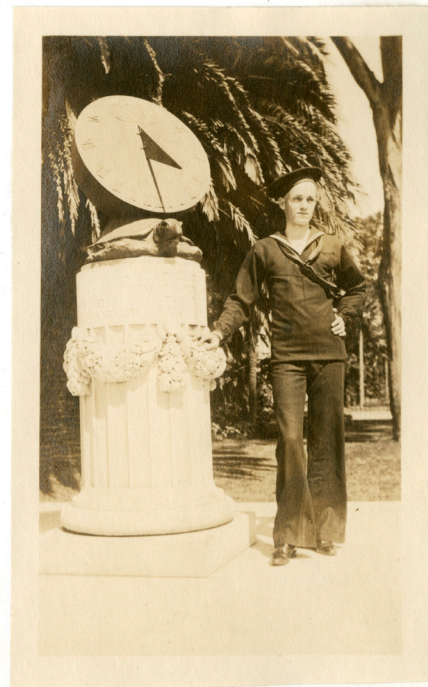


Sundial











OLD SUN DIAL, MYTTON CHURCH YARD.

SUCK, PHOTO.





Charles

A New Kind of Sun

by Rowan Lynch

This past June, I spent several days in a remote 1970's-era mobile home tucked away between farms on the west coast of Ireland. It was my first time in the area, and I did not know that the county I was visiting was home to arguably the holiest site in the country: a quartz-capped mountain called Croagh Patrick.¹

Like many holy places, Croagh Patrick exists within a tangled ribbon of meaning. Tracing one surface brings you

towards prehistoric associations with the warrior-sun god Lugh and the pagan festival of Lughnasadh, held at the beginning of August to celebrate the coming harvest season. Parallel to this, the mountain carries deep associations with St. Patrick, who spent 40 days fasting on the mountaintop in 441 AD for the country's salvation, battling demons and banishing all of Ireland's snakes in the process. The saint's achievements are celebrated in the mountain's name, and by an annual pilgrimage pinned to the last Sunday of

July. While there are scant historical records of pagan traditions, these empty spaces seem illuminated by the fact that it was on this mountain that St. Patrick had to stake his claim for the hearts, minds, and immortal souls of the island's inhabitants. The thin edge these stories share: a location, an ascent, and a time of year.

The sun's connection to the site is immortalized some 7km east, on a natural rock outcrop covered in lichen and yellow wildflowers. The Boheh

Stone is accessible through a gate leading away from a narrow country road. It rests in the backyard of a derelict one story house, flanked by a fence, an old gray horse, and a sign indicating the consent of the landowner to visitors. Carved as early as 3800 BC, the stone's surface hosts countless cup and ring marks, with several of the most intricate remaining forms darting along its flat top in direct alignment with the mountain in the distance. From this vantage point there are two days each year, April 18 and August

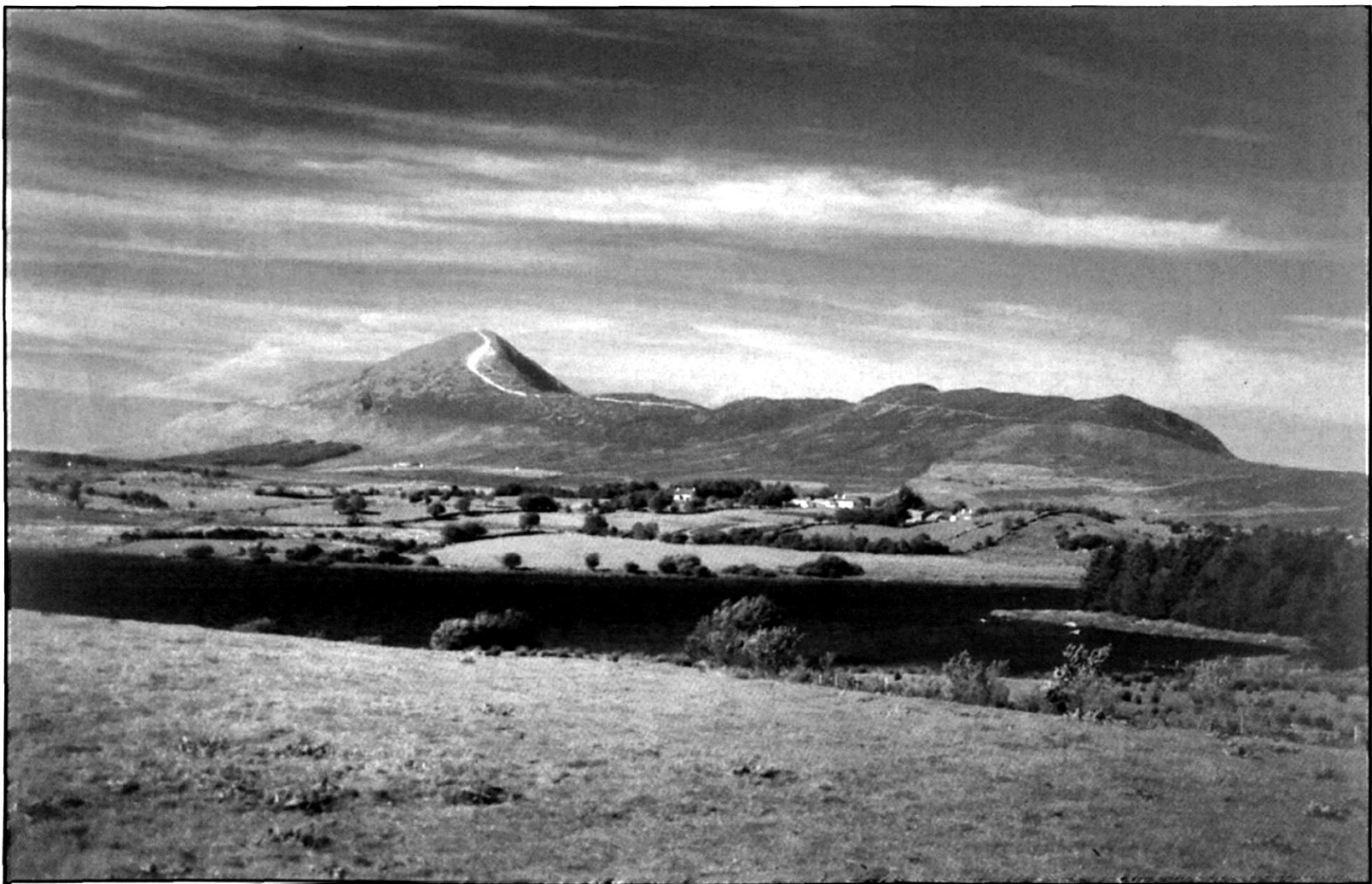


Photo: Christian Corlett

24, when the sun appears to roll directly down the north side of Croagh Patrick as it sets. No matter the intentions of the carvers, impenetrable as they are across a mass of time, this alignment has created a way of looking at the mountain that persists.

Despite delivering an impression of limitless unregulated power, I have come to

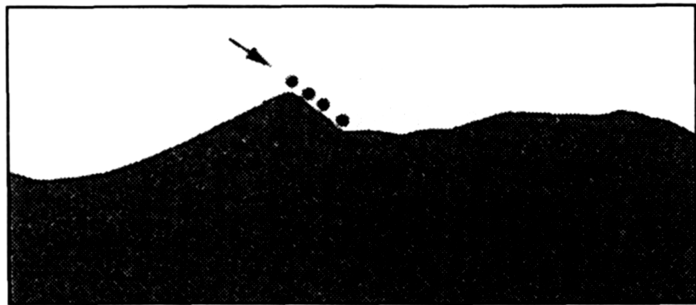


Diagram: Christian Corlett after a photo by Gerry Bracken

learn that like the rest of us, the sun is beholden to cycles. Solar activity follows a roughly 11-15 year pattern, with a peak and trough referred to as the Solar Maximum and Minimum. At the time of writing this essay, we are living through cycle #25, ramping towards a Maximum anticipated in July, 2025. These peaks entail a greater occurrence of solar flares, sunspots, and auroras viewable from unusual latitudes. This activity has been monitored from earth for the last 250 years, the sun's whims care-



Photo: Christian Corlett

fully plotted in an attempt to plan in relation to destructive potential.

I only brought two books on this trip, and in opening *Our Death* by the late poet Sean Bonney, I am surprised to find the sun appearing on nearly every page. Forming a shorthand for the enduring catastrophes of contemporary life, the sun becomes the reference for a modern force: one that permeates surfaces, inescapably changing all towards an end of instrumentalisation. In these

pages the sun rises, falls, and transforms expression into the “aforementioned words of power,” translating away the radical potential of language and enshrining it within a linguistic system of surveillance.² Throughout the poems its relentless presence is countered through a simple denial of its assumed traits: it can be smashed, it is shattered, refused.

In 1859 astronomers noted the most intense solar storm in recorded history, an incident

² Sean Bonney, *Our Death*, (Oakland: Commune Editions, 2019), 67.



that would later become known as The Carrington Event. Telegraph wires sparked, caught fire, and were destroyed. Today we live with much higher technological stakes alongside a continuation of the latent threat of the sun's force, that which "turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing. Exercised to the limit, (...) a corpse."³ Within the poems of *Our Death*, I find a contemporary desire to exist in a world that not only transforms us, but that is receptive to change in return. Within this fantasy

3 Simone Weil, translated by Mary McCarthy, *The Iliad or the Poem of Force*, (Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 1958), 2.

lies the denial of the sun as a summary of all such forces in our lives. In Bonney's words, "Not of course the pinched no of border guards and the rest. But "no" as in the opposite of the sun."⁴

During the first third of the climb, before the exertion takes me to the porous place of physical pain, I look down and see a pattern appear: circles within circles trailing each other up the sand of the path. As if imprinted into my retina, it has followed me the dis-

4 Sean Bonney, *Our Death*, 99.



tance between the stone and the mountain, reappearing in the tread of a stranger's shoe. The mountain is a working sheep farm. Sheep are everywhere, walking in wooly columns through bramble that obscures them, appearing as abstract flecks across the landscape to drink from the stream that marks the first stage of the ascent. Holy is the mountain and holy are the sheep, the comedic punctuation of their bleats rise to the sun.

At the top, exhaustion numbs my reaction to the peak's clear view of the bay. It is not until I walk around the small chapel and look to the west that I am absolved of any doubt that it was all worth the effort. The setting sun has erased the distinction between sky and water, obliterating all visual information within the borders of an immense flare of silver. When I turn it remains splayed across my field of vision, a circular void intersecting the stones that have been assembled into the shape of a cross on the summit.



The Sarkis Sundial Collection of Photographic Prints & Ephemera is a growing collection founded in 2015 by Jesse Marcelo Sarkis committed to celebrating the art and poetry of dialling. The collection consists of over 300 images, artworks, books, and other objects featuring or related to sundials. The digitization and storage of acquisitions is currently managed and made possible by friend of the collection Parker Kay. The collection is busy building a website for online viewing and planning upcoming print editions of contemporary sundial artworks, dialling workshops, and further publications.

Jesse Marcelo Sarkis is a resolved dilettante and documentary artist living in Toronto, Ontario. He holds a BFA in Photography Studies from the School of Image Arts at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Rowan Lynch lives and works in Toronto. Their practice involves writing, visual art and design, and organizing events and exhibitions. They are a graduate of OCADU's Criticism and Curatorial Studies program and one of four founding members of Hearth, a project space started in 2019. Hearth seeks to present projects within a context that values collaboration, experimentation, and community. Hearth is committed to working towards anti-oppressive, queer positive engagement, and welcoming marginalized and racialized folks through programming that celebrates the work of a diverse range of emerging collaborators. As a structural element in the makeup of a house, and a tool providing warmth, light, and food; a hearth gathers us towards itself, and towards each other.

Pumice Raft is a federally registered non-profit organization in Tkaronto/Toronto ON, Canada. Incorporated in 2018, Pumice Raft's activities begin from an ecological activist approach to the display of visual art and the facilitation of related education. This means that the guiding principles of the organization are rooted in a conception of place that begins with the protection of people and the planet.

The physical space of Pumice Raft currently resides on the land of the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and the Anishnabewaki. Located on the first floor of a light industrial building at 348 Ryding Avenue, Pumice Raft sits in Toronto's present-day Junction neighbourhood. Nearby to the west, the Humber River (Nîwân'âb Onega'gûib'îb) flows south towards Lake Ontario (Nîgami-gûchiyami).

sundialcollection.com

rowanlynch.com

pumicraft.com



