

# palmer gallery

Exhibition 05

EX-VOTO

09.10.24 - 09.11.24

Private View:  
Tuesday 8th October, 6-9pm

Shaan Bevan

+

Owen Pratt

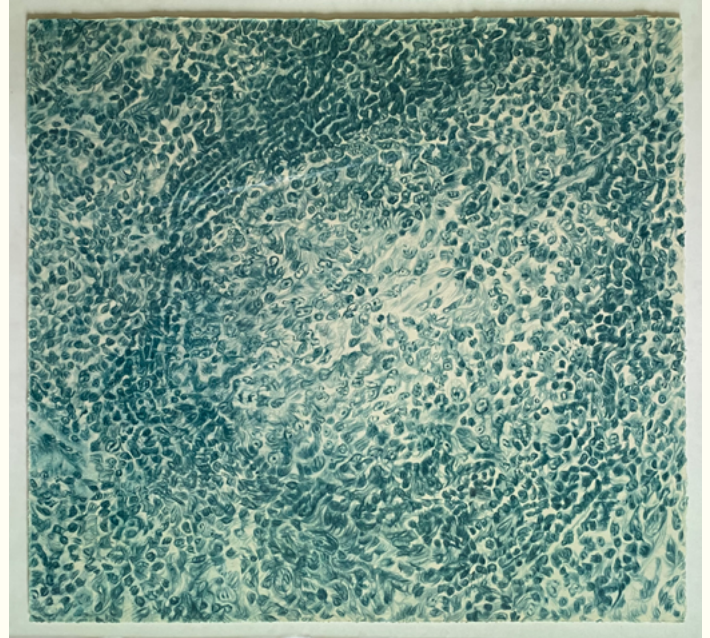
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Palmer Gallery is pleased to present *Ex-Voto*, the gallery's fifth exhibition. Showcasing the work of Shaan Bevan and Owen Pratt, *Ex-Voto* takes its name from ancient offerings used by various communities throughout human history, primarily intended to ward off illness and danger. While in her mid-twenties, Shaan Bevan was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, and her experiences with treatment and recovery became the foundation of her artistic inspiration. She left her job in the fashion industry, moved to the coast, and focused on her healing. Shaan quickly found solace in drawing, particularly in depicting the sea around her. As her treatment progressed and her condition worsened, her seascapes grew increasingly tempestuous, reflecting the turmoil within her body. This sparked a long and ongoing artistic exploration of the interplay between internal and external states, generation and decay, the body and the natural world, and illness and healing.

After entering remission, Shaan relocated to Montaigne Noir in southern France with her partner, Owen Pratt. There, the couple developed a growing interest in a nearby rock quarry once used for lithography. As such, *Ex-Voto* imagines the human body as a rock quarry (and other natural landscapes), where bodily systems are examined alongside geological processes of deposition, transformation, and extraction.

Shaan has created a new series of drawings inspired by early cellular histology textbooks, which detail bodily tissues and cellular structures. These works delve into the material makeup of internal biological systems while inviting a poetic interpretation of these structures as ambiguous landscapes. Her practice seeks to understand the origins of her own physiological pathologies, exploring the limitations of medical science and situating her illness and recovery within the broader context of earth systems, deep time, and the evolution of life on Earth. This approach considers the interconnectedness of ecological systems as essential to understanding individual healing. The drawings are intricate, skilled evocations of body and place, abstract in nature yet familiar in feel - just as the contours of mapped land mirror the sinewy cross-section of human muscle, or the rings in a tree suggest the arcing curves of a fingerprint.

Owen has developed five brass resonator speakers that function as sonic sculptures, instruments, and artworks in their own right. He and Shaan collaborate on the surface of the resonators, employing chemical patination processes and biopassivation to create unique markings.



*Pond (lymph node), Shaan Bevan, 2024, Pencil on paper under blown glass, 80 x 88 cm*

Biopassivation, a conservation technique that uses fungus to prevent the environmental oxidation of copper alloys, protects the surface from material degradation while also altering it visually. The resulting patinations are dense, swirling abstract compositions, made all the more compelling by the ripples sent through the surface from the resonator's sound waves.

A sound piece by Owen will be played through the resonators for the duration of the exhibition. The resonators will also be featured in two musical performances at the gallery during Frieze Week, with one work appearing in a presentation at the Minor Attractions alternate art fair. These works are intended to serve as repositories for performance—fields of deposition created through shared experience. They challenge conventional ideas around art conservation, particularly in relation to ritual objects that are intentionally transformed by the audience, the practitioner, or the environment.

The exhibition is inspired by an expansive concept of living entities and material animism, where quarries become bodies, organs transform into landscapes, and paintings pulse, hum, and vibrate, sustained by a living biological film. The artists seek to dissolve the boundaries between living and nonliving, body and environment.

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## About the Artists

### Shaan Bevan (b.1990) ([link to cv](#))

Shaan Bevan is an American born artist based in the Montaigne Noir in southern France. During her mid-twenties, while working in the fashion industry in London, Shaan was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. She subsequently left her job and focused on recovering. Her artistic practice became a key force in this journey of recovery and once in remission she completed her MFA at the Slade in 2023.

Since then she has exhibited with Des Bains in London and at Feria Material in Mexico City and Zaza Gallery in Naples and Milan. Shaan was part of Palmer Gallery's group exhibition *Land, Sea, Air* in May 2024.



### Owen Pratt (b.1984) ([link to cv](#))

Originally from Suffolk, Owen Pratt studied Music and Audio Engineering at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA). Whilst there he founded Cassette Music, a commercial recording studio working with many of the local bands. After graduation he moved to London, establishing Flesh and Bone Studios in Hackney with five other LIPA-educated engineers. Across the ten years of Flesh and Bone's operation, Owen also worked as a recording engineer for producer Luke Smith and set up Output Audio, mixing work by the likes of Ryuichi Sakamoto and Lana Del Rey.

Seeking to explore different approaches to working with sound, Owen began a series of collaborative projects with visual artists, including Jala Wahid's narrative soundscape 'Naphtha Maqam' (2022) and Hannah Quinlan & Rosie Hastings' large-scale installation 'Inside' (2022). In 2020, Owen relocated to the Montagne Noire in southern France. While continuing to collaborate with visual artists including his partner Shaan Bevan, his solo work as a musician and sound artist has become increasingly central to his creative practice. Highly responsive to the specific topographies of his local area, it has been exhibited in the UK and internationally.



## Work in Progress Video Links

(Please note that these are WiP videos - the brass sheets have not yet been stained/fired/painted/hammered or framed)

1. <https://vimeo.com/988388440?share=copy>
2. <https://vimeo.com/988388504?share=copy>
3. <https://vimeo.com/988388474?share=copy>