

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

# Marie-Claire Blais

## *Road Wall Door*

16 June to 16 July 2016  
Opening Thursday, 16 June from 7 to 9

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100 Niagara Street (at Tecumseth) Toronto ON M5V 1C5 416 361 2972  
Tuesday - Saturday 11-6 or by appointment www.diazcontemporary.ca

For her first solo exhibition at Diaz Contemporary, Montreal artist Marie-Claire Blais introduces three recent bodies of work, each activating the different ways that we apprehend form and space, and organize it in our perceptual memory. Diffusion and diffraction of light are key emblems in her work, articulating a space between viewer and stage of action, delineating the threshold between them, offering a route of access.

### ROAD

In *Tracé d'un clair-obscur* (Half-light Drawing), 2015, light provides a direction, with lines emerging from the dark into an expanse of pale colour. Like field markers made when navigating new territory, a way through to an interior space aligns, forming a road to follow, with the lines uniting to an imperceptible horizon. Fine lines of plaster in relief, similar to the microgrooves of a vinyl record, oscillate on the surface, expanding from and disappearing into the distance of the directed view.

### WALL

Where the lines in the works of *Tracé d'un clair-obscur* converge at the vanishing point and privilege the act of the gaze above the reward of its destination. In the works comprising *Entrevoir le jour* (Glimpse of the day), 2014, Blais alludes to the division between day and night, when daily activity fuses into dream. This "wall" is a filter, a threshold in constant flux, light and dark, shifting between blocking and permitting a view, ultimately camouflaging itself. Across the surfaces of dyed burlap, the works reveal instances of fine threads of burlap gently removed, creating voids, where the subtraction of substance equally pronounces a constituent solidity.

### DOOR

The folds of night evoked in *Entrevoir le jour* fade into a series of forms and layers, and the wall gives way to a door, barrier and entry simultaneously. The works of *Être la porte qui s'ouvre*, 2016, propose a field that places us where seeing and being crossfade and collapse the distance of viewing, suspending us at this threshold – stage and audience at the same time – with painted diffraction cascading multiplied, immersive perspectives across the canvas. The viewer is enveloped in this in-between, anticipatory space of the "rideau de scène."

The exhibition *ROAD WALL DOOR* acts like a transitional passage through these three stages of moving through space and time, giving form to the way we process what we see and how it is absorbed into memory.

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**MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS** (b. Levis, QC, 1974) lives and works in Montreal. Blais studied architecture at the University of Montreal before concentrating full-time on her visual arts practice. Her work in a range of media focuses on our experiences of moving through space and how we perceptually index those encounters in memory. Her work has been featured in exhibitions in Quebec and Ontario, including *L'œil et l'esprit*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2015), *Blancs*, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal (2014) and *Projet HoMa*, Fondation Guido Molinari, Montreal (2013).

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