

field notes: July 11, 12, 13 / 2017

collated by: Denise Lawson / Angela Somerset

re: Rita McKeough's *Veins / Listen / Cul-de-sac*

### We look in to look out.



Beyond the window is a large clear blue sky. From a distance, set against the horizon we notice animated, unnatural formations – a plunging, mechanical motion, moving up and down. The action is slow and laborious. We approach, trying to make sense of what we are seeing. As we draw closer, there is a moment of recognition – these are oil extracting machines feeding a pipeline. Their motion is similar to that of a bird pulling up worms over and over again, except they are not birds and there are no worms to be found. Large cone shapes propped up on small twig tripods also populate the landscape. At one end these megaphone forms appear to be pressed to the earth. At the other end brightly coloured birds appear to lean in to listen. Nearby, more birds appear to be immersed in the act of saying something. We are close enough now to hear their songs. They seem to be speaking to us.

**LISTEN** (window gallery): The birds are gathering at the mouths of the megaphones that have emerged from the dirt. They draw closer to listen. There is a pulse, a pumping sound, and a blackness seeps into the dirt and spreads through its veins. The birds are uneasy. They are thoughtful and repeat what they have heard, trying to decipher and translate this complex and urgent message.  
– Rita McKeough