

Crawford Art Gallery

BACKWATER **TWENTY** -10

13 March – 10 APRIL, 2010



This exhibition celebrates 20 years of the Backwater Artists Group - an artist-led organisation based in Cork City - who are dedicated to improving the working conditions and support structures for visual artists.

Curated by Stephen Brandes and Vera Ryan over 120 artists feature, each of whom have worked within the Backwater Studios whether through the six-month Ciarán Langford Memorial Bursary; a project based residency or artists who enjoy full time membership.

Founded in 1990 by graduates of the Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork Backwater Artists Group has 27 studios facilitating emerging artists and established artists in providing secure, well-equipped studio spaces and support structures for professional art practice.

Both individually and collectively the numerous artists who have worked within Backwater Studios over the last twenty years have made a formidable and dynamic contribution to the arts both locally, nationally and internationally.

The exhibition covers 3 floors of the gallery and celebrates the success of the last 20 years of Backwater Artists Group and looks forward expectantly to the next.



1. **Sharon McCarthy's** work is an exploration of different materials. In *Paintfall III* she 'combined liquid pigments with PVA, poured down a surface, pooling onto a shelf, layering several pourings over the previous ones. I try to create sculptural paintings that question the role of paint as a material and its relationship to land formation'.
2. *Haven* by **Donna McNamara** is from 'a series called 'The Very Heart of the Matter', where I make works that are a physical/poetic equivalent to extreme emotions that arise and surprise us with their intensity. *Haven* depicts a sanctuary, a hidden place where high emotions can fade and bring us to a place of knowing.'
3. **Ciarán Cronin** started his 'Flux' series in 2005. *Flux* was completed in 2009. He 'has worked in monochrome in repetitive processes over this prolonged period, both on walls and on floors. Working at speed and with dynamic energy the lines within the work suggest glimpses of the human form and the human condition in flux.'
4. For **Maureen O'Connor** 'painting is a platform to concede to one's own strangeness, and installation a technical engagement with disorder to configure something true to experience. Both pose a misshapen combination of materials and references to correspond with internal perception and thought.'
5. The piece of glass work entitled *Bláth* inspired a very short story about sleep, death and the celebration of life which **Suzanne O Sullivan** wrote. In it she writes 'despite neglect, the flowers were blooming once again. They had not died, they had merely slept'.
6. During the summer of 2009, **Aisling Smyth** 'set up scenes with a theatrical atmosphere which she photographed with a wide angle lens. She then painted a series of works based on the visual information gathered. The props and distorted angle in *Bird on Ladder* allowed her explore space and illusion in the painting. Directional marks and rich colour invite the viewer to enter in and around the illusionary space in a manner similar to her experience of making the painting'.
7. **Elayne O'Connor's** work 'is informed by nineteenth century romantics like Constable and Wordsworth. The inspiration derives from a love of the landscape and is combined with a keen interest in sport. As in *Fallen Hero*

my choice of location is imperative to the overall atmosphere of the work, which centres around or near empty playing fields and the outskirts of villages or small towns. I create landscapes that attempt to raise sport to an epic and mythic level, while managing to convey a sense of defeat and pain. My preferred medium is oil on board. I also work in mixed media, when working outdoors.'

8. Paint always takes **John Adams** 'on a journey exploring process, questioning direction, reaffirming skills and seeking challenge. This is why I paint landscapes, seascapes buildings and figure. Repetition is not my thing.' *Cork Docklands* is based on an iconic view of the city.

9. The settings in **Anthony Ruby's** paintings may be suburban and domestic. Although here we are given a title, *The Dinghy*, 'The viewer may question what the image is. It may become a merging of individual and collective memory where a distant urban setting is imbued with a veil of melancholic ambiguity. Or unknowing figures are seen through the eyes of a voyeur.'



10. **Brian Crotty's** small painting *Humility Shall Escape Them Without More* underpins an interest in sublime content. 'Subject matter is made to reflect reverence and terror in the presence of the infinite. Colours are not naturalistic and spaces are deep and ambiguous, appearing black at first, inviting the viewer to peer deeply.'
11. In a series of paper-works called *Memory Tests* **Brian Harte** used material from books, newspapers and the internet to create artworks which mirror the anxiety and confusion of modern life. He focussed on 'the life of chess master Bobby Fisher, who in his lifetime went from being adored champion, to an anti-Semitic crank, to opponent of capitalism and the Western way of life.'
12. **Brian Smyth's** 'paintings are mostly figurative. Working within the classical tradition, in *The Café-iste* and *Man In Italian Garden* and other paintings, he uses exact compositions, gestures and deep colours to convey a story or allow meaning to be found.'
13. **Tonia Keohe's** work 'is currently involved with having fun producing it. I use motifs such as deer, trees, horses and aeroplanes as everyone can relate to them. I am trying to be more experimental with colour and less precious about the outcome. The work is enjoyable for me and I hope it comes across this way to the viewer.'

14. **Aoife O'Brien** is 'interested in the idea that visual perception, ie interpreting what we see, is thought to consist of 80% memory and 20% input through the eyes. She explores this by offering the viewer depictions or suggestions of imagery which lead the viewer to his or her interpretation of what is represented. The aim is to create pictorial spaces which toy with the viewer's impulse to believe in them. Anonymity prevails yet the work is strangely evocative of places we sense we might know'.

15. **Stephen Brandes** 'likes to fictionalise real places and present them again as something other than they really are. Places which are familiar as well as strange are re-invented and the promise and escapism associated with travelling are infused with a black humour and surrealism. The work often takes the form of a meandering pictorial travelogue.'

16. In *Remembrance of Things Past* **Mags**

Geaney worked from a composite of found photographic images. She 'is interested in interrogating costume and how it informs the body's biography. In the execution of the painting I purposefully leave out the orchid head piece and the velvet choker that initially attracted me. It is the unfinished costume that alludes to the mystery of the biography of the two women'. (diptych).



17. *Angel* by **Ray Lawlor** is one of a 'bunch of pieces that have been assembling themselves, in the corners between weeks, behind boxes in spare rooms. I was aware of them and lent a hand when required of me, but otherwise let them to their own modest devices. There it is.'

18. *Ever* by **Suzy O Mullane** is 'part of an ongoing body of work which deals with the huge passions and trials of its maker. Initially, the painting reads as a reactionary piece in that it is simmering, feral and visceral. But it is also layered and held in, which empowers it.'

19. *The Behold Series* by **Catherine Hehir** 'was produced after a residency in Asia, looking at approaches to ritual in different cultures. It is a series of etchings of objects – flowers, incense sticks, candles, prayer flags, the heart – held by hand in ritual gesture. The preciousness and vulnerability of each object is expressed in these etchings'.



20. *Uccello's Cacti Chalice* by **Nevin Lahart** could be seen as a playful engagement with the concerns of the Italian Renaissance artist Uccello.

21. *The Glen (2008)* by **Patricia Burns** 'is from a series of paintings based on the north side of Cork city, which deal with ideas of home and the ordinariness and familiarity of other people's homes.'

22. **Ita Freeney's** recent series of paintings represent a change 'from using regular or anonymous forms to using more varied and irregular ones. Now roads, rivers and paths cutting through the landscape feature prominently. Although more representational than earlier paintings, the current paintings are still concerned with compositions based on blocks and shapes of subtle colour, as in *Homewards*.'



23. **Helena Tobin's** *Andean Reverie* was taken on a trek in the Peruvian Andes in 2009. 'Snowfall and cloud envelop a vast mountain peak, shrouding it in a mysterious blanket of white, its enormity almost obliterated as the blizzard fills the sky'

24. **Catherine Gibney** 'uses layers of light washes of colour to create a landscape inspired by time spent in Kerry.'

25. **Elaine Coakley's** seascapes on aluminium are pre-eminently about paint surface and light. She worked in the studio from photos taken of beaches she had seen while travelling.

26. *Prevailing Summer Light*, 'a landscape based on **Deirdre O' Brien's** visit to Iceland, registers her response to the ever- changing light, atmosphere and weather conditions there. Like all her oil paintings it is executed in the studio'.

27. **Mark Whelan's** work deals with seeking beauty in the mundane.

28. **Simon Bennett** 'draws inspiration from the streets and faces that I see on a day to day basis, though not necessarily those familiar to me. There is both magic and romance to be found in them all, as in *Evergreen Street*, if only the right perspective from which to view them can be found'.

29. **Geraldine O Riordan** has explored voyages of emigration in her recent paintings, tracking the journey her kinsman may have made when leaving Cork. *The Admiral's View* allows us to imagine gazing down on the magnificence of the harbour in Cobh from a domestic and empowered position.
30. **Video** *Heaven, Hell and Traffic Lights* by **James McCann** 'is in its fourth incarnation. The initial aim was to draw comparisons between the mechanical exactness of traffic lights and the imaginary spaces of heaven, hell and limbo. In attempting to condense the rambling, panoramic, over-articulated vision onto a single screen the video file literally exploded and this piece is a result of that explosion.'
31. *Hare* by **William Lawlor** pays homage to Joseph Beuys's *How To Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* performance in Dusseldorf in 1965. On his visit to the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery in 1974 Beuys expressed the belief that Ireland was ready for change. Ireland in 2010 certainly has changed and I feel it is vital to hold aloft his ideal that art can still protect, guide and heal our society.'
32. **Trestle Table 1**
Kieran Moore sees his drawing *And so shall we two go and worship together* as being about faithlessness and the allure of bad advice and takes his title comes from a line in *The True Confessions and Memoirs of a Justified Sinner* by James Hogg.
33. Employing images culled from celebrity magazines and the fashion press, **Gemma Browne** makes modest watercolour and gouache drawings, where the paint gives her characters a warmth of personality which are often absent from the original photos. S.B.
34. **Trestle Table 2**
Vivienne Griffin reinvents the everyday meaning of objects through personal manipulation. Here the found photograph of a man and a woman is viewed anew by the threadings on his head.
35. **Donal Moloney's** practice 'currently involves investigating the structures of paintings. Through my current investigations into digital manipulation of images and print, I attempt to create paintings that investigate both the mechanical means of producing a painting and the materiality of the substance itself.'

36. **Trestle Table 3**

‘In her photographic series *Crows in Suburbia* **Sinéad Barry** studies these birds. She is very fascinated by the ways in which these compelling creatures fit into this setting’.

37. Trestle Table 4

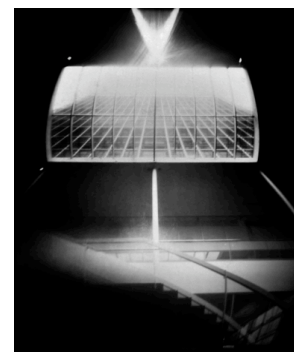
Helle Kvamme’s ‘*The Steamstudio* was built in Sättra, on Öland, Sweden. It is a glassbox 160cm x 165cm high, 2.5 metres off the ground. The studio was heated with steam brought up through a pipe in the floor. A large kettle of water was boiled on a woodburner underneath the box. The temperatures varied from 14 – 43 degrees celsius. I used the studio to study my closest environment.’ These photographs record the structure.

38. The settings within **Aidan Crotty’s** paintings ‘Tyre’ and ‘Erractic’ ‘derive from local environments that border townland, river and sea. Within these confines I am drawn to solitary subjects that seem long detached from social function. In my current work it has become intrinsic to my practice both to observe and to work from memory’

39. With one exception all the work in the Backwater Twenty Ten exhibition is current. The *I.D. Booth (1992/3)* by **Ciarán Langford** is that exception. It is a self portrait of the artist who was a deeply respected and committed director of the Backwater Artists Group from 1993 to 1996 and died in his thirty third year in 1997. In 1998 the Crawford [Municipal] Art Gallery held an exhibition in Ciarán’s memory. He is remembered too in the studio bursary offered in his name by Backwater Artists Group annually to young artists graduating from the Crawford College of Art and Design

40. *Shandon Church* by **Niamh Hurley** was ‘worked up from a series of preliminary sketches done *in situ* and photographs taken in different lights. The architectural lines and patterns present in this little vignette of old Cork are what inspired the composition. The coupling of the man-made and organic structures visible in everyday surroundings inspires the work.’

41. **Harry Moore** has been involved with the practice of pinhole photography for over a decade and is concerned with ‘the traces events leave in spaces, sometimes ghost-like and occasionally so slight that there is no visible record...The long duration of exposures and the engagement with the processing and proofing of the images help establish a meditative activity’. The title of the work exhibited- *County Hall Stairs the 18th July*- characteristically includes both place and time.



42. VIDEO In **Mark Clare's** *The Perfect Human* man is placed as the object, whose actions become a problematic and comedic backdrop for a found audio. We are told "We are going to see the perfect human being in action". This is the human being just after dawn or just before bed: full of potential or as good as dead, Homo Sapien in his small earth-bound space, surrounded with bits and pieces of technology; some light, some power, some space. We see a witty combination of vain posturing and committed karate. With limited resources, wonders Clare, how might this human being make an impact, how might he effect change. S.B.

43. **Kevin Holland's** *Watershed* is an interactive, sound-producing, metal sculpture, based on the story of the sculptor stranded in the windswept, rain battered desert shed, who is asked the question "What am I doing?" Since no answer was apparent, he decided in the meantime to make a piece of interactive, sound-producing metal sculpture based on the story of the sculptor stranded in the windswept, rain-battered desert shed... etc,etc.

BENCH

Untitled is from an ongoing body of work 'Fallen', in which **Julie Forrester** 'explores the notion of latency. The position of the almost life- sized sculpture of the body is intended by the artist to suggest a narrative that has ended in the moment expressed in the position, a moment that contains many moments leading up to and emanating from this one. The artist hopes the moment can be discreetly shared with the viewer.'

44. **Frances Murphy** views wax, from which these fragmentary sculptures are made, as only a substitute 'while the beauty of life is fragmented, analyzed, abstracted, disappearing into the light of space and form'.

45. An interest in the body, in particular in relation to certain man made materials and the tensions that are created when these are brought together and intertwined with the body, informs **Sorcha O'Brien's** current work. The three drawings she shows here are inspired by the photographic studies of Muybridge.

46. When **Leo Mc Cann** 'was young, romantic scenes in films were more often than not curtailed by an abrupt knock on the door or the phone ringing at a telling moment of caress. This ingrained non – fulfilment has imaginatively dissolved itself for me in a concerted series of works of which *Ladies Life Drawing Class, Crawford Municipal Gallery, Cork (1924)* is perhaps the climax.'

47. **Eileen Healy** 'loves the sensuality of drawing. *Jenny* is from a series of work done from observing her model Jenny. Eileen's accompanying notebooks

afford a glimpse into her working process – she feels working from the life model keeps her work alive’.

48. **Cyril Desmond’s** ‘charcoal drawing *Nude 2* forms part of a body of work which reflects his evolving relationship with art. He sees it as an honest drawing which simply represents his pleasure in the study of form and the creative process’.

49. In *After Dürer’s Adam and Eve*, **Megan Eustace** registers her response to Dürer’s engraving of 1504. She is interested in the idea that the figures in the engraving are not based primarily on studies from life but on theories of perfect proportion. If this exhibition space is entered through the Sculpture Galleries of the Crawford Art Gallery, one can see casts of the kind of sculptures on which Durer based his figure of Adam and get a sense of the dialogue about representations of the human figure across time. Megan’s notebooks also show her process.



50. Drawing has been at the core of **Lorraine Cooke’s** ‘practice since graduating from the Crawford College of Art and Design in 1994. For the last eight years she has worked both from the model and from Nature on a small scale.’ Using drypoint etching, her clear sensitive lines evoke mood with economy and clarity.

51. In her photographic work *Pietà* in which she posed the female model in the position of Christ in Michelangelo’s iconic sculpture, **Annette Persson** ‘explores the complexity of identity, shame and pride, tender strength and raw vulnerability. It’s about holding yourself up and letting yourself be held’.

52. **Alannah Byrne’s** ‘site specific wall drawing is made with thread. *Structure VII* is based on a vocabulary of geometric forms with numerous art-historical inferences or references. Through the exploration of line and the study of colour an image emerges.’

53. **Pamela Myers’s** ‘*Notes of a Diary* is an installation of small canvases manipulated to appear like scraps of paper. It challenges hierarchies and perceived values in art. The imperfections and incomplete artist’s notes plot the development of an idea.’ Her initial plan to do a performance piece based on being suspended in the air evolved into the acquisition of a

camera with which to record what she observed. Her notes of intention and desire become the actual piece.

54. VIDEO: 'In *Adam and Luan* **Tessa Power** situates a duet through which she explores the idea of a neutral voice, specifically engaging with the idea that the sound of one's voice is largely influenced by one's local environment. The vocal mimicry acts to emphasise similarities between the human and the dog, referencing their social partnership'.

55. **Tom Campbell's** 'Three Dogs were made this year as part of a collaborative project to make a pack of 100. They are made using re-cycled materials. The objective to make 100 dogs was not quite achieved; but 73 were made as part of an open collaboration. People were welcome to help create the dogs, who then toured to Electric Picnic, Art Trail and Rosspoint (Shell to Sea) in the Cork Circus van. When the dogs were sold the funds raised were given to a human rights activist who works in Palestine.'



56. **Tom Campbell's** pages from a diary show his preoccupation with the human face.
57. **Niamh Davis's** drypoint etchings '*If you say the word enough times each day you'll find it* and *If only I could remember* are stills of faces for an animation based on sixteen people's definitions of love. The ideas on love of the French philosopher Alain Badiou were a starting point for her project'.
58. **Eileen Healy** sketchbooks
59. **Megan Eustace** sketchbooks
60. *Welcome Strangers* by **Pat Mortell** 'call attention to issues of cultural diversity and social inclusion raised recently in Ireland by the explosion in immigration numbers in a country whose experience has been primarily of emigration. The drawings have been created from media sources; each face- not a portrait, but a representation – is of a unique individual and intended to be seen at eye level without barrier of glass or frame. In another context, such faces could be son, daughter, cousin...'

61. **RED BRICK WALL: Chris Samuels** in *Up!* a small series of contained enamelled faces, manipulated images of his 'own face from photographic sources to form a self-examination which acknowledges that both photography and enamelling have strong associations with keepsake objects. *Up!* becomes an attempt to reconcile the personal with the public image.'

62. **Deirdra Nolan** 'needs colour to be high and saturated, visceral, Catholic in taste and emotion, like the shining jewelled stained glass in churches. As a young pregnant woman in Britain I became aware of another young woman who used to gaze longingly out of her window, looking to some remembered landscape, a lost paradise. *Flight Paths of Paradise Birds* speaks of the loneliness of the married home, the removal and longing for the other self, the carefree child/girl. The desire for familiarity and the sadness of estrangement is a consistent thread in the work'.

63. **Martin Healy's** photographic *The Sleep of Reason* (2006) explores the symbolic and mythological associations of birds. The title refers directly to the creatures that surround the sleeping figure in Goya's print of same name.'



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64. **Maureen Considine's** photograph *For Michelle* relates to collective loss and memory. 'At the gable end of a terrace, tenants and friend of Michelle McCormick, missing since 1993, erected a Marian grotto in her honour. The grotto is an expression of grief at the loss of a loved one and a rejection of authoritarian regulations. I am told that residents built the memorial with their bare hands. On close inspection a photograph of the missing woman can be seen at the centre of the grotto.'

65. **Lucy Phelan's** photo-print *His Needs were Greater than his Power to Resist* 'in a nutshell deals with what we need and what we want which are not necessarily the same thing'.

66. **Robert O'Connor's** *End* is from 'a series of photographs taken in Berlin, which focus on the language of the city, such as posters and billboard advertising. Advertising, unquestionably one of the central roles for photography in capitalist societies, was a starting point'.

67. **Kieran O Connor** 'loves the orange of sodium vapour streetlights at night; the way they strip away the mundane colours of day and make every walk home a trip through a Fritz Lang film. Photography has been a way of making images between times. I can make a picture while making dinner, while walking home, while watching television. This has allowed me to continue making art after a fashion at least, without having to be an artist'.

68. *The Forest Series* by **Lorraine Neeson** is a series of photographic images produced in a dark forest at night. The flashgun on the camera serves as the only available light source. Triggered at random intervals, it provides the necessary illumination to enable navigation of the dark unfamiliar terrain, while also providing the necessary light required to expose the photographic image. The concept of *eyeless sight* is explored, as the camera becomes both the steering apparatus and eye during the entire process. From the information presented, the viewer is forced to mentally construct and navigate darkened areas of unknown territory, which are devoid of visual information beyond the surface of the image.'

69. **Olivia Hassett** 'creates habitats that reflect her personal narratives and offer an opportunity to view an alternative world. Elements of absence and presence and the tensions which occur while attempting to reconcile opposites feature strongly' and are evident in her mixed media installation *Biosphere*.



70. *Two Sleeping* by **Sinead Rice** can be viewed as visual abstract meditations where the artist, 'through the minimal ordered forms of these small abstract paintings attempts to evoke empty, quiet spaces. The surfaces are built up through intense layering of colour over time, to achieve physical depth, relating to the way in which layers in nature are built up and worn down through the processes of time'.

71. In his installation *Eye Box* **Cliff Dolliver** 'encourages playfulness by allowing the viewer to manipulate the imagery, which owes as much to formal aesthetic concerns as it does to discovery of emerging subject matter. The techniques used in *Eye Box* and its resemblance to a diorama or set model are an extension of the artist's exploration of the contemporary role of the visual artist'.

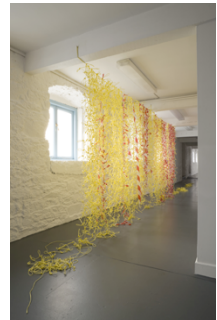
72. **Susanne Leutenegger** is mainly known as a painter. '*Growing Figures in Space* reflects studio experiments. You can track the presence of a variety of materials and approaches, mixing pigments with ash or plaster, rolling

and embossing clay, trailing acrylic paint grainy with marble dust. The physicality and playfulness involved comes from a deep urge to embody and make visible inner states of mind'

73. *Co-ordinates and Mapping the Grid* by **Tanya de Paor** 'are part of a series of carbon drawings inspired by daydreams of leaving, of detachment and of change. There is a playful element to the drawings, which comes from imagining how a child might alter a modern suburban landscape'.

74. **Tanya O Keefe's** 'work involves the use of found objects in an anthropomorphic way, evoking human relations'.

75. The title of **Tony Magner's** work, '*2.2727273 Mile's* refers to the approximate length of knotted twine in the work. The piece results from the activity of making a knot, the simple act of twisting a yarn upon itself that forms a notch on a piece of string, then draped together to make a cloth. Like a rosary or *quipu* – an ancient Inca device for recording information, consisting of variously coloured threads knotted differently – the repetitive binary scribble binds time and hints at a language half forgotten.'



76. **Dominic Fee's** 'recent body of work has been based on the circle, with its many well worn connotations of divinity and perfection. By subjecting the circle's infallible geometry to imperfections, negative spaces and controlled interruptions he tries in his installation to see how the ideals survive.'

77. Taking Le Brun's idea of 'Naturalized Man' and pushing it further **Sarah Iremonger's** 'figures are not only 'Animalized', but also 'Landscapized'; they have become heroic and time-less creating a physical bay or haven between them. A stylized fantasy of the idea of an enduring romantic relationship between humankind and nature, these works continue an obsession with exploring how we relate to and understand the world around us.'

78. *Warfarin Anti Coagulant* by **Paul Drohan** 'is based on a montage of different images. The man on the trolley is based on a newspaper photograph and the outlines of the curtain were drawn working from a photo the artist took on his phone in a local hospital. The cool palette and realistic figures are a move towards more subtlety and less grotesquerie than is characteristic. The choice of matter- of -fact title reflects Otto Dix's belief that it is not the artist's job to convert but to bear witness.'

79. **Julia Pallone** sees 'the spilled grains of couscous as little animals that are running away and drawing a wild forest on the wall, while the space opens up into a fantasy world. Using different means such as installation, drawing or photography, she creates worlds where the vegetal, animal and human intertwine. She develops a vision of a world that is fragile and vulnerable. Her interest lies in the surging up of the fantastic in everyday life, not as an intrusion but as part of it.'

80. In *Trouble No More* **Ray Murphy** 'experiments with the potential of the human figure to communicate an emotion, such as sadness, to the viewer. He is also interested in the ability of the language of Christian art to convey emotion in a contemporary context and in the relationship between irony and sincerity when conveying emotion in painting.'

81. *L. Ron Hubbard* by **Ian Healy** is part of 'Offerings', a series of works 'investigating religious types through portraiture. It is a partner piece to *Louis Farrakhan* with 'American History Man' as the sub-heading. I wanted to display them in a Pop art style and in close association with American art of the 1960s. I was fascinated by the apparent 'louder than bombs' artifice of American religion, from the Nation of Islam, to scientology to American Evangelist preachers.'



82. **Brendan Butler** is a 'painter of stories, inspired by dark fairytales and classic and modern literature. With imagined sources as a starting point, the stories evolve through the process of making the work. The characters and actions change and develop in the process. His characters enact a variety of roles and sometimes depict disquieting tensions beneath the surface.'

83. **Patrick Corcoran's** *Portrait Number 4* is part of a body of work which explores 'how we respond to images and footage presented by the media. The work also deals with themes of conflict and anxiety in both a personal and global context.'

84. In *Painted Ladies* by **Wendie Young** the artist explores her interest 'in taking photographs of subjects with which people can identify, while at the same time capturing something that is removed from reality. The soft painterly quality draws the viewer into exploring an emerging dream like atmosphere. The face echoes the markings on the butterfly of the title and the delicate ephemeral nature of the butterfly relates to their fragile young innocence.'

85. The title of **Danielle Sheehy's** sculptural drawing '*Three Little Birds* comes from the title of a poem by Lewis Carroll. The work removes the drawing line from its surface, freeing the birds to run around. The verse that these birds illustrate runs

Little Birds are seeking
Hecatombs of haws;
Dressed in snowy gauze;
Dressed, I say, in fringes
Half-alive with hinges
Thus they break the laws'

85.VIDEO: *Looking and Listening in Lines* by **Tanya De Paor** 'is a multimedia project exploring ideas of identity and place. The project developed through a series of mediations into social and cultural relations – of people to place and the connection of citizens to the urban landscape. This was a collaboration between a group of young boys from the Knocknaheeney/Hollyhill area and the artist. The work was installation based and screened on LCD monitors in a transformed car in Knocknaheeney and the Courtyard, Backwater Artists Group, Wandersford Quay'.

86.VIDEO: **Conor Harrington** discusses *Masters of the Universe* (2009), a large mural executed for the New Art Gallery in Walsall in this short interview.

87.VIDEO: This video is a documentation of some projects completed by Backwater members over recent years and includes some footage of social events. It has been compiled by **Éilis Ní Fhaoláin** and **Lorraine Cooke**.

88.VIDEO:**Lisa Fingleton's** short film '*Portraits* (2009) was created as a part of the 'Creating Waves' education project at the Crawford Art Gallery. Students from Beaumont Boys School filmed their responses to the exhibition "The Hero With A Thousand Faces" which was about portraits of Irish writers, with assistance of the artist/filmmaker. Each student got an opportunity to work as camera/sound person and director.'

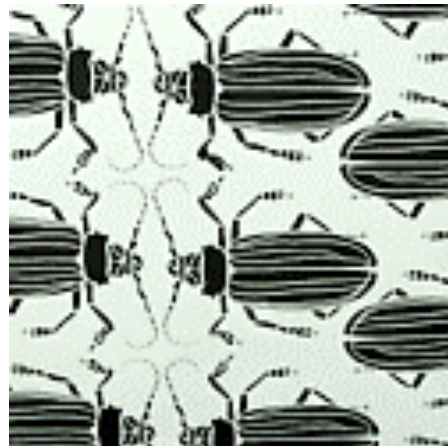
89.Viewed together **Ben Reilly's** 'sculptures made in cast wax seem familiar, perhaps triggering distant memories, their sombre inky blackness tinged with colour of humour'.

90.In **Laura Lynda Loughnane** 'tried to capture the sadness and despair of this little girl on the biggest day of her life, her First Communion day. It was painted from a photo of my sister who was quite sick on that day in 1988 but tried very hard not to show it. Of all the photos taken that day, the one

on which the painting is based is the only one which shows signs of sadness.'

91. In her sculpture *Arbiter* **Éilis Ní Fhaoláin** is exploring her interest 'in ideas of territory and its associated physical and mental boundaries. Issues of choice, taste and ownership arise alongside those of the predatory, the defensive and the protective.'
92. VIDEO: **Aideen Barry** 'is preoccupied with the search for what is 'Gothic' and *das unheimlich* or uncanny in the everyday. In *Levitation* (2007), the artist created the illusion of levitation by making a performance to camera of a repetitive jump to create a slippage or augmentation of reality. She hovers while hovering, in an effortless yet hysterical gesture of obsessive domestic work. The piece is informed by the artist's diagnosis of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder'.
93. **Margaret O'Sullivan** gave 'the title *Óenach* to her painting as a clue to the source of imagery. It is the ancient Irish word for feast/assembly. The painting is built up with layers of umbers and is divided and subdivided into uneven panels, to give it a sense of narrative. The light colours of the mythical images on the dark background are used to evoke a sense of presence'.
94. *Generate Transmission* by **Kevin Tuohy** 'is part of an ongoing exploration of the physical production and perception of sound and of the perpetual need for activity which often results in self fulfilling loops and nothing else. Solar panels are used to collect energy from a television screen, which is transmitted to a radio and made audible'.
95. '*Irish Summer* by **Debbie Godsell** was originally part of an exhibition entitled 'Idyll'. This body of work explored a cross reference of iconography commonly associated with Irish identity. *Irish Summer* depicts an idyllic, romantic and mythical land where a tapestry of shamrocks and rainbows replaces politics, finance and endless rain.'
96. *Natural Processes 1* by **Mags Dunne** is from 'a new body of work in which plaster slabs carved with contour lines of mountains originally created for use with clay are used to produce textured prints that express the colours and effect of weather and erosion on the mountainous landscape.'
97. *Mind's Eye* by **Frances O'Connor** is one of the works she 'begins by deriving an abstract composition from a photographic source. What evolves on the canvas is a new and separate organic entity, a conversation between the paint itself and [her] internal emotional landscape.'

98. **Marianne Keating's** 'work is an exploration of the individual and their perceptions of reality, focusing on how recurring motifs of the outside world may alter and impact on the inner ideals and morals of even the most incorruptible and faithful. Paranoia is a thought process heavily influenced by anxiety or fear, explored through the use of wallpaper, which most commonly provides a backdrop in our everyday domestic setting. Think wallpaper, and we think of warm, familiar, maternal, cozy interiors that are unassumingly, ever-present elements of a home, unobserved and merged into the background. At first glance they portray a benign decorative aesthetic, but on closer examination a darker less obvious message is implied.'



99. In every painting she makes, including *Cockerel*, **Margaret Walsh** 'aims to capture the essence of its subject. The bird is strong yet vulnerable, at one with its environment yet distinct from it. ...painting animals is rewarding in that they are always themselves and therefore can be depicted in an honest way'.

100. **Fiona Dowling** 'makes art about Love and Happiness in a warm, poetic and humorous way. She invites visitors to the Crawford Art Gallery to come and relax on her sofa, watch her home made television and let their imagination do the rest.'

101. For **Eveleen Murphy**, 'the use of the side table refers to the female role and plays with the idea of stereotypical feminine needs, posing questions of pride and happy endings being all a woman desires. The images sit as though collaged, but are in fact painted. The scenarios constructed appear random but in effect compete an ambiguous narrative in what can be described as a curious mindscape or even beautiful fantasies with an air of impending doom.'

102. **Amanda Rice's** 'work is informed by found detritus and unwanted material, often re-assembled referencing the decorative. The work playfully references the banal, frequently in a jovial manner.'

103. **Ellen Barrett** 'responds to the environment in which she grew up and takes inspiration from the landscape, in particular the coastline. As is evident in *Fastnet*, lighthouses, boats and beacons are significant symbols in the work'.
104. *Memorial Drawings* by **Gail Ritchie** 'were conceived to understand and de-code the common architectural language of War memorials. These drawings were completed whilst on residency in Paris and focus mainly on monuments, which have been given a commonality in scale and tone and are inclusive of all countries involved, in order to be both non-partisan and non-judgemental. The drawings were the first stage in the development of a 'Universal Memorial' based on organic form'.
105. **Valerie Gleeson's** '*Cow Studies* evolved from a series of drawings undertaken during a residency at the Cill Rialaig Artists Retreat in 2008. Produced is a set of etchings on copper plates. The weather was wild and inhospitable. Armed with my sketch pad and pencil I fought adversity to be part of this landscape and to understand and capture the spirit of these animals. I found myself perched in precarious positions in order to capture the essence of these intriguing creatures; this tension is mirrored in the hostile unsettled images. I was reminded of Brian Lalor "No human presence moves on the headland; a few cows graze in the crazy fields, sheep clamber on more challenging terrain" (from *The laugh Of Lost Men*).'
106. **Lorraine Cooke's** drypoints of a tree in winter reflect her commitment to drawing, which is at the core of her practice.
107. **Sarah Roche** 'works mainly in installation and performance. *White Drawing* is part of a recent body of work which was shown as the installation 'suspiramus' (2009). This title relates to a quotation of St. Paul; that prayers are like sighs too deep for words.'
108. **Paul La Rocque's** 'work deals with icons and superheroes. The idea of the guardian angel was investigated when doing his Master's degree and over time he began to look further at the subject matter from other angles, particularly the viewpoint of popular culture and the superhero who like guardian angels, possesses super powers and does battle between good and evil.'
109. **Laurie Le Grand's** 'investigation, initially based on the human form, has expanded to encompass its natural and social environment. The presence of natural elements emphasises the relationship between

humankind and nature and the use of mythology presents the figure as sacred, enduring yet carrying the stigmata of its time.'

110. **Deirdre O'Brien's** drawing is based on her interest in the ever-changing light conditions in Kerry.
111. 'An exploration of the human condition and life's rights of passage underpins **Noelle Noonan's** work. The recent work is introspective, a response to the mystery of death and deals with themes of memory and loss. *Surrender II* is a monoprint drypoint.'
112. **Amelia Norman's** etching *Lion and Deer* 'is based on the anthromorphism of human to animal. The piece ironically involved a ritual of morphing Artemis in the grip of a dominant Leo in a contemporary environment.'
113. **Ciara Healy's** *Hedgerows* is part of 'a recent body of work titled 'A House In The Country' which draws inspiration from the rural village where I live and reflects upon our aspirations for the 'good life' as well as the impact, both transient and permanent, we have on our environment and consequently, our sense of place. Etched into the architecture, the pavements, the allotments full of rhubarb and sweet pea around me are the traces of a history connected with nature.'
114. **Stephen Gunning's** video work is often anthropological in content, exploring social events and behavioural codes. Shot in Estonia, *re-lapse* focuses on performance by a local Shaman/poet in a disused metal storage tank. Though closely resembling a contemporary art performance, there is something primal and uncontrived that sets *re-lapse* very much apart. S.B.
115. **Stephanie Hough's** video 'piece takes its inspiration from a sub-genre in 'YouTube', which involves adding voice-overs to footage from many popular cultural videos, filmic and televisual forms and subverting the original meaning with humorous intention. This video is part of a broader body of research I began during my MA, where I was looking into the phenomena of user generated online video and its effect on video art. The footage in the video piece is appropriated from Donald Cammell's 1977 sci-fi thriller *Demon Seed*. I am satirically attempting to relate the fear of technology (expressed in early sci-fi) with the fear of video art.'
116. **Maire O Mahony's** *The Handmaiden's Tale* 'is named after the folktale which document a young woman's rite of passage from the

under-world of the psyche into maturity. Videos from the 1970s psychoanalysis and storytelling are the inspiration for the work.

‘Dreams are just nightmares wearing lipstick
Glimpses of the Sublime in fear and wonder
Small magic and flights of fancy
Now and then
Storytime.’

117. **Sandra Minchin** writes about *Insomnia*, ‘I swing from left to right, as I feel empty inside, keeping the movement slow. Nobody cares, nobody hears..... Life’s a lonely drag.’
118. Colour has always been very important to **Mae Holland** ‘I use it extensively to express my feelings. I have travelled widely and experienced many cultures and varied architecture and in an abstract way, all these have played a part in creating this body of work.’
119. Although many shapes in her work are based on elements from the natural world, **Carín MacCana** does not intend works such as *Crucible* ‘to be representative of reality in any way. I would like it to be seen as a celebration of colour and form, with the ability to convey and reflect emotions’.
120. **Catherine Murray** believes that you paint something about which you don’t know. Although she travels a great deal, neither *Gothic (right)* or *Punjab (Left)* are based on places she visited. In her practice she ‘explores the harmonics of space, form, balance, surface and colour. Work is a process of intuitive enquiry and is articulated via the medium that suggests itself to decode the artist’s voice, in this case paint, but in others video, photography or soundscapes.’
121. *Late Light, A View from Cliffside* by **Lorraine Mullins** is painted in characteristically rich colours. Sumptuous deep pinks and reds are suffused throughout the canvas, intensifying and celebrating the richness of a late sun which almost overwhelmed the world it usually illuminates.
122. **Elizabeth O’Callaghan’s** ‘work is an exploration of colour inspired by the sensations experienced first-hand and from memory, of sea and landscape, hoping to recreate the immediacy and energy through colours, texture and form. Brush strokes are abandoned in favour of pouring, dragging and spraying paint onto the canvas.’

123. *Let There Be Something Wise In Your Saliva* is a piece made during **Eva Maher's** 'time in the Backwater Studios. The space in the piece may represent the space felt while in the studio. Airy and spacious. Deserving. The title draws on poetry as much as it does on painting, asking the viewer to add his/her own wisdom and story to the lines created. It may also hint at gaining wisdom, or some information being disclosed through an act of intimacy – intimacy with the viewer perhaps. That interaction, that questioning takes the form of overlapping interwoven lines. Overlapping and considered, wrapped with the same thought as one might wrap a skein of wool.'
124. *Scallop* was inspired by the South West coasts of Ireland where **Rebecca Peart** 'has been living and painting since 2006. The translucent amoebic form of the scallop and its life in the sea where it is an active swimmer went in tandem with act of painting. The different hues of yellow suggest the freedom and optimism and delicacy of the active scallop.'
125. *Sprightly Dance* by **Sínead Ní Chionsaola** 'is about the dance of water, based on her observations of the Mahon Falls in Waterford and the play of light on water there. Kandinsky wrote about the inner voice of the soul that can be reached only through solitude. Nature serves as a doorway to true self expression. I am a direct painter exercising total commitment in which the paint is allowed to converse.'
126. **Caroline Buggy** 'sees her painting *Digging for Light* as a collaboration formed by the people, the land, the 'underground –scapes' of her childhood and memories of mining stories. In this series, she layers abstracted form and colour until she finds a level of emotive balance between the elements'.
127. **Wesley Triggs's** painting 'relates to our urban environment. Observing a building project during its destruction and observing the decay and weathering of everyday objects, he is interested in reflecting the relationship between old/new, weight/weakness, polished/eroded in his work.'
128. **Kieran O'Donovan** regards his work 'as both a physical and emotional journey, through which I explore the language of painting, a powerful carrier of human emotion that is influenced by the complexity of life experience.'