

---

# Bray Arts Journal

---

Issue 3

November 2006

Volume 12



**EDITORIAL**

*In our modern world the artist is tempted simply to do stunts in order to attract attention. But the true task of the artist is to discover her or his relationship to a community, a community often in desperate need of the artist's power to see the world anew.*  
**Historian Page Smith, from the forward to Art in Other Places.**

This is an interesting perspective on the relationship between the artist and the community and suggests that the artist can play a very significant role in how a community comprehends the world and its own place in that world. It is not that the artist necessarily or consciously sets out to promote some set of ethical values or a moral code for the wider community (although some do); it is simply that the compulsion of the artist to reveal and explain the world around him or her, in whatever art form, offers new insights and experience to the wider community. We have all, at some time or other, experienced the spiritual uplift after a play or film or the mesmerising impact of a painting or a piece of music that encapsulates some deep human emotion that is beyond words, and in some unexplainable way we feel more connected, more human and part of something greater than ourselves.



In his "The Defense of Poetry, Shelley wrote "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." He might have said artists. In popular culture we see a real manifestation of the influence of artists/poets like Bono and Bob Dylan.

Yes Art is a serious business. It is very heartening therefore to see a political party, in this case the Labour Party, giving some very serious consideration to Art and its role in society. The report that follows gives a brief insight into the Labour Party's Consultative Arts Forum on the 31st Sept. To read the party's full proposal called **art4all** go to website URL : <http://www.labour.ie/download/pdf/art4all.pdf>

**Front Cover :- Still Life (oil on Hardboard) by Conall McCabe.**  
 Upcoming exhibition in Dalkey Castle Nov See Pg 7



"The life of the imagination must be fostered and facilitated with the same emphasis and commitment as our physical needs are. It is important to promote the appreciation participation and practice of the arts for their own inherent value"

Michael D. Higgins TD

Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup> of September was a wet windy day. However this did not discourage or stop a group of committed and enthusiastic artists and people interested in the arts attending the Labour party's Consultative Arts Forum in the Eque-

strian Centre in Ashford Co. Wicklow. This arts forum highlighted the Labour party's proposal for a National Cultural Strategy.



**Liz McManus**, Deputy leader of the Labour party gave the opening address. Liz expressed the view that "Art is not simply about performance. It is fundamentally about participation from people and their communities. It is the belief of the Labour party" she said "that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities".

**Martin Murphy** chairperson of Labour Artists and a playwright gave a comprehensive account of a survey Of European patterns of behaviour and recreation. What was surprising from this survey was that for a country with Ireland's reputation for culture there was a comparatively poor showing by Irish people in the area of attendance at and the participation in cultural activities such as visual arts, literature, dance, theatre, classical and traditional music.

Secondly Ireland's per capita spending on the arts and culture in 2003 was only 23.15 euro, almost certainly the lowest in the EU, and by quite some margin. The Labour party believes it is the job of the government to ensure cultural rights for everyone wherever they are and whoever they are. The only way that can happen is by a comprehensive and properly resourced cultural strategy.

After a welcome break for strong tea, coffee and biscuits the forum continued with group discussions. Valuable comments, suggestions, recommendations as well as problems were expressed.

**Problems for artists.**

- \* Lack of studio space for work,
- \* Lack of areas for band and drama rehearsals.
- \* lack of adequate space for displays or projects.
- \* lack of general information about opportunities, submissions, and the 1% scheme.
- \* above all lack of respect for the individual's work as a profession and not merely as a hobby.

**Recommendations and suggestions for the sustainability of arts in our community.**

- \* Local council funding needs to be increased to improve facilities.

\* Local council to purchase a building for arts, for studio space, rehearsal space, areas where artists could socialise and an arts information office.

\* An arts representative to be elected for each town council to co-ordinate arts activities etc.

\* artists as problem solvers. Involving artists in community planning discussions can uncover new ways of approaching community problems. Funding is often available to involve artists and writers in designing community improvements such as streetscape elements, path way finding system and community markers.

Yes an enjoyable forum, and a fruitful one. A special congratulations to Liz McManus and her team for providing a forum to explain and discuss the Labour Party's Cultural Strategy and vision for the arts.

Una McCabe

## PREVIEW OF OF NOV 6TH ARTS EVENING

8:00pm Heather House, Seafront, Bray Adm Euro 5/4 conc.

Bray Arts presents another fascinating mix of talent in Literature, Music, Comic Theatre and Visual Art.

O. R. Melling is our guest writer at our Nov. Arts Evening. It is a great pleasure to welcome this prolific writer and, judging by her profile from her Website, very energetic and adventurous woman.



She writes :-

*I was born in Ireland (Bray) and grew up in Toronto, Canada with my seven sisters and two brothers. Left home at seventeen to live in a commune, then headed off across Canada with my pal, Carole, and we hitch-hiked around California for months, then back up to Vancouver (Van as we called it then) and across Canada with two more pals, Linda and Peggy. A year later,*

*headed off to Malaysia and Borneo with Jeunesse Canada Monde/Canada World Youth for a year. Baik-lah! Back home, went to Trinity College at the University of Toronto (posh blokes) while also joining the Canadian Naval Reserve as an Officer Cadet. Trained on the east and west coasts of Canada every summer. Great fun. Then what? Hmm. Started to write books, dodgy personal life (that's personal but let's just say it's been a long time between drinks) started to wander around the world, had a darling daughter, settled down in Ireland, wrote more books.*

From her BLOG on 17th Oct. 2006

*The Light-Bearers Daughter* (third book in *The Chronicles of Faerie*) was completed yesterday evening. HURRAY HURRAY

*HURRAY. I am a free woman until the galley proofs arrive. That means I can have a life for a while and get back to dancing, hiking, painting my bathroom, shopping for November trip, reading books, meeting friends, doing emails, making phone calls, and other general having-a-life things.*



Music for the evening will be supplied by Ger Doyle a man of many talents. After years playing the violin Ger went to the Dublin School of Music to further develop his technique. As well as the violin he plays the guitar, mandolin and whistle. He plays gigs all around Ireland and other countries including Spain, Slovenia and Germany. Ardmore Studios use Ger's talents as a musician playing in films, an actor and an organ-

iser of other musicians to play in films.

He has been a member of many bands including 'Shanakey,' 'Its A Secret' and in more recent years 'The Wild Colonials.' Ger plays all kinds of music including Irish traditional, Russian Gypsy and Ballads. When at home he plays in Jim Doyles (Bray) on Friday evenings with Paddy O'Gorman. They also play in Dan's Bar (Greysones) on Thursday. Robbie Overson joins them when he is in town.

Ger will invite some of his musical friends to join him at Bray Arts to make it a very special night for all.

They are back! **The Two Old Codgers** (Frank O'Keeffe and Justin Aylmer) will be pontificating on some topical issues and



giving us the benefit of their quirky slant on life. Wickedly naive but cute as water rats the old codgers will have you holding your sides with laughter. I believe they are distant relations to those two brothers from Ballydung, Rog and Pog so we might expect a few comments on wimmin or related matters. Then again we may not; these boyos are firece volatile. Frank and Justin collaborate on the script.

Then again we may not; these boyos are firece volatile. Frank and Justin collaborate on the script.

The artist **Colin Rush** will present and talk about his art. Colin will have a solo exhibition in Signal Arts later in the month. It will run from Tuesday 21st November to Sunday 3rd December 2006,

Rush was born in Dublin in 1976 and graduated from the National College of Art and Design in 1999 with a degree in fine art paint.

Continued on page 6

## The Travelling Elvis Museum

By Matt Kirkham

Cilia Bignall, you're crazy. I told him,  
watch out for us lefthanders. I'll tell you this:  
after a day showing vinyl to nerds,  
suits to impersonators, the nail clippings  
to voyeurs and irony junkies,  
me cranking the trailer's legs level each hour  
as it won't sit still, my travelling museum,

after all this, I put the speakers outside;  
a Bristol car park, a meadow in Dumfries.  
I lean back with a Bud in my right hand  
and my museum rocks. Left-thumbed, I text  
my man in Luton. Viva Blackpool. Lonesome.  
The King has not left the museum.  
The museum has not left the King.

## At Doon Well

by Mary Melvin Geoghegan

At Doon Well  
a woman barefooted  
bends a rosary  
through her prayers.  
At Doon Well  
I take off my shoes  
press my feet  
into the forever present.  
At Doon Well  
I fill a bottle  
with still water  
to keep me going.

## Regrets

Sean Richardson

The teeth and hair are sparse, each day a piece  
Of me is inclined to stray  
I cannot remember my salad days  
A lot of dreams have found different ways.  
I get more twinges than wet kisses and wine.  
I m smooching inhalers morning and night  
Is it right I should wither on the vine  
It can t be right

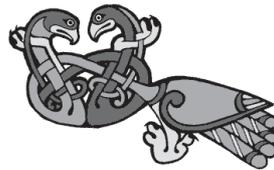


## Writing Out Of Doors

Early Irish -Anonymous

A wall of forest looms above  
and sweetly the blackbird sings;  
all birds make melody  
over me and my books and things.

There sings to me the cuckoo  
from bush-citadels in grey hood.  
God's doom! May the Lord protect me  
writing well, under the great wood.



## POTENTIAL

By Brendan O'Brion

The waiting is the worst part  
Flat out next-in-line.  
Time matters not to you, but to me  
life starts and ends in a click.

There is no way of knowing,  
of turning any tide, influencing any whim.  
Have you ever once thought what it's like  
To be White, A4 and unfulfilled?

In theory.

One could alter minds  
Call lovers together  
Bring an end to war.  
Be the next page you can't wait to turn to.  
Be the winner of a Nobel Prize.

Equally.

One could be the terms and conditions that apply  
A Corporate Vision Statement  
A CV binned without a second glance  
A PS or a MS.  
Or the small print

Shush.  
Start Print has been pressed.  
It was for this I grew tall in Norwegian woods.

I could be a poem.

## MORNING BELL

By Tim Smyth

It was to be his sixth and final rejection. It would come during his last cigarette before his first class of the day - fifth year English. A rowdy bunch, and with a few acne-nosed poets thrown in to make matters worse; kids who spent hours dreaming up tosh closer to Dan Brown than Dostoevsky.

He stood on the smokers' balcony, radio noise and a thick smell of coffee spilling out of the staff-room. Fellow teachers exchanged morning banalities, voices a mere notch below manic.

He remembered primary school, and his hopes that there would be more to big school than football and shoving. He could recall his hopes at seventeen that college would bring polo-necks, existentialism and refined discourse on impenetrable Balkan dramatists.

And then had come the clank and burble of the university cafeteria, then CVs, then life. Now he faced conversations about football and the clank and burble of the staff room.

He tried to cut his train of thought short. He had promised to himself that he wouldn't be like this today. For today would bring the news of Padlock Press' decision. And he'd promised to be optimistic.

So he decided to lose himself in the dark-blue morning. The lights were still on outside the church, casting bright-yellow half-ovals all along its side, and the alleys beside the school were dark enough to hide the detritus of litter. Smoke uncoiled from his cigarette in blue-silver threads.

He had loved mornings like these (and rainy days under an umbrella) since adolescence. He used to pretend he was the hero of a film noir: alone, detached, warm where others feel cold.

The phone rang. His heart leapt, then fell when he heard the agent's voice. It sounded like a breaking hinge on its last swing.

He didn't really hear what the agent said. He was too busy trying to keep his stoicism intact. But then the task of tuning out the agent's examples of famous rejections grew too much, and he felt bitterness start to seethe in his chest. Then the agent said "Goodbye, Dave!" (his name was Jon) and he was left, fuming, in the cold. He felt himself slipping back into self-pity.

He checked his watch: forty minutes until class. He stubbed out his cigarette and went back inside.

The morning bell had sounded. All of the other teachers had gone to class. It was just after nine, and he wasn't on until the next class. Although he wasn't required to, he still came in early on Tuesdays: his wife deserved a break from his morning moods. The other teachers on later hadn't arrived yet, so he was left to his weekly warm-up ritual: coffee, a book and silence. And, today, solipsism.

He sat there, re-reading the same page of "The Remains of the Day". He hadn't moved on for five minutes, but his mind was in such a churn that he didn't feel the usual compulsion to speed-read.

His head was in a spiral. Silently, he ranted at Padlock Press for their narrow minds, their business minds, their merciless minds.

And then the argument his wife hit him with when he became intolerable: "*How can you be right and all of them be wrong?*"

He turned on himself then, for being so arrogant to send it away, so pathetic to write it in the first place - that catalogue of tiny crosses, of miniscule tasks dreamed to Herculean labours. Accounts of daily vows of silent strength that always got weighed down by his own inner melodramas. A litany of disappointment met with jealousy, and bitterness, and petty acts of spite, and that constant feeling he'd been denied his due.

A tale of shameful memories he'd hoped would be less shameful on paper. Rationalising his wrongs. Comparing it to the labours of John Banville, Margaret Atwood. Breathing heavy sighs when moved from his laptop to open jars or answer phones. Tormenting people with the manuscript.

He felt himself winding down, just as he always did. He was coming closer to the usual conclusion of "everything must go" - a conclusion he would dwell on until someone interrupted and he could forget it.



The door opened. There was a furious clip of high heels on linoleum, the click of a radio and a skewed noise of garbled words and music as it was tuned. Then came the cartoonish, half-hiccoughing voice of a morning DJ. It sounded like a screaming child running downhill.

It was the new Junior Cert English teacher - she of the acrid, pale-purple smelling perfume and the creed of 'overdress to impress'. He remembered her kind from college: girls who banged the door after they'd arrived late at lectures.

To avoid conversation, he desperately tried to look as though he was doing something important. She dropped a heap of tests onto the table and set to correcting. Her pen made a rapid, scratchy whorling sound that set Jon's teeth on edge.

Even through his irritation, he felt a pang of sympathy. Today was the deadline for the return of corrected Christmas tests. He knew well the tedium of corrections and the panic-driven race to finish assignments.

He was reflecting on the strangeness of it all - how this vapid young time-waster and this morose, jaded neurotic had ended up in a job that paid the same whatever you did and however you got there - when he heard it.

*That intro. Those drums. His mournful baritone. Morrissey. The Smiths. "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out".*

He remembered hearing this song in the year of its release - a sullen thirteen-year-old looking for a role model. Twenty years later, he was just as dissatisfied and a fraction as wealthy as the man who'd written it.

This moment could be tragic or hilarious: his book rejected, his solitude disturbed, a song that made him think of wasted time. It was perfectly awful. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry. A rueful smile crept across his face.

And he looked from the teacher to the radio to the book in his hand, seeing everything at last.

There really *were* two perspectives on it all, and changing them was as easy as switching glasses. It started with whether he looked at this rejection as an excuse to give his class hell, or as a fork in the road.

Or maybe it started when he got home, by not mentioning it to his wife and helping her with dinner - instead of stewing in an armchair and shouting his rancour into the kitchen.

Actually, it started sooner than all of that. It started with taking half of the uncorrected tests from the younger teacher, saying something about free classes and not thinking of it as another straw added to the camel's back.

But, as he tried to decipher what some young fool meant by "cadjabdiflated", he wondered if this was all it took.

There was a moment's indecision before he took out his phone and dialled the agent's number. 'I'll be back in a sec - I have to make a phone call.'

He checked his watch: half an hour before class. He stood up and went back outside. -

**Tim Smyth** is a final year student in St Kieran's College, Kilkenny.

### Continued from Page 3

Since then he has been teaching and working as a practicing artist. Rush's work involves the production of television images in the medium of paint. Television images are translated into the paint medium and as such are introduced to the tradition of painting. On the one hand this involves the traditional materials and on the other hand there is the tradition



of the values that painting has observed in its own progression. Spatial relationships and the integrity of the paint as its own representation. Rush's work is concerned with the process of translating from one medium to another. "People bemoan the loss that occurs in translating a work from one medium to another but in the schism that results a door is opened." Within the images as formal arrangements of colour there are the representations of icons of television and cinema. Images of the shows and in this way another translation occurs. That of low art to high art. Populist icons invade the elitist specialist space of painting. Rush returned to Dublin in 2003 after two years of travel and began work on a series of paintings. The works exhibited at this exhibition are largely the product of that time.

The exhibition is entitled

### **Bursting Forth With Ten Fists Of Flame**

Opening Reception: Thursday 23rd November 7pm-9pm

### **VIDEO VOYEUR**

**Harold Chassen**

Tristan and Isolde is the legendary tale of a pair of medieval

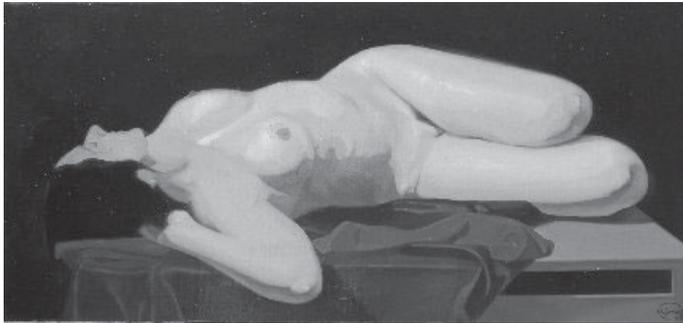


doomed lovers caught on opposite sides in a war. At times I found it to be a bit like those epic costume dramas of the 50s with lots of battle scenes where you really can't tell the good guys from the bad, and don't really care. It had a few romantic scenes thrown in at intervals to keep the interest going for the female audience. It was filmed in the west of Ireland and even if the storyline wasn't that great the spectacular scenery

makes it worth a look.

## **AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY CONALL MCCABE**

The exhibition will run from Tuesday Nov 21st to Saturday 25th Nov. in Dalkey Castle. Conall's last exhibition in the Sum-



mer of 2005 in the Signal Arts Centre was sold out on the opening day so if you are intent on collecting one of his works this may be your opportunity. The work in this exhibition is figurative and still life.

Liz McManus will open the exhibition. Redmond O'Toole, a friend and contemporary of Conall will be there to add a touch of magic to the event with his wonderful music. If you want to see Conall's work visit his website :- [www.conallart.com](http://www.conallart.com)

## **AN EXHIBITION OF NEW PAINTINGS BY ELAINE REIDY**

From Tuesday 7th November to Sunday 19th November 2006. Signal Arts Centre, 1. Albert Avenue Bray.

Elaine studied Art & Design Education and Fine Art at the Crawford College of Art & Design in Cork and obtained a de-



gree in English and Greek & Roman civilisation from UCD.

Her work has been exhibited in The Cross Gallery and the Oisín Gallery in Dublin, the Tig Fill and Lavitt Gallery in Cork and the Mermaid Arts Centre in Bray amongst others. Elaine has been moving between still life and landscape paintings of the Bray area. Her work has been described as ethe-

real and mysterious, containing lone buildings, shadowy interiors and recognisable Bray landmarks such as the sea-front kiosks and the cliff walk on Bray Head. The materials and physicality of the paint are inseparable from what Elaine depicts. She uses layers of paint and coloured glazes to build up tone and surface and create depth, sometimes leaving a painting for a long period of time before returning to it. The term "atmospheric" is usually used to describe Elaine's work. However she hopes the paintings will speak for themselves.

## **REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER ARTS EVENING**

What an entertaining evening it turned out to be. Pat Burnes from Signal Arts started the evening at a nice thoughtful and leisurely pace as she talked about her experiments in visual art using different techniques and materials. Her work began to revolve around the minute examination of elements of old black and white family photographs. It was as if she was seeking an understanding of the larger world by an examination of its minute particles. She gave some very interesting insights into the different techniques she used in her work.

Lorraine O'Brien then performed her own monologue called 'Two Trout on a Draining Board.' This was a combination of comedy and pathos. The narrator is a housewife standing at a draining board gutting two trout and thinking about her husband, a Harry Potter fanatic, who pathetically swears 'he'll be a big man yet' and the fisherman who romances her on a wild weekend in Galway with her friend. She fantasizes about the fisherman but somehow knows it was simply that, a fantasy and by the end of the monologue she recognises that her somewhat inadequate husband is the one who really loves her. The monologue is extremely humorous but the humour is modulated by intervals of tenderness and longing for romance.

A brilliant piece of theatre, beautifully performed. Lorraine also has an excellent singing voice and gave a lovely rendition of 'Fiddeler's Green.' Bravo.

After Pat Burnes and Lorraine and a short break to refill our glasses Robbie Overson and Martin Dunlea tuned up their guitars and literally 'brought the house down.' They were simply bloody marvelous. The session started with Martin singing a great version of *May You Never* followed by a guitar duet of *Eleanor Rigby*. Then Robbie sang the Tom Waits song *Fumblin with the Blues* with great passion. There followed a Robbie Overson composition called *The Blizzard of OZ*, then a wonderful rendition of the sound track from the film about Brazilian children called *Black Orpheus*. Robbie and Martin blended beautifully and you could just feel how much they were enjoying playing together. Martin sang another great Tom Waits song *Looking for the Heart of Saturday Night*. He sang with such feeling that the audience were simply mesmerised and of course with Robbie's scintillating guitar work thrown in, you would be hard pushed to find a better version of this song. The audience would not let the lads go and they finished off their brilliant performance with a set of Irish tunes. The verdict on this duo; when are they coming back?

The MC for the evening was Mary Forde. As one might expect she did a professional and polished job.

## Visual Art at Mermaid

Sinead Ni Mhaonaigh

27 October - 25 November

Comprising of mainly new works Ni Mhaonaigh's exhibition at



Mermaid reflects her preoccupation with space, time, emotion and experience, with the result of her works being suggestive rather than representational. There is a suggestion throughout of flux

and a strong sense that the journey towards an image, rather than the creation of a fixed, specific representation, is key.

## Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : [bacj@eircom.net](mailto:bacj@eircom.net)

Creative Writing Prose/Fiction Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : [afitzgerald3@ireland.com](mailto:afitzgerald3@ireland.com)

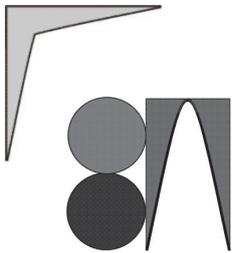
Poetry Editor : Eugene Hearne : [poetrybray@yahoo.ie](mailto:poetrybray@yahoo.ie)

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to

The Editor BAJ 'Casino',  
Killarney Rd. Bray,  
Co. Wicklow

Visual material: Photographs by Post. Digital Images by Email or CD in JPEG format.

Deadline 15th of each month.



**Bray Arts evening Mon 6th Nov Heather  
House Hotel Seafront : Doors open 8:00pm  
Everyone welcome Adm : 5 Euro / 4 Euro Concession**

**Art :** Coilin Rush transposes populist icons and images from modern media to fine art.

**Literature:** O. R. Melling internationally published novelist, screenwriter and literary critic. Born in Ireland educated in Canada.

**Comic Theatre :** Put the children to bed; the **Old Codgers** are back.

**Music:** Multi talented musician **Ger Doyle** and friends

Bray Arts is grateful for the support of Bray Council, Wicklow Council, CASC and Heather House Hotel.

Printed by Central Press

If undelivered please return to :  
Editor, Bray Arts Journal  
'Casino'  
Killarney Rd.  
Bray  
Co. Wicklow