
Bray Arts Journal

Issue 1

September 2009

Volume 15



Welcome to the 2009/2010 Bray Arts Season

Review of Last June Arts Evening

Patricia Aherne O'Farrell

Patricia Aherne O'Farrell is a very familiar name in art circles in Bray, and a presentation from her at Bray Arts was a long over due event. During a long painting career this talented woman has exhibited extensively in Ireland including the Royal Hibernian Academy Annual Exhibition. Her more recent venture call Dial A Portrait is a great example of a traditional painter using the internet to its fullest advantage. She showed the audience examples of her work from photograph to finished painting. One client from Queen Charlotte Islands in northwest British Columbia, Canada, commissioned paintings of both daughter and grand daughter. The striking aspect of the portraits is that Patricia enhances the original images, not only by her fine painting technique but also by creating new backgrounds that add atmosphere and vitality to the pictures. The audience very clearly warmed to Patricia and there was particular appreciation evident when her beautiful swan paintings were shown. Patricia's website is <http://www.dial-a-portrait.com/index.html>.



The Song of a Mountain.

A large audience for a Bray Arts evening has gathered and the room is hushed. Eight volunteers from the floor have agreed with some trepidation to take part in a musical experiment; to create, in response to a traditional Irish air, with their own music and poetry the experience and sensation of a mountain. The musician is the flautist, Italian Rocco Anticco and he is also conducting the workshop. From the moment Rocco addresses his group



and the audience he inspires trust. His enthusiasm is infectious and he develops instant rapport with those who have chosen to take part.

Rocco hands his group a number of items, a jug that pours water into a bowl and loose rice in a container amongst

other found items. He wants the group to use them to make musical sounds. Each participant closes his/her eyes and describes in their own words what for them is the poetry of a mountain. The words are taken down to be edited there and then as a poem. The experiment is ready to come to life.

The found items are played by the volunteers, the poem is recited and Rocco plays a haunting Irish air. Suddenly a creation involving music poetry and sounds has been made for a delighted audience.

Song of the mountain.

Mountains ferns heather
Dew on welly boots
The sun brightens spots
Trees sway
Rivers rush down
Pinks and whites and purples and tall blue weeds
Birds fly from one flower to another
It's luanasa; up the sacred mountain

Mists on the tall mountain top
Distant peeks, a goatherd.
On top of the mountain he gave us the sacred message

Rain cascading from the higher mountain tops
Tracks, old boots
Left by the walker
Stand as a monument
To the past.

Indivaara

The happy buzz of conversation faded as the first few bars of pulsating dance music heralded the entrance of the spectacular dancers of Indivaara. With a heady mixture of American Tribal Style dance and Egyptian style belly



dance, the ladies of Indivaara mesmerised the audience with an exotic and sensual blend of movement, colour and sound. The exuberance and physicality of the dancers with the powerful rhythmic music was a perfect finale to the Bray Arts 2008/2009 season. Once again this talented troupe delivered a memorable and joyful performance. The dancers were Wendy Marlett, Deirdre Fitzgerald, Eleana Garcia, Mary Millichip, Patty Guedas and Ronelle.

Preview of Arts Evening Sept 7th

Heather House, Strand Road, Bray

Admission E5 / E4

Doors Open 8:00 Programme Starts Promptly at 8:15pm

All are welcome

Serendipity Theatre

Hedda Kaphengst and **Josh Johnston** of Serendipity Theatre will be perform excerpts from their show "Open Doors" (German, Irish and French songs) and some piano solo by Josh.

Hedda started Serendipity Theatre in 2001 while working in a Nursing Home as a chef.



Trained as an actress and singer she decided to use those skills to enhance the lives of the men and women residents of the Nursing Home. But there was also another very important aspect of Hedda's enterprise and that was to provide regular work for other actors. This concept of Hedda's has proved very successful and it is spreading, not just locally, but also in Los Angeles

where Hedda and Josh recently did a very successful tour.

Josh studied Popular Music in the University of Salford, graduating as a pianist, band leader and composer. He is well-known as a versatile musician. He was pianist in the band of Birr singer/songwriter Roesy for six years, performed on stage and record with Kila, Declan O'Rourke, Stewart Agnew, SJ McArdle, Noelie McDonnell, Irish tenor Karl Scully and others. He is the resident organist at the Unitarian Church in Dublin. He released his first solo CD, Three Friends in 2000 and a duo disc with jazz (and classical) violinist David MacKenzie.



Contact Info: Hedda Kaphengst 44 Old Connawood Dr., Connaught Ave., Bray t: 01 272 2580

Lorcan Byrne - writer

John Steinbeck in his advice to new writers said, 'I have written a great many stories and I still don't know how to go about it except to write it and take my chances.' There is no sure fire recipe for creating a good short story, but some writers are endowed with an innate magic touch that brings us close to the essential truths of life. It is a pleasures to read or listen to such a writer. Amongst the many wonderful writers who have en-



tained us over the years, Lorcan Byrne is, without doubt, one of the very best.

Lorcan is a Winner of the Irish New International Short Story Award (1999) and twice a Sunday Tribune New Irish Writing Hennessy nominee. His first short story, 'Two Views of Delft' was short-listed in the Waterford Review Short Story competition.

Macdara : Singer/Arranger

It is difficult to explain the subtle ingredient that distinguishes excellence from very good, but whatever it is, Macdara has it. His singing is simple and without flourishes or ornamentation but it is that very simplicity that gives such depth to his music. 'Its So easy to Love You' is the title of one of the songs on his recent CD, 'The Love Token', and that sentiment somehow reflects the obvious love Macdara has for traditional Irish music and song.



It is not surprising that this young man from Inishere is establishing himself as a very distinctive and innovative talent while still retaining the essence of traditional music. Bray Arts is delighted to introduce Macdara on the first Bray Arts Evening of the 2009/2010 season. His CD, 'Love Token' will be available on the night.

President Obama and Arts and Culture

On "Meet the Press" last month, Tom Brokaw asked Obama if he plans to invite artists to the White House during his presidency.

"Historically, what has always brought us through hard times is that national character, that sense of optimism, that willingness to look forward, that sense that better days are ahead. I think that our art and our culture ... that's the essence of what makes America special and we want to project that as much as possible in the White House."

In the Harvard Crimson, NATHANIEL S. RAKICH says "The Obama administration may be embracing art because, as the economy gives us reason to be pessimistic, art gives us good reason to hope. But more likely, this particular brand of hope has clearly been present in Washington for a long time. Instead of stemming from a campaign slogan, art is the logical end product of a country that values free expression."

Front Cover : Liberation Came Too Late

by Thomas Delohery.

Thomas will be showing in the Signal Arts Centre shortly: see page 7.



TRUST

by James McNeive

Know that a bitter wisdom haunts old age
Needs but call to mind the years of care;
Would our children grow in grace and take the strain?
Would they cast off the dread the cletgy taught?
Would new found freedom build on sand
And find new gods to break young hearts?
Too late we know they would not fly too near the sun,
When all our worry's done.

RENUNCIATION

by Donna Barkman

Several dozen drops of scarlet blood
glow beneath the bird feeder,
vivid against the virgin snow.

They ease into shades of rose
and orange, tiny blossoms,
a pale lily here, a starburst there.

Sister birds step among them,
oblivious to their beauty, greedily
pecking one seed and then another.

Was she sick? or wounded
in a battle over supper? -
birds being so quarrelsome.

She's disappeared, her body
as forgotten as these telltale drops
will be, innocently buried by falling snow.

I THOUGHT THAT I'D BE OVER YOU BY NOW

by Donna Barkman

Drifting downstream as
the current and the tide collude
past purple loosestrife
and bloodberries so I named them

They tell me summer's sighing to a close
watched by great blue herons modern
pterodactyls of the sky
and plunging ospreys snatching fish
before night falls

Bright blue darning needles
baste the air with stitches
a patchwork of invention dreams
pursued

Dry brown leaves
prematurely aged
pass cuplike balanced
on reflections of themselves

Now the river opens to a wide wild place
where the wind lives and hides defying stream and tide
Reeds bow low in deference
Glinty ripples rise and wink as I

push the paddle deep digging down for purchase
flailing left and right
off course

Heart
beating like the wings of crows above
I stall against the shore
cries of cicadas
tearing at my ears and
rampant sunlight rushing down the distant gorge

I wait on fossil-printed rocks
and hope a moon will rise

Donna Barkman bio

Donna Barkman has been a teacher of children's literature in graduate schools of library science and education for 20 years, and a performer of her own and others' work for longer than that. As the start of her fourth career, her poetry has been published in The Westchester Review, ragazine.cc, Waterways, and forthcoming in Pennsylvania English. She's recently enjoyed a month at Jentel Artist Residency in Wyoming. A resident of the U.S., she's been bringing groups of Americans and Canadians on tours to Ireland, her second home.

Heroes [extract]

by Lorcan Byrne

Eugene pulls into a gateway about four miles from the home house and feels the wheels of the hired Toyota bump over the rutted earth. He thinks of the air-hostess on the flight over, the pretty brown-haired one, who told him that it hadn't rained for nearly a month in Ireland, that the farmers were going mad for rain. She had brought him a glass of water and made conversation, perhaps feeling sorry for him, sitting there on his own, the way he must have looked so different and out of place. He gets out of the car and looks down into the shallow valley, at the patchwork of yellow and green sunlit fields, the river Shannon shining like a strip of chromium and, further off, a flume of bright, white smoke rising from the stack at the pig-station where he used to work during school holidays. Even though he is too far away and the light breeze is at his back, the sight of it yields up again the sickly-sweet smell of death.

Driving through town opens doors to a past he thought he had locked away forever: Tynan's bar and his first pint of Smithwicks, St. Corban's parish church where he made his First Holy Communion and Confirmation, the Deerpark Hotel and Ballroom where Susan Molloy let him fondle her small breasts for the first time. And a couple of miles beyond the hotel, still standing in the middle of what they called the Top Field, one of his father's fields, he sees the big lop-sided oak that was split by lightning the summer before he ran away.

The northern corner of the Top Field was more bog than pasture and he remembers the week his father got the 'flu being sent out every morning and evening to check the herd for red water. He was about thirteen years of age and it was the first time his father had handed him such a weight of responsibility. On the Sunday morning his father said he felt a bit better so he forced himself to his feet and shakily got into his car and drove down to Mass. Afterwards, they had both gone up to the Top Field and found the carcass of a heifer, its eye-sockets already picked clean by the crows. Eugene had missed it, the red stream of piss that gave a day or two's notice of death. His father had



stood very still for a moment, then wheeled round and punched him, cutting him with his ring. Instinctively, as he drives, Eugene lifts a finger to his cheek, tries to locate the tiny bump of the scar just above the much longer one that now disfigures that side of his face. 'Ye just can't be trusted, can ye?' his father's voice carries across the years. 'Ye think I'm made of money, do ye?'

He turns in through the gates of Loughbray for the first

time in fifteen years and pulls up behind an old Ford Fiesta. He gets out and looks around. The place has been let go: the walls of the house badly need white-washing, grass grows in the gutters and the television aerial has broken free from the chimney and hangs by a cable across the slates. Weeds fill the corners of the yard and sprout from the lower layers of turf in the shed. Spots of rust show through the chassis of the old Ford and thin lines of bright green moss run the length of the window-seals. He reaches in through the open window of the hired Toyota, takes out a packet of Marlboro and has just lit one when his sister walks around the corner from the back of the house. She stops, frowns then brings her hands to her face.

"Eugene, is that you?" she says through her fingers, in a voice he can barely hear.

"Yes, Aggie, it's me." He walks up to her and they embrace awkwardly.

"Oh, Eugene," she whispers, "where have you been all these years?"

"Let's go inside," he says.

The kitchen is much as he remembers it: the panelled ceiling stained brown by cigarette and turf smoke, the wooden key-holder in the shape of a key with 'Torremolinas' hand-painted across the top, a pair of tarnished brass candlestick holders on the shelf high above the range, the same small Aga although the white enamel is a lot more chipped now. But the floor covering is different, an alternating pattern of small black and white squares that makes Eugene feel slightly dizzy and headachy.

Agnes hands him a large mug of tea. She balances a plate of Jaffa cakes beside him on the wooden arm of the single fireside chair and pulls out from under the table a kitchen chair for herself.

"Aren't you having a cup yourself, Aggie?"

"No, no, I'm too excited to drink tea."

Agnes is in her mid-forties, nearly twelve years older than he, but looks even older, he thinks. As soon as he had heard about their father he decided that he had no choice but to come back, not for his father's sake but for hers. Her hair is darker than he remembers it but then he notices the half-inch of grey showing at the roots. She pushes a few loose strands of hair behind her ears.

"I'm a holy show, Eugene. The place isn't fit for a stranger, let alone you. Why didn't you ring or write or send word at least."

"You haven't changed a bit, Aggie," he says.

"You always were a liar, Eugene," she laughs, "and there's no point my saying you haven't changed because, well, you know, we all know you have. Everyone around here was so proud. The whole thing was written up in the Con-nacht Tribune, you know. Meeting President Bush, the

medal, the whole thing. I'd have sent you the cutting if I'd known where..." She hops up before Eugene can tell her not to bother and he hears her go upstairs and rummage around. From the front of the house, from across the hallway, comes the sound of metal banging on metal. His father, he guesses.

She arrives down waving the cutting. "There ye are," she says triumphantly. "I never throw anything out."

And sure enough, there he is, standing to attention in full military uniform in front of the President of the United States, and though the photograph is grainy and sellotaped across the middle he can clearly see his saluting hand minus its thumb and index finger and the pale line of the scar than runs from the corner of his mouth to his ear. Across the top of the article runs the headline 'Home-grown Hero - Back from Iraq'. He has another sip of his tea and because he cannot close his mouth properly on the side of the scar a tiny rivulet dampens his chin. With a handkerchief that he always carries in his pocket he quickly dabs it away.

"We all prayed for you at Mass, Eugene," she says, starting to cry, "I wish you..."

"Now, now, Aggie, stop that."

She sits down again on the chair beside the range. She must have lost weight, he notices; her skirt is loose on her hips and her watch dangles on her wrist.

"I suppose I'd better ask," he says, "how's himself?"

"Well, since the stroke," she pauses, looks at him with red eyes, "you *do* know about the stroke? Isn't that what brought you back?"

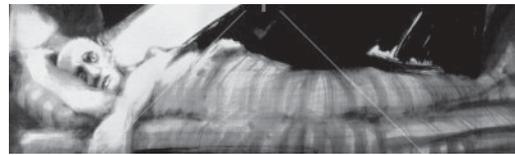
He nods. Fr. Connolly had walked into his Staten Island liquor store the previous May and in a voice barely louder than the hum from the 'fridge had said, "Ya gotta go home, Eugene." "My home is here now," he had answered, although he knew deep down that he'd go back for the sake of Aggie.

"Strange enough, he's easier to manage now." She gets up and with a tilt of her head indicates that he should follow. "Not half as aggressive. More like a big boy."

Between the half-drawn curtains hangs a busy-lizzie in a macramé basket. The room is cool and smells of talc and medicated cream. Along the wall, opposite the window that looks out over the yard, instead of the piano he vaguely remembers his mother playing, there is the metal-framed bed that has been brought down from upstairs. A portable television stands on top of the glass cabinet that contains the stuffed snipe and a few pieces of cut crystal. Behind the head of the bed, pushed neatly alongside the wall, is a folded wheelchair. His father hasn't heard them come into the room and lies with his back to them under a big, flowery duvet. When he senses their presence and turns stiffly to face them, Eugene thinks he is smiling.

"We've got a visitor, Daddy," Agnes says loudly, "look what the cat has dragged in."

"Hello, Daddy," Eugene says, forcing himself to walk closer to the bed, "It's me, Eugene. I'm home for a short while."



(extract from 'The Heroes', a short story by L. Byrne))

Na Naoi bhFuath

A Comic entitled 'Na Naoi bhFuath' (The Nine Phantoms) by **Gizelbertus** aka Aodh Mc Lochlainn, caught our attention recently. It's a story about Caoilte, a black horse, Fionn Mc Cumhaill Mc Treanmhor, a giant and nine phantoms. The drawings and the text have that raw Celtic exuberance that one associates with the old Irish myths. There is mayhem and slaughter depicted in the beautiful swirling pictures of Gizelbertus.



Anyone who wants further information on this comic or on Gizelbertus's other work can contact him at 61 Ascal Watson, Baile Breac, Co. B. A. Cliath (01 28544438)

Signal Arts September Exhibitions

Soft Day, Thank God

Exhibition of Paintings by **Leah Beggs**

From Tuesday 1st September to Sunday 13th September 2009

Leah's paintings have always concerned the surrounding landscape. She paints from memory, but is inspired by continuous journeys through the Connemara countryside.

However there is a noted change in the direction of her latest body of work. Whilst the subject matter is acknowledged as landscape, the way in which it is executed captures the climatic essence that is present at that moment in time.



She uses paint in a layering process and works on a series of paintings at any one time. The result is described as 'intimate' and involves up-close viewing to appreciate the underlying layers of paint, whilst viewing from a distance - along with subtle hints from the titles - gives a sense of the initial compositional inspiration.

Opening Reception: Friday 4th September 7-9pm

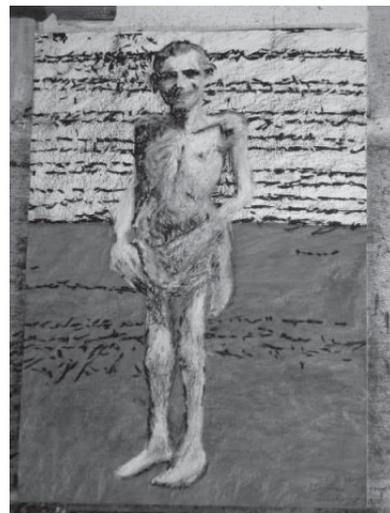
If This Is A Man

Exhibition of Mixed Media Artworks on Paper by **Thomas Delohery**

From Tue 15th September to Sun 27th September 2009

Thomas's work since 1997 is mainly to do with the theme of the Holocaust. It is expressive in nature and he is just as fascinated about the process of making work as he is about the theme that drives it. His art bears witness to what happened. It is an ongoing memorial to those who perished. It honours their courage, suffering, humanity, and various ways of resisting. It shows the need for religious as well as cultural tolerance to make absolutely sure that history will never repeat itself on such a massive, horrific scale. He states, "More than just people died in the Holocaust, I think a certain part of humanity did."

Holocaust Survivor Suzi Diamond is doing Delohery the huge honour of officially opening his exhibition on the 17th of



September at 7pm. Renowned Irish Artist John Shinnors has said of Thomas Delohery's Art, "One thing that is hugely evident is that he is a marvellous draftsman and he is able to pull off these images that evoke cruelty and repression", (The Irish Examiner). Is Bismark right, that the only thing we learn from history, is that we don't learn from history? <http://www.thomasdelohery.com>

Opening Reception: Thursday 17th September 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

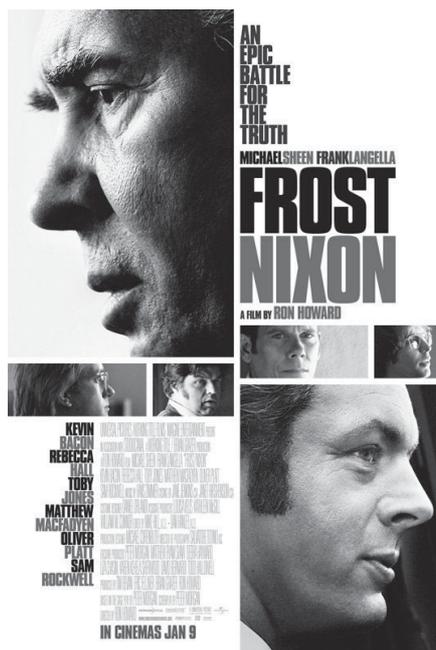
Video Voyeur

Harold Chassen

Frost/Nixon tells the story of the television interview of disgraced U. S. President Richard Nixon and David Frost. I found the acting very good. Frost comes across as a playboy and showman. Nixon thought he could easily

best Frost mentally and come across and win the hearts and minds of the American people. Nixon easily controls the early interviews by filibustering and it seems Frost lets him get away with it.

It isn't until the final interview that Frost pounces and pins Nixon into a corner and gets the better of him. This is a film well worth watching. Frank Langella was nominated for an



Oscar for his portrayal of Nixon.

P. S

Receiving the by Post

For those who wish to continue receiving the Arts Journal by post, please forward a cheque for E 10 made out to Bray Arts.

Funding for Bray Arts

Bray Arts' application for funding from Wicklow Council was unsuccessful. Our application for funding from Bray Council is awaiting consideration by the Council sometime during September. We are hoping that the council, like Obama (see pg3) will recognise the need for the arts during this frightening recession.

All Journal, from 2006 on, can be accessed on our website www.brayarts.net.

Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : editor@brayarts.net

Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : afitzgerald3@ireland.com

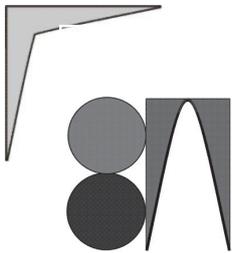
Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to

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

Deadline 15th of each month.

Bray Arts website : www.brayarts.net

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*Arts Evening Monday 7th Sept 2009
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

Serendipity Theatre : excerpts from their show "Open Doors"
(German, Irish and French songs) and some piano solos by Josh.

Lorcan Byrne : Prize winning Short Story Writer

Macdara: He hails from Inishere and is acclaimed and praised everywhere he sings. He is introducing a whole new audience to traditional song.

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