

# EXIT Cork

*Just how good are Cork’s art students?  
Just how good are Cork’s art institutions?  
What criteria for quality can we employ?  
What types of written language do we use to discuss art?  
What does it mean to ask these questions today?*

Presented here are reviews of every one of this year’s graduate fine art degree shows at the Crawford College of Art. The reviews were commissioned, for €10 each, by Static Gallery, Liverpool, for the project *EXIT Cork*, Static’s contribution to *Cork Caucus*.

*EXIT Cork* commissioned fourteen reviewers to review each of the student’s degree shows in order that each of the 47 students received 2 reviews. The invited reviewers are amongst those who direct or influence Cork’s visual arts infrastructure, in addition to several ‘outsiders’ through which ‘internal’ and ‘external’ opinion can be compared. By commissioning reviewers in Cork to review Cork’s art school *EXIT Cork* recognises and maximises Cork’s expertise, in addition to fostering the understanding that all players in Cork’s infrastructure play a part in the generation of a critical artistic culture.

The mode of *EXIT Cork* was first applied to fine art graduates in Liverpool, in response to the specific context of Liverpool where art institutions and art colleges have an implicit cynicism about each other. Static wanted to create the conditions where art colleges and art institutions must bear the consequence of speaking their opinions publicly, and in writing. Cork’s visual arts infrastructure is small so Static wondered whether the art school is seen as central to, or detached from, the art institutions in the city; what the art school’s place in the wider city is, and whether it is perceived to be leading, or lagging behind current debate.

Contrary to many of the projects within *Cork Caucus*, *EXIT Cork* adopts a conventional hierarchical structure with those with expertise operating powers of distinction over those with less. However, as in the first Liverpool EXIT REVIEW the reviewers are perhaps under more pressure than the recipients as their abilities of communication are put to the test. Static believes that, rather than positing faux or utopian models of equality, honest reflection of circumstances may ultimately enable greater change.

*Cork Caucus* intends to ‘*provide something that will make a long-term contribution to the development of an artistic community*’. While artistic communities are not fuelled solely by artists, it is important that the artists involved are active, critical and confident so that they can draw in others and put their abilities to work in the wider environment. Therefore it is vital that the art school plays its part in a critical culture, and it’s student’s are equipped to be critical, receive criticism and to understand the power of thinking critically. *EXIT Cork* is a tool to energeise the development of a critical environment.

At 2pm, July 7<sup>th</sup> all reviewers, students and Cork’s wider community are invited to attend an event where the reviews and the review process will be discussed (Cork Caucus centre, Evergreen Street). Static intends that *EXIT Cork* is not just a one year project but continues for three years in total, embedding a commitment to criticism in the city.

*EXIT Cork* responds to the difficulties art students encounter as they move from art school to life beyond college. Art schools protect students from realities of artistic practice, providing them with space to develop a visual language. While this space may be important to artists’ development, if we are to believe that context is half the work, then intelligent art students make art for art school. To examine this situation *EXIT Cork* forces a model of reality on art students by exposing their work to scrutiny and public evaluation. Through this Static hopes to compress students’ learning about how they want to practice and to draw attention to how artwork may be constructed in the public realm through the words and opinions of others. *EXIT Cork* is an artificial attempt to accelerate the usual pecking order of who gets reviewed and who has access to systems of visibility.

Through the way they construct their text and the language they employ we may be able to see what values the reviewers expect from art. The activity is confused, for the reviewer, by knowing that their subjects are students. Should they review the work solely as finished object, as at any professional show, or should they make concessions to some supposed vulnerability of the students? The reviews will have greater public longevity than the art work itself, creating a double concern of representing the student and their work. Reviewer’s opinions are also fixed in a publicly accessible form which may one day come back to haunt them. The reviewers are asked to be very certain they can stand by what they say and are prepared to argue their case.

*Cork Caucus* is an extended project that began in late 2004 and culminates in a major interdisciplinary meeting of Irish and international artists, writers, philosophers and other creative individuals, until July 11, 2005. The purpose of *Cork Caucus* to use Cork City as a base to investigate the relationship between art and social change in a specific place.

## Reviewers

Art/Not Art was conceived and set up in 1999 by artists and cultural activists, *David (Dobz) O’Brien* and *Fergal Gaynor* and was founded to investigate and further conversation into cultural thinking and art making.

*Tara Byrne*, Director, National Sculpture Factory. Co-curator, *Cork Caucus*. NSF is a flexible organisation providing workshop spaces for sculptors, artists’ training programmes, residencies, commissioning and projects.

*Dawn Crawford*, Assistant-Curator, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery. Crawford Gallery presents a wide spectrum of art media by national and international artists from the eighteenth century to contemporary art.

*Mike Fitzpatrick*, Director, Limerick City Art Gallery.

*Fiona Kearney*, Director, Lewis Glucksman Gallery  
*René Zechlin*, Curator of Exhibitions & Projects  
*Nora Hickey*, Curator of Education & Collections

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery is a cultural and educational institution that promotes the research, creation and exploration of the visual arts. It was recently awarded ‘Best Public Building in Ireland’ and a RIBA architecture award.

*Brian Hand*, Independent critic.

*Paul Hegarty*, University College Cork, Department of French.

*Sharon Philbin*, writer based in Cork.

*Paul Sullivan*, Director, Static.  
*John Byrne*, Static research associate.  
Static is a Liverpool-based organisation dedicated to critical activity.

*Shepherd Steiner*, critic and art historian working in Los Angeles.

## EXIT Cork Reviews

### Ellen Barrett

Barrett has produced a nice, clean and un-objectionable set of abstract type paintings for this show. Most are mounted on board and consist of collages of other work carefully arranged to produce well designed pieces which hint at spontaneity. Some contain an interesting degree of tension between line and form. There are pieces with collaged photographs of rope etc that seem to work less well. Overall, there is a symmetry to this show, at least to the extent that these collage/paintings work well together. As with much work in the Crawford show this year, there seems to be something struggling to get out from beneath the surface of this work. You get the feeling that, if only Barrett could let go a little, there might be some good work lurking beneath these otherwise decorative pieces. I sense a rebelliousness in the work of this show, and in the colleges in general, that just can’t seem to break out. The result is work that will look good in cafes and restaurants and could be so much more.

*John Byrne*, Static

If the titles of Ellen Barrett’s painting suggest a thematic link, subject matter does not immediately jump out at one in looking. Instead what the paintings seem to court is the fine line between a psychotic language and a very accomplished sense of composition. But there are no easy identities here. Pilgrim Light is a good example. Automatic writing that conjures up the likes of Twombly and Artaud is set against a very deliberate method of collage. The intentionality of the latter process, which hums and hovers about the placement and arrangement of shards of paper, reigns in the formers wildness. The inclusion of text and photographic fragments in a number of the other works seemed to upset my connoisseural tastes. But then perhaps this is the risk of working within such a loaded tradition. For where does one go next?

*Shepherd Steiner*

### Tom Barry

There was a sense of nostalgia entering this very male ‘heavy metal’ zone. Using metal and wood Tom Barry creates work about weight and balance. There is a sense of revisiting fundamental notions of sculpture here, ideas of lifting, carrying and holding. These structures of metal, from which hang heavy suspended weights are first rate experimental work dealing with basic sculptural elements. There are echoes in this work of Cork’s formal modernist sculpture tradition. The large Battering Ram work sums up this exhibition, there is a boyish charm about the piece. It seems like it could be created for an epic movie set, a small voice shouts in my ear ‘we must keep them back’. This work is raw, rough and literally very heavy and that’s what makes it physically and visually engaging and rather endearing.

*Mike Fitzpatrick*, Limerick City Art Gallery

Four wooden and metal sculptures, each re-working the idea of construction and the inevitability of its cyclical demise in the battering balls balanced at the end of the crane structures. The largest, most visually engaging structure has a highly rendered red battering-ram which gently, silently sways when pushed and is quite mesmeric to watch. Perhaps it belies the noise of it smashing buildings or persons it may come into contact with. For me, strength lies in the rather enigmatic large-scale works but the two companion pieces lack presence and are somewhat awkward.

*Dawn Williams*, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery

### Jane Butler

The introductory corridor to Jane Butler’s fine exhibition was filled with poorly made photographs that set a tone completely at odds with her strong moving image work. Inside a college lecture room she presented three separate screens, two small LCD monitors and one a large-scale projection. The work was based on observations in the environment of animals, insects, light and the weather. Minimal intervention was made by the artist as she set up her fixed camera positions in different locations. The outcome was an excellent body of work that was meditative, visually attractive, excellently installed and importantly, memorable.

*Brian Hand*

Jane Butler aspires to induce in the viewer a ‘sublime reaction’. She indulges us in lusciously sensual images of roses, which possess a surreal quality. She hones in on and relishes natural moments of sheer perfection. A pulsating rhythm links three video projections into a coherent body of work. In the first a graveyard icon stands steadfast against a shifting background. The unrelenting toll of church bells announces the passing of time in a menacing manner as Butler explores the effects of light and climate on the landscape. This same rhythm is echoed in studies of nature in the second and third videos. Butler’s is an insightful view of beauty and the sublime, of rhythm and the passing of time.

*Nora Hickey*, Lewis Glucksman Gallery

### Jennifer Byrne

My immediate reaction here was that the work so overtly referenced other artists’ work (female Irish artists and Alice Maher in particular) that I couldn’t judge it as particular or original (problematic as this term is) and found it hard to engage with in a fresh or neutral way. This was an installation comprising of several installations and objects, the largest and most dominating of which was synthetic thread falling from the ceiling and intended to look like human hair. I liked some of the ceramic (?) pieces with this installation, but in a purely formal way, and again I felt they were reminiscent of well known artists working in Ireland in the 80’s and 90’s.

*Tara Byrne*.

Byrne’s installation has the codes of both art gallery and craft shop. Although the main selection of works of shell like objects - which are wall mounted or set out on glass stands - may belong to the later, the introduction of six full height sculptural pieces entitled ‘Erminias’ certainly belong in the former. The effect of these six pieces - made up of many pieces of individual fishing threads, which get narrower as they descend and swirl onto the floor – is that they act as an architectural device which on one side, creates a corridor, in which you are forced to see the wall mounted works at very close range and on the other side, a wider space to view the ‘glass stand pieces’. Is Byrne therefore looking at ways of making us see the work? Perhaps, or perhaps it’s just down to the fact that the only place to fix these six elements was the wooden beam above them. That said, Byrne’s objects are very beautifully made and also say a lot about the Cork vernacular and memory. However, the question for Byrne is where is she going: Towards the gallery or towards the craft shop?

*Paul Sullivan*, Static

### Jonathan Crook

I liked walking into the piece with the ramp corridor and reduced door; it was an excellent entrance or decompression chamber for the subsequent works. There was to my mind a sense of a contemporary gothic in the blow up rooms and corridors of the photographs. Crook clearly showed how and where these keyhole viewpoints came from, it was interactive without the use of IT and impossible not to think of multiple narratives within and about the spaces created. The slide projection seemed less thought through and diminished the sense of the architectural uncanny in the models and photographs. All round a well conceived and well made degree show.

*Brian Hand*

The choices of the visitor to Jonathan’s space determine their experience of it. A constructed entrance hall, tapered sides leading you in to walk through the passageway and out through the door at the end of perspective. Choosing to continue walking upon the Crawford’s’ concrete floor and pass by Crook’s constructed entrance one can also examine his tiny scale model of it. I felt a certain playfulness with perception and reality, beautiful spaces pictured upon the walls, atmospheric light streaming through the windows, a sense of otherworldly calm therein. Unless, like Alice in wonderland I drank the shrink me potion, never could I stand within that hall and look out through that round window to the world beyond. Open Jonathan’s entrance door and one meets the projected image of an abandoned room, pools of water on the concrete floor, planks of wood in the grime, weeping walls and patchy plasterwork. A serene atmosphere permeates the image, the calm of dawn light seeping through the single window. Then, to my left, a model of the same room, I have to look twice and thrice and check the details but I conclude that this serenity is indeed part of an illusion. To live vicariously in the spaces created through these images of perfect spaces, to humble ourselves to occupy this house in our imaginations, to perhaps dispense with the reality of large scale real time construction, yet another boring apartment block. Close your eyes and imagine perfect home.

*Sharon Philbin*

### Natasha Crowley

An arrangement of photographs, mounted on sheet metal, go to make up the image of a butchered carcass. A set of drawings of the arm bones and hand of a human, supplemented with graph paper and photocopies of anatomical etchings, are splashed and spattered with red of a bloodstain. There are also four inserts into the wall which have been used to mount mini displays of drawings, minute copies of photographs, dead bird carcasses, a plaster cast of teeth and small bottles filled with medical related objects such as syringe tips. Next to these is a collection of sheep’s organs and a pig’s trotter in formaldehyde bottles. It seems that there is always at least one Damien Hirst in every graduate show these days. This is very derivative work. One set of photographs, mounted 3x20, without bloodstains or debris, offers a possible way forward for this otherwise mundane show. There is an assertiveness and aggression here that could have been put to such better use.

*John Byrne*

The artist’s statement is a dictionary entry for ‘flesh’. The room is filled with meat: in photographs, in sketches, in jars. The only thing that is missing is the smell – and just as well, as there is a narrative at work, I think – to do with human processing of bodies and flesh, to do with the steady control and finally denial of meat. The first wall is all montages of photos of carcasses, mounted on aluminium, arranged into newly physical shapes. The second wall is sketches, and this is followed by an arrangement of 60 Polaroids, again of carcasses, interspersed with shots of blood splatters on the ground (echoing the last of the aluminium based images). Small alcoves present the steady medicalisation of the body, followed finally by the preservation (for science?) of organs in jars. There might be a message in here somewhere, but it is too ambiguous to impose itself (this is a good thing). There is no attempt to shock here, just an aesthetics of the physical that has surpassed the literal: between animal and human, living and dead, these are new

future bodies, racked for viewing, not to be used. Beautiful montage bodies await their future role – but for all the waiting, the end is known in advance. Meat.

*Paul Hegarty*

### Samuel Curtin

The Artist’s Statement suggested a Rothko-like practice, but these paintings had nothing of the heroic proportions of old-style Abstract Expressionism and were painted in colours from a palette not far from that of interior design. When taken on their own terms, however, they were quite pleasing. Seen from the right distance the planes of colour floated back or forward from the canvas surface, and it became clear that the artist, within this modest painterly vocabulary, had achieved certain mastery.

*Fergal Gaynor*, Art/Not Art

This form of abstract expressionism is now difficult to approach. This world has been lauded, theorised, interrogated, revered and then hated finally to be exploited by the trashiest side of our society. It is a well trodden sod, but almost in a response to the likes of Rothko Curtin has created his world in miniature, 9 to be exact. They are also supported or in my view let down by other larger paintings (3). His colour palette, olive greens, burnt oranges, and peaty browns, could possibly only come from livrancy in an Irish climate and his wet application might also suggest this. But outside of this dreariness there is illumination. On one wall 4 (5” x 5”) placed with Grecian precision there resides a break in the clouds. One needs, I feel, to read them like a Seurat, from 14 feet away, to appreciate their full vibrancy. The white frames against the white wall allow them to hover in mid air. My fear, by the simple fact that they are being sold singularly and the fact the remainder sit uncomfortably in the tight space, is that this may have been a happy accident, but I am very willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

*Dobz*, Art/Not Art

This is a highly focussed display, with a series of nine small paintings (entitled ‘Conceal’) and three larger works. They offer some sort of visual opening, with geometrical colour bounding dark centres. The artist proposes that these works investigate depth as occurring both in the world and in the painted surface, and how views can be blocked even as they seem to reveal themselves. Wisely, this is done at a formal level, with different strategies, across the series, of looking at what is no longer a window onto anything. The larger works are not as interesting – they play out the geometrical abstraction that prevailed in Europe in the 1950s, without really offering a new perspective. On the other hand, the greater surface area is used to explore the surface itself, with a range of painting strategies drawing the viewer away from adopting a single point of view – we continue to look at, rather than trying to look through, so I think these are great examples of controlled formalised painting.

*Paul Hegarty*

### Robin Daly

This is an assured use of the medium. The artist also masters well the scale and proportion of the figures to their environment. The extreme nature of the imagery veers towards the macabre and the ghoulish scenarios have a fantastic almost comical effect. This nightmarish quality diminishes any empathy for the work and in particular places the exaggerated relationship between mother and child in the realm of caricature. The monstrous associations are too explicit for any real sense of menace to emerge. The viewer observes rather than engages with the horror and so while the artist’s concerns may be genuine, the sculptures run the risk of being gratuitous.

*Fiona Kearney*, Glucksman Gallery

This was one of the pieces I encountered that most surprised me. As I entered the room, I took one look at these bronze, table-sized, figurative sculptures and felt compelled to dismiss them as commercial ‘bronze figurines’, but a closer look surprised me. The figures were contorted and elongated with the seeming theme of fertility or impending motherhood. That, coupled with the name of the artist convinced me that its creator was a she, which somehow seemed to fit. I found out later that Robyn was a guy, none of which actually matters, but pointed out to me how many assumptions I had been making about the theme being ‘typically female’ and therefore uninteresting. Ultimately I did not enjoy these pieces, although I thought they were brave in the sense of not trying to be ‘contemporary’.

*Tara Byrne*.

### Janet Ellis

This work comes across as savvy and self-conscious about art education and the value system of artists. Through simple but effective means like the use of notice boards, videos and photography, Janet Ellis addresses some of the mantras of art careerism. There is humour and sophistication in her statement and I particularly liked the shelf with the framed works where Ellis cleverly presents just enough framed work to suggest the difficulty of coherency in the field of contemporary art after Duchamp. Talking about the problems of the gallery system and the role of education in supporting the commercialisation of art might lead an artist to become didactic but the maturity of this work skillfully avoids such an outcome.

*Brian Hand*

“But you and me are not the same”, hand-written repeated several times on one of the photographs in the presentation, this could also be the title of the whole installation. The presentation is a playful juxtaposition of the artist as a person and the viewers subjective expectations of an artist and art in general. The first exhibition room is dedicated to the creation of a picture of the artist. In several collages the artist mixes personal images of herself with pictures of empty rooms and potential art works. The different layers of possible views of the person, Janet Ellis, present the artist as a subjective human being instead of an abstract and objective inventor.

Barney Fahey, 2011

In another, smaller room furnished like an old class room, the visitor is allowed to write down or draw his ideas on art on pieces of paper with photocopied frames. The idea to hand the art space over to the viewer appears as well through the sentence “art space to let” that runs through all her works. Particularly interesting in Janet Ellis’ work is her attempt to raise questions about expectations in art without denying the form of an art piece as an object.

*René Zechlin*, Lewis Glucksman Gallery

## Barney Fahey

Black Shoe Road, Tottenham Hale, Seven Sisters, Finsbury Park. These are some of the London Underground stations documented and photographed in this show. The photographs are accompanied by some textual information regarding the etymology of these names, and the images themselves are of murals produced for these locations – e.g. Edward Bawden’s depiction of ‘a castle keep atop a hill’ or ‘bury’ apparently refers to Highbury. I’m not quite sure what was going on in this exhibition. Was it a documentary project or, more likely, a weak attempt at finding a rationale that could hold together a series of photographs of stations. If this was an attempt at a conceptual piece it failed. If it was an attempt to present as many photographs as possible to a public in the hope that they would sell, it still failed. The uncomfortable amount of images – especially a collection of A6 prints in ‘clip frames’ tended to take away from any integrity that the better images had. Some of the exterior night shots of stations (especially Ealing Common and Clapham South) were excellent – engaging, intriguing, unnerving and complex. But I had to search for this amongst the overkill of imagery that nearly made me give up. Why not blow such images up to a huge scale (having a printer ‘tile up’ images onto a tableau of A3’s is quite cheap) or, even better, project them. Selection and self-editing need to be learnt here if the possible quality of some of these images is to shine through.

*John Byrne*

Barney Fahey, 2011

Fahey is a sculpture student, whose two-dimensional photographic project records interior architectural features, tiling motifs and exteriors of an eclectic mix of London Underground Stations. In addition, the artist retells the historical context of how each underground station and its corresponding tile motif evolved. The text is very sloppily presented (cut out photocopied text ‘Pritt-stuck’ on to A1 sugar paper) and appears to be an afterthought in an attempt to consolidate whatever dialogue Fahey is trying to create. Perhaps Fahey is trying to hint at the pleasures of noticing the unnoticed, the everyday details that one fails to focus on because of ‘familiarity’? In the catalogue Fahey quotes Charles Holden (eliminate) ‘everything which does not fulfill a necessary function’ but the artist tries to document too many elements and in doing so loses focus and function of the essence of his work.

*Dawn Williams*, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery

## Thomas Finucane

I really like the magic lantern DIY approach to this show and I enjoyed stepping into a darkened atmosphere with whirring machines and background noises. Architectural X-Ray ghost spaces were effectively conjured on the walls with mirrors and projections. There seemed to be a sense of nostalgia about these primitive devices and a sense of the complex history of the Crawford Technical Institute coming through to the surface of a contemporary art college. I particularly got this sense of the past and the erasure of plans in the wall drawing. I found this show well put together with interesting ideas on transparency and an excellent use of sound behind a frame.

*Brian Hand*

Thomas Finucane, 2011

Tom Finucane’s group of lambola prints in the hall reveal that he is capable and able of exploring a much-visited subject in recent years - depicting living spaces that evoke loneliness and a sense of failure and foreboding. The images are well constructed and the elements of saturated cold and warm colours extend an emotional content to the viewer. However, in an adjoining room Finucane fails to create a successful installation as it seems the idea and process is only reflected and not developed. Perhaps Finucane is attempting to emulate the work of Finnish artist Jaakko Niemela – but I found the basic, scratched Perspex architectural structures which either spun on the floor to create ‘eerie’ shadows or had blurry images projected on to the structures ill-conceived and void of content.

*Dawn Williams*, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery

## Jacqueline Galvin

Galvin’s work was ambitious as it spread its ideas across different media and distinct spaces. I like her attention to detail in the two installation spaces where she presented bandaged branches/sallies in water in one and butterflies in another. You could easily detect that Galvin had really thought about what element to include or discard in her approach to these tall airy spaces. Following through the space to the room of video projections was something of an anticlimax as neither were particularly compelling to me and the lightness of touch in the preceding spaces gave way to a claustrophobic white room.

*Brian Hand*

Jacqueline Galvin, 2011

This was a thoughtful and well presented installation, sensitively sited in an atmospheric set of small cupboard-type rooms. Each piece (reed and sink based installation, prints and video), were imaginative and seductive. I really wanted to stay with this work longer. As a viewer, you were encouraged to engross yourself in the three parts of the installation, and the video images of a young woman in a field, which could have been quite clichéd, were actually poetic in a folkloric kind of way. Only the prints seemed a little weaker than the other parts and I’m not sure they added to the overall installation.

*Tara Byrne*

## Gearóid Hally

There’s very little painting here –apparently, and what there is little: details, tiny outsider pictures glimpsed through peepholes. Hally has been very

Gearóid Hally, 2011

inventive with the space, and constructed all kinds of odd viewing devices, breaking the flow of the viewer by changing the levels, means of viewing and the possibility you might be missing something hidden away. Tiny windows built into the partitions flicker – one overlooking a tied up toy figure. A hole in another partition is half-filled with tiny bricks. These are all fine devices – and the room is like an enticing but evil toyshop. There are a couple of paintings, unsettling and of someone else’s world, surrounded by huge gilt frames. I liked the strategies, I thought the pictures were less interesting than they could have been (so there is nothing particularly great through those peepholes). Painting and viewing are both questioned, coherently but not too heavily.

*Paul Hegarty*

Gearóid Hally, 2011

Ways, habits, and prejudices of viewing seem to be the crucial questions in the work of Gearóid Hally. For example, on entering the exhibition I blindly headed down a purpose built corridor like a moth to light, felt dissatisfied with the two small diorama’s there, turned around, and aimed straight for two well-lit paintings in gilt frames wondering if a small table along the way was part of the exhibition and promising myself to look through two clusters of just too many peepholes, later on. Death to the Bluebird, the larger and less quirky of the two paintings was a happy, though apocalyptic, work that reminded me of a comic book Chagall. I finally located the poor bird lying there dead. Apparently the hunt for meaning can be an empty proposition, especially when it is used as an instrumental motor of engagement! Hally’s installation is painting in the expanded field.

*Shepherd Steiner*

## Erica Hellmich

Laser prints mounted on aluminium. The subject of this work deals with close up views of pieces of material, cloth, lace and plastic. There was a very painterly quality to the work but the prints were disconcerting in some way. As these source materials were primarily selected for their colour and textural qualities and it seems curious to select the rather flat medium of laser prints as the final means of delivery in relation to the ideas engaged with. The medium of photography can capture some of the qualities of the source material, in particular the colour relationships, however other forms of art practice, techniques and approaches may have been more appropriate to deal with the textural aspects of the chosen subject matter. These works appear one of a series of projects that could have resulted from the source material. The works presented here, though interesting, appear like partial studies of an overall project.

*Mike Fitzpatrick*, Limerick City Art Gallery

Erica Hellmich, 2011

Laser prints on aluminium, these images seek to capture something of nature, but something also just beyond it (or beyond our understanding of it). Using her own models and ‘natural and artificial found objects’, the artist tries to conjure something of nature, to make it happen, make something appear that was not simply there in the first place. The images are of alien organics, forms opening out, dispersing or collecting light. The images favour beauty over either the conceptual or the more formal, and verge on the decorative. There is not enough variety here, either, although perhaps this enhances the harmony of the world being brought forth. Whilst they show us something about imagination, the works are not themselves particularly innovative.

*Paul Hegarty*

## Stephanie Hough

Set in the space between floors, around and on the staircase, Hough’s work infiltrates its surroundings: we have dust stencils on the arches, projection on to the domed recess in the ceiling, a stuffed fox curled on a step. Paintings and prints have been ‘appropriated’ and doctored – like the Chapmans or David Godbold, but to have scribbled on, defaced etc. existing pictures is not much of a statement by itself. One piece, ‘The Martyrdom of St Matthew’, despite its portentous title is truly excellent: twelve stuck videos on twelve televisions (I hope the number isn’t what I think it might be). The pictures are all oscillating stills, mostly of moments of violence or narrative resolutions....angry faces lose their humanity, throbbing in and out of a moment that will be always suspended... the whole gives us a rhythmical pulsation where the individual elements continually recombine. Visually powerful, and following on, rather than stuck in, Nam June Paik’s television work.

*Paul Hegarty*

Stephanie Hough, 2011

Hough’s engrossing twelve screen video installation each showing a continuous looped split second action of soap opera character in an emotional hiatus comments on the repetitive and predictive nature of soap opera’s portrayal of ‘real life’ and the public’s obsession with the programmes. The dialogue is underscored by cliché soap opera quotes and rather bizarrely, a stuffed fox covering its eyes from the monotony. The Hough’s video works are confident and intelligent while the elaborately framed doodles on well-known paintings (à la Chapman Bros.) lacked any real substance but were a pleasant diversion.

*Dawn Williams*, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery

## Teresa Jackson

Teresa Jackson’s show is simply made up of drawings. Most are small, all are simple and some are amongst the best I’ve seen for quite some time. Jackson has a fine, spidery handling of line which, coupled with a sense of humour, produces some interesting imagery. There is one small drawing of a fish which I particularly liked for its simplicity and succinct wit. Some of her other images, using writing, backs of envelopes, graph paper and other found materials were equally engaging. There is something lingering here beneath the surface that one wants to grasp and take hold of – though like reflections on water, this is an elusive practice. Of her larger drawings there is one that stands out. It is part of a diptych and consists of a folded page of an A3 sketchbook. On the top half of the page is a rectangle of intense, overly worked line. Hovering between the intensity of an Abstract Expressionist painting and the simplicity of a Le Witt sketch, it is an engaging web of overlapping, scrupulous effort.

What is disappointing about this show is its hanging. Most of the larger images are placed within plastic sleeves and hung on painted and stained

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John Byrne, 2005

board. I appreciate that this contrivance is there to suggest the rough and ready simplicity of the work but, unfortunately, it remains as an uncomfortable adjunct to work which, otherwise, has a strong potential.

*John Byrne*, Static

John Byrne, 2005

Jackson’s 30 drawings (€250–€700 each) plus one sketch book (Not For Sale) remind me of the surrealist’s automatic drawings, but hey, we can all read what we want into drawings, right? The problem with this work comes down to a simple question: Are they exploratory drawings or are they illustration? This isn’t about value judgements: Is one good, is one bad (in fact the work is quite neat), it’s more about ‘where is the potential in each drawing?’

The decision of Jackson to show the ‘sketch book’ highlights that there is no difference between what’s in the book and what’s on the wall, apart from one set is for sale the other isn’t. So therefore we may speculate that the latent potential that we associate with the drawing when part of a wider thought process (not an end in itself) is compromised by the showing of the drawings on the wall (an end in itself). We may therefore conclude that this uneasy slippage leaves Jackson’s wall drawings unclear - in that there is no visible representation that they are part of a wider project - and therefore we may argue that the only potentiality left is one of trade, from artist to buyer.

*Paul Sullivan*, Static

Paul Sullivan, 2005

### David Jenkins

I liked the palette in some of these paintings and immediately the colours conveyed an evocation of Beckettian existentialism. An equivalence to or translation of Beckett’s text in images is perhaps an impossibility and there are dangers in attempting to produce such an outcome. Beckett was just so good how can I express anything comparable. But first things first, if I am going to try every step must be highly self-conscious. Such a heightened sense of self-awareness was hit and miss in this show unfortunately. New elements like a line of thread in Beckett’s silence or the heavy relief in No. 4 disrupted rather than distinguished the works. The change in scale also seemed at odds and the smaller work was overdone in my opinion. Edges were important in some works and disregarded in others. I was distracted by this inconsistency.

*Brian Hand*

David Jenkins, 2005

If painting is dead then these ghosts hover between theatre and reality, uneasy tenants of the exhibition space. We have our roles, we read from the script written long ago, man became centre of the universe the measure of all things and that story of modernity continues to unfold. Samuel Beckett is referenced in Jenkins’ pallet, the murky greens, dusty browns, a piece of string, thick lucid paint and faint lines, carefully applied. Paintings titled ‘As though turned to stone’ (from ‘Ohio Impromptu’), ‘Voices of Silence’ and ‘Signature Marks’ each present the schematic suggestion of awkward bodies in a bleak and inhospitable landscape, squares and angular shapes almost in a grid, positioned within a rigid structure. Yet these paintings are irreducible to a reading as Beckett illustration, they are a feeling through and a re-presentation of mental sensoria. Beckett undercut that despair, that dowdy white blindness that would set humanity tripping and stumbling along the path of delusion to think of the artist a privileged ‘creator’ elevated and divinely directed. ‘Close of a long day’ is particularly effective capturing that feeling of utter exhaustion, where limbs and spirit each conspire to collapse the mind into sleep, the down stroke of this night brown paint the eyes slide downwards and my thoughts return to my own frail embodied state of tiredness.

Though ‘Beckett’s Silence’ a bleak reality was inscribed in a million words, written in exile, even a double exile often written first in French and later translated into English- acknowledging that uneasy relationship to language once oral culture has been educated out of existence. Jenkins’ reframing of this perspective, imagined and realised in Beckett’s world of bleak apocalyptic visions, the unwanted aged population and harbingers of an earthy hopelessness for a world under the spell of youth and progress. Artists will seek to change the script of civilizations’ trajectory but also to live life, which is found outside the four corners of any frame or image or text.

*Sharon Philbin*

## Martina Keane

Martina Keane’s exhibition consists primarily of images of memory, growth and loss. It begins with a tiny ‘touch screen’ image of a baby moving in a pram. The intimacy of this piece is quite wonderful, its scale and delicacy match its intention well. This then leads the viewer onto a series of photographs which appear to give the possibility of a narrative – or make the viewer uncomfortable, aware that they are seeking a narrative structure to make sense of this very ‘photo album’ type of work. An intriguing set of images of an older woman being made up and having her hair dyed presents an uncomfortably accurate insight into the privacy of familial interaction and the ‘changing of hands’ of generations within and behind the confines of shared domestic space. This is a coming of age piece. The exhibition finishes with a video of hair washing and cutting. Within the context of the other photographic works provided here, this makes sense. As such, many of the cliché’s associated with this kind of subject matter are avoided. One is left with an uncomfortably intimate – yet inevitably distanced - insight into a particular situation. This work is good, but it does not seem finished yet. There is a nervousness about its presentation which distracts from the possibility of its impact. More installation work like this by Keane would begin to resolve some of these problems whilst, hopefully, providing a body of biographical and autobiographical works that avoid the usual pitfalls of ‘me’ art.

*John Byrne*

Martina Keane, 2005

Sharing in Keane’s experience of everyday life, a chandelier hangs from the roof above my head. Enter and two clear plastic frames meet the viewer, a single banal photograph of someone’s hand by a coffee cup sits in the corner of one. I follow the collection of images reading from left to right, permutating combinations of photographs and larger prints, the looped film of a baby reaching out to the viewer from his tiny screen, sandblasted text on glass stands out from the wall above an off centre image, one of these tells ‘an ageing woman finds no shelter in language ...words she once loved.. Summer, Yellow, Sexuality have suddenly become dwellings for someone else’. An adjacent room houses an intimate short film of women’s

Sharon Philbin, 2005

hair being washed and cut in a kitchen space, the joy of sharing, of being groomed and touched which Keane has described as the ‘primitive ritualised bonding necessary for the production of alliances’. Many narratives could be teased from this work, images are presented without the conceit of preciousness, simple and irreducible moments recorded and shared with the visitor, a space is created for meditative contemplation of culture and everyday ritual. In the final images a women dressed in a bridal veil sips coffee in her home, looks at the television and standing on her doorstep stares out into the world outside.

*Sharon Philbin*

Sharon Philbin, 2005

### Gareth Kearney

Gareth Kearney’s show consists of paintings of urban landscapes. Slightly ‘out of focus’ they recall the kind of blurred experience of urbanity that one gets from discovering the edges of a city or town where façade and window dressing has been replaced by concrete functionality and dehumanised necessity. The lack of figures in his landscapes re-enforces this feeling. Kearney’s muted pallet of mainly blues and greys presents a series of works that hang together quite well. The more interesting images tend to present the possibility for Kearney to indulge in draughtsmanship and line. There are two good images of tower blocks, an interesting sketch of a gas station and some intriguing images taken from oblique high angles. All of these tend to emphasise Kearney’s drawing technique. Many of the paintings, however, don’t bare close scrutiny. Kearney’s handling of paint tends to run away with him when there is a lack of detail to be modulated and handled. I have a feeling that Kearney would make some very good drawings. This work is just too safe.

*John Byrne*

Gareth Kearney, 2005

In the work of Gareth Kearney painting and the city are seen through what seems like the optical distortions of photography. Having noted the reduced palette of contemporary painting and after some quick editing on the fly, I found myself zeroing in on two rough and somewhat provisional paintings of scaffolding and architecture. Faced with the subject of these two works and the tension between areas of focus and lack of focus I would be tempted to say that one doesn’t have to be an accomplished painter to make interesting painting today. But if the practice is partly about learning how to paint, for this argument to work one needs the double focus of an urban subject matter and painting to converge as they do here. I like the work for this reason. In the context of a college full of good painters, Kearney’s work may articulate a different set of possibilities.

*Shepherd Steiner*

### Grattan Keating

I couldn’t get this at all, except in terms of illustration. Lots of nineteenth century landscape techniques revisited, but without any sense of anachronism. Francis Danby without the apocalyptic, Turner without the light. No irony, no extension of the style. They would make fine book illustrations and, if the new editions of Stephen King’s Dark Tower novels and Tolkien are anything to go by, this is an art that is being revived. But they just looked bizarre in a gallery-like space.

*Fergal Gaynar* Art/Not Art

Fergal Gaynar, 2005

I don’t even know how to approach reviewing this work. It’s an oddity, something that certainly a number of years ago you were quite likely to encounter in this college. It’s made more difficult by the fact that ironically in this slick multi-media based exhibition he is probably the rebel, but to turn around and say ‘I am inspired by romantic art’ is ridiculous. Keating is a Turner copyist, with David Casper Friedrich’s footprints stamped all over it. A copyist, mind, who understands his predecessors well, but this is of no benefit. If Keating is rebelling against his peers then all I can say is rebel more, rebel against them, rebel against them all, masters included.

*Dabz*, Art/Not Art

Fergal Gaynar, 2005

The artist acknowledges his debt to the Romantic Movement but does little to explain how he might move his work on from this historical period to provide a contemporary response to the themes and ideas of the great artists he has studied. If committed to a traditional mode of expression and concept, there should be a better awareness of formal techniques, particularly the use of glazes that might lift the rather heavy tones of the painting and enable a greater play of light so crucial to the Romantic picture. The smaller works hint at the possibility of a more personal creation.

*Fiona Kearney*, Glucksman Gallery

## Cáitríona Kelliher

I liked the statement in this show and thought it set up the viewer for an interesting experience. In fact, I liked a lot of the elements in this show but felt that the overall idea was somewhat lost in the editing of work. A greater sense of restraint would have helped to reduce the numbers of works presented and clarify the ideas in the statement. Sometimes work can just become wallpaper and the layering process can become too opaque. I particularly liked Untitled I with its wide brush strokes and Untitled II seemed to me to be the strongest piece on show. Much more could have been made of the Polaroids and the perhaps a greater sense of risk taking would have allowed this show to reach its inherent potential.

*Brian Hand*

Cáitríona Kelliher, 2005

These semi-abstract works had a certain preciosity, and are bound to appeal to viewers with a taste for the lyrical-spectral. I have problems with this whole practice, however. Decaying interiors are ‘ready-mades’, they are pre-packaged generators of atmosphere. Photographing them and working the images into artworks doesn’t seem enough to me: it’s just another exploitation, a process for extracting essence. I’d like to know what these places are, not just get a whiff of their musty character.

*Fergal Gaynor*, Art/Not Art

Fergal Gaynor, 2005

Sometimes less is more. 3 burnt framed Polaroids, 16 loose Polaroids, 9 paintings and 2 magnolia framed Polaroids. The difference between exhibiting for a degree show and presenting for an assessment, perhaps. Kelliher has used the Polaroid and its iconic connection to the forensic photography of the past and as the ubiquitous tool of the present day ghost hunter to capture this nether space, these haunted places where memory

breaks down and myth merges. This I can understand but Polaroid photography is already too loaded and the rich leaky colour images can draw individuals into a false sense of security that allows the medium and its history dictate the result. Here I feel it let Kelliher down. More on the plus side, the diptych on the end wall with its subtle irregularity of surface, the lace and soft white, then a hint, a blur, of something or someone, was well realised maybe the haunting we have been expecting.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

### Jenny McCarthy

McCarthy tells us in her statement that this work “demands a calm quiet space” and that indeed she has created it for them. Yet as I arrived the janitor was pushing me out and I couldn’t hear nothing but cars outside. Come on, let’s be fair, McCarthy’s quiet isn’t really about real quiet, it’s about the proposal that a white room equates to quiet and calmness.

Like other works in this exhibition, McCarthy’s rhetoric forces meaning on the work. We read about “pieces that fall to earth, female form, vessels for the creation and protection of new life, sadness, loss and delicateness”. So we visually read the piece with this accompanying text. The work itself though doesn’t convey any of this to me, or if it does it is a very literal translation of some of those ideas. I see a well-trodden set of dirty shoe prints on the white floor - meandering through a belt of suspended pod like forms, some of which are also on the floor, presumably the ones that have fallen from the sky - and I wonder how many times I am going to see this equally well-trodden historical composition of conceptual art which Nietzsche may have described as the ‘eternal return of the same.’

*Paul Sullivan, Static*

Sharon McCarthy

A peaceful white space, chalky forms nestled in white powder at my feet, or float an ocean of calcified jellyfish as when one covers an inflated balloon with PVA and French chalk, and then bursts the inner body. The newborn child, needs quiet to sleep and to rest, yes. But most important for new life is interaction, that it is spoken to, cuddled, embraced etc, if it is to grow and to develop. Approaching Mc Carthy’s work, I saw a space of quiet ‘calm’ and the inactivity of mute forms howling- representations of the female form, ‘a vessel for the creation and protection of life’. This is effectively a portrait of the Victorian woman, frail, thin skinned, sickly white (which is read as innocence, her place in the home, shielded from the sun). PVA and French Chalk, ruffled and ultra delicate, transparent and hollow, some of Mc Carthy’s forms hover in the vacuous space between earth and sky where woman was once imagined to glide - like an angel, idealised out of reach, put in clean glass boxes, too delicate to speak.

*Sharon Philbin*

### Sharon McCarthy

A painter in the traditional abstract mode with a vibe from the Spanish artist Tapiés appearing to be the strongest influence on the work. Seven paintings of uniform scale were on show, each made on board using sand and plaster or similar materials to build up a thick textured surface. The colour range employed centres on an ochre palette. The surfaces are scratched and incised. Words were written and subsequently scratched out and obliterated. Intriguingly for the viewer one wishes to know what these words were, I found myself wondering in front of ‘Homage to Home VI’ what did it say, I could make out the letters *s b a d*, was the home of the title sad or bad? I realized that I was creating a narrative in relation to this work, when perhaps none existed. This work looked competent but lacked a more experimental approach that would have got more ideas and possibilities going. In short this work represents a good though timid start.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Sharon McCarthy

There’s no doubt one is in the presence of a materialist with Sharon McCarthy’s painting; or at least if I remember correctly what materialism once meant. One feels the importance of Art Brut amidst these works in sombre earthy tones: hints of Fautrier, Dubuffet, Wols, and also through a strange reversal the Decollagistes, come to mind. In McCarthy’s case a critical mimesis of painting in the wake of paintings decline is not the only promise. Process is obviously important here, but one also feels like these sites have been created from a palimpsest of memories as well as layers, and so one narrates one’s way through the variously impersonal, potentially painful, and at times only dimly recalled moments of human presence with a quiet respect. ‘Homage to Home I, Homage to Home IV, Homage to Home V’, are all nice.

*Shepherd Steiner*

### Cian McConn

One of the short videos by Cian McConn is of a hand ‘Wanking’ (the title of the work) a piece of rough wood - I bet he gave himself splinters. Like the most self-indulgent of male acts itself, it doesn’t last very long and finishes in somewhat of an anti-climax. Another of his short videos ‘Yes’ sees McConn repeating the word ‘yes’ until he steams up the lens of the video camera before cleaning it with his index finger. Like all of his work here, they are playful, relatively funny and instantly forgettable in a one-hit-wonder kind of way. This seems to be the work of somebody with a rebellious self-image whose horizon line of rebelliousness is normatively low. Like the ‘K-Tell Love Songs Album’ (which forms part of a selection of cheesy second hand records that visitors to the exhibition are invited to put on a turntable) they are re-presentations of other people’s work in a derivative format. I’ve seen videos of people dancing in the street before, Gillian Wearing’s 1994 piece *Dancing in Peckham*’ sees her gyrating in front of camera in a strangely similar way. Was this postmodern pastiche, ironic re-quotation, or did he just hope that nobody who came to see the show had ever looked at YBA work? I did like the T shirts printed with lines from pop songs such as ‘I think we’re alone now’ and ‘Take my breath away’, and I thought that the still photographs of McConn wearing these in incongruous locations - like supermarkets or in a tree - worked better than the videos. There is a really good sense of fun, wit and irony here. It just needs to be targeted at a wider audience rather than deployed to satisfy the whims of local contemporaries. This could be the difference between making a mark on the art world or remaining the class joker of 2005.

*John Byrne*

McConn’s work is housed in two adjacent corridors. One corridor houses a monitor/headphone piece and a series of photographs of McConn wearing T-shirts with song lyrics printed on. The monitor piece requires you to use headphones which I always dislike as the person who wore them before me may have had some really bad head disease. Having put them on though, I listen to and watch a series of shorts with titles such as ‘breathing out, wanking, I’m really just a dog barking’ and a nice little piece entitled ‘a pathetic attempt to escape’ which sees the artist banging on a window trying to escape. At this point I am beginning to feel the same way and thoughts of ‘this is a bit like Mark Quinn without the humour’ and ‘do you remember that Japanese game show called endurance’ start crossing my mind. I move on to corridor 2 and the ‘benefit of the doubt’ argument that I had started to formulate as I was thinking of what I could say about this piece evaporates as I am presented with more T-shirts on a clothes rail, a set of records (and record player), presumably the records that contain the lyrics on the T-shirts and a further monitor based video with said artist dancing with T-shirt on in the centre of Cork (a sure cue for any mud-man to jump in front of the camera and do something oppositional whilst I dance on my video). The thing about this type of process based work is that its always in danger of becoming anal if the artist chooses to reveal too much of the process, the ‘just in case you don’t get it, I will reveal more’ syndrome. No doubt McConn will develop the required ruthless streak whilst away from the institution but nothing but the promise of a years free Guinness at the Bróg would remotely make me want to bypass this piece again.

*Paul Sullivan, Static*

### Lorraine McDonnel

A painted installation, a space to investigate how we live, how we see the way we live; spraypaint and marker pens mix it with more standard painting types, and objects intervene (like forks in wall sockets). Vacuous reflections compete with paintings of drink, references to junk food etc. Surrealism and cartoon graphics fight it out. Paint crawls off canvasses onto walls and floors (which is nice). I initially liked it that this installation could not be sold, but actually the canvasses embedded in it can be. It’s democratic art – it doesn’t want to play the high culture game (except in the sale of canvasses). It wants to have a laugh, and that’s the problem. Art and fun can mix but zany and madcap are just bad comedy even before they get squeezed into art, and the relentless guffawing of the work lets it down. Watching someone laugh is not funny. There’s a bit too much of an afro wig about the installation, fun as received, pre-processed. Ironically, the response to ‘is it art’ would still be yes. Is it fun? No.

*Paul Hegarty*

Lorraine McDonnell

Lorraine McDonnell

Over-worked installation of meandering spaces in which McDonnell attempts to address issues of contemporary Irish society in a pseudo-graffiti installation. Her lightweight aesthetics are visually agreeable but she engages too many motifs and in doing so her work left me somewhat perplexed and bemused.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

### Emma McElroy

In an environment with a pleasant blue-lit entrance, one mannequin pushing a pram with a doll in it, another passively providing a surface for projected images. Both seemed to stand for the human product of mass consumerism; both were undergoing the art equivalent of being mocked and burnt in effigy. It was all very two-dimensional, but didn’t have the sheer energy that a two-dimensional outlook often brings. If the mannequin could talk back, or if the environment itself were more fully realized. . . . I don’t know.

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Emma McElroy

Emma McElroy

The hardest show to find in the whole exhibition, the hidden underbelly, a series of thin corridors into a seedy world of the tacky, the cheap and the downright dirty. The overall effect here was a little incoherent, the use of Polaroids either misunderstood or just a lazy response to consumerist thrash. I felt the vision was as confused as the space and the darkness just disorientated me further, remarkably though on leaving I did feel a shower was required. The irony, maybe of this exhibit, was the first and last thing you experienced were these delicate window display-like light boxes which said more in their simple gestures than the combination of everything else. Worth thinking about.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Emma McElroy

Emma McElroy

This was an installation comprising of a small, blue painted room, which had been constructed within a bigger room. The room contained printed teeshirts on a wall, a mannequin dressed in 80’s style casual (almost trashy) clothes, a lightbox and various other objects. The room was claustrophobic (presumably deliberately so), chaotic and had the feel of a teenager’s bedroom (angst-ridden in some ways), with a sense of naval gazing at it. Like many younger artists, this work seems to be self consciously trying to communicate something that was not very clear to the viewer. The room seemed loaded with symbolism, but I couldn’t tell you what it was. Overall I had a sense of frustration with the unsophisticated chaos and lack of clarity of this piece.

*Tara Byrne*

Emma McElroy

## Frances McGonigle

Frances presents us with a series of small abstract works using acrylic on board. Although small they appear to crowd the clean rectangular space they are displayed. Fifteen works appear too dense a hang. The works hover between description and abstraction and have a bravery of mark making and fluidity of approach. I found the more time I spent with these paintings the more striking visually they became, the stronger they read and the more engaging. It became important to focus on one at a time. Taking time to study them individually each became hugely enjoyable and seemed to require lots of space to be viewed to best advantage. Seen in this manner they became individual journeys, the titles became interesting, ‘Meadows Foundations’ ‘Dockland Foundations’ the works could be interpreted as partial aerial views. Overall these works represented a strong vision and it was enjoyable to lose oneself in their slightly curious modernist journeys.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

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Interesting semi-abstract canvases that seem to use natural and industrial landscapes as a reference. McGonigal effectively uses a palette of muted blues, reds and greys which promote a sense of energy and expectation. The artist reveals little about herself in the paintings but the body of work has an edginess that stands out from other works on canvas in this degree show.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

### Peter McMorris

Peter McMorris delivered a fine sound work installation for his Degree show and also showed some prints which very much seemed to be going through the motions, as in the college conveyer belt. The main work was shown in a darkened space and took the form of a transparent plastic cube inside of which a series of wire like objects glowed. A sound piece played with a continuous hum that reminded one of a busy and satisfied conveyer belt. It tutted and clicked in a fairly robust manner somewhere between music and natural rhythmic found sound. As I gazed at these curious doodle type light drawings, perhaps created with fibre optic cable I wondered about the hypnotic sound issuing from the conveyer belt, what could it possibly be making? One of the most sophisticated pieces in the degree show and a highlight for this reviewer.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Peter McMorris

Peter McMorris

I enter a blackout room with semi-transparent monotone tent-like structure in the middle of the space in which thin light cables are formed to create elemental structures that suggest objects in a living space. For me the installation nods towards society’s interdependent relationship with consumerism and I found McMorris’ work visually and sonically intriguing. It questioned my memory in identifying familiar objects and the manic, rhythmic repetitive sound of clashing coins contrasts with the stillness of the living space where one can look but cannot enter. Technically very accomplished, the sound and visual elements in McMorris’ installaation equally validate the strength of the work.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

## Chie Mogi

‘Who Am I’. Shadows, cast by the illumination of delicate paper sculptures, ask me this question. On closer inspection the myriad of tiny sculptures, supported tentatively by wires, contain images of portraits in their textured surface. These are intriguing pieces. The rather obvious question is somehow undone by the complex and multi-layered fragmentation of elements which go to make it up. Even then, the physicality of the question exists only in shadow-like catching the true possibility of a fleeting moments only in the traces that they leave. Mogi’s intent was to posit work that existed between the language barriers of two different cultures. In such a simple piece, this worked in a surprisingly poetic way. The work here marks a good start to the possible development of similar projects. However, the uncomfortable wooden sculpture which also appears in this exhibition - poorly made out of three pieces of wood whose cut out forms can be made to read ‘Where do we come from’ - indicates a possible line of inquiry which should not be taken. Subtlety works here for Mogi, the grand statement doesn’t.

*John Byrne*

Chie Mogi

Chie Mogi

Chie Mogi

These looked lovely and were carefully crafted. When they worked they had that real ‘sculptural’ quality of being able to embody an idea entirely sensorially. The little gestalt play of ‘Who Am I?’, turning a jumble of shapes into an intelligible shadow, was nicely realized. If there were problems, they were in the details: the foodstuffs in the trays worked well, but including little portraits on the shapes was a bit literal. I wondered as well about the shapes: were they the result of the process, possibly by computer, of achieving the gestalt trick. And did ‘Where Do We Come From?’ need its own lighting?

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Chie Mogi

Chie Mogi

Two light based tromp l’oeil installations. ‘Who am I’ and ‘Where do we come from’. One created out a series of mysteriously Tetris-like shapes propped up by thin wires; shadows lying in pools of oats, rice and crystallised salt made perceivable by projected light. The other a large wooden placard parasitically absorbing the residual light to form further fragmented shadows. Initially this installation seemed whimsical and almost trite in its casual trickery but the longer I pondered over the gestalt conundrum, the jigsaw, the coding, the materials the more distracted I became. Maybe it was the questions selected? Or even the possibility of questions to be asked. Maybe because I felt that these enquiries were more geographical and national than an existential cry, either way I am still captivated. Why did you do it? And What do you do next?

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Chie Mogi

Chie Mogi

### Louise Moynihan

The work here relates to the visual language of pop art: the recurring motifs and hot clashing colours suggest vibrancy and humour while the central image in the show is of a limp, hanging bunny. This potentially poignant figure is somehow too crude and so unrelated to its surrounding visual environment that the opportunity to create a moment of pathos is lost. Similarly, the repetitive presence of the glamorous housewife lacks grounding in a more considered framework–the effect of this is to create an unsatisfactory disjunction between the bright and stylised form and the suggested narratives of alienation.

*Fiona Kearney, Glucksman Gallery*

Louise Moynihan

Louise Moynihan

These recessed and back lit glass drawings in boxes, were engaging in their slightly kitsch and cartoonish images of domesticity, womanhood and stereotypes. What let this quirky and technically accomplished work down, was what seemed to me an unnecessary accompanying installation of cloth, soft sculpture rabbits, the relevance or otherwise I never succeeded in working out.

*Tara Byrne*

Louise Moynihan

Louise Moynihan

## Caroline Murphy

Small wooden frames covered in encaustic form a mosaic across the walls of this exhibition. The individual pieces hold subtle patterns. Some have squares

cut into them, some have holes criss-crossed with hair or twine. Some bare the traces of writing whilst others contain traces of gold paint. There are larger pieces also, as well as a series of photos in which strips of cloth have been tied to old barred windows. Some of Murphy’s own encaustic works appear in these images hung on graffitied walls. I’m not convinced by this work, though there will be a market for it. The artist’s statement claims a search for the ‘nostalgia of a place that no one knew existed’. It does exist, it exists in the syntax and grammar of the handicraft shop, especially its greeting card section.

*John Byrne*

Caroline Murphy

Caroline Murphy

An installation in a light and airy room of wall mounted cube boxes, varying in scale, constructed from wax, material and gold leaf. Yet despite the vulnerable ethereal quality of the work the labelling system that identifies the price tag of each box to the viewer completely destroys the visual harmony of the work. In my mind, Murphy’s strengths lie in her photographic body of work where she makes temporary interventions of her larger paintings in derelict buildings and documents them. In doing so she creates an engaging interplay of textures and spaces that are quite enigmatic in what they conceal and reveal.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

### Claire Nagle

Claire Nagle’s work centres on a series of sixteen small monoprints each representing a story of Cork culture i.e. ‘Pana’ ‘an cuman’ and ‘music man’. All are stylistically similar, each with a black background with rounded heads of the foreground figures. No 4. ‘The Crossing’ is one of the most subtle prints and has a beautiful fine line quality. The works have a childlike quality in the drawing with a more symbolic rather than a realistic representation. The prints look quite static with the exception of the previously mentioned work and No. 16 which has a lively sense of movement and takes one into the narrative in a deeper way with its moody sky and a figure standing on a little walkway on the edge of a turbulent Lough. These are simple and humble works which are based on childhood memories.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

### Gráinne Ni Chuirrin

Epic and delicate at the same time, these highly controlled expanses of paint are suggestive and well-realised. The artist resists what she correctly sees as a too-ready tendency to look at abstract colour fields as some sort of landscape (physical or mental), and seeks to reclaim the inspiration of nature without being bound by trying to show it, or figure it in any way. The paintings aspire to be emotional responses, and draw us in to the artist’s interaction with nature and her self-reflection, but what is curious is that the paintings are emotionally cool (in what I think is a good way) and formal expressions of *painting* and not of emotions etc. Many artists make the presumption that we have to believe their statement to convey what the work does, but as in this case, tell us the how as well as the what.

*Paul Hegarty*

Gráinne Ni Chuirrin

Gráinne Ni Chuirrin

Gráinne presents a suite of large scale paintings created with layered washes of oil on canvas. They appear to relate to views of landscape slightly in the style of the painter Gwen O’Dowd but without the surface textural intensity that Gwen employs. These paintings were created by layers of oil washes. The statement accompanying the work specifies “I do not consider myself a landscape artist” rather “my paintings are a natural expression of my emotions and feelings”. Intriguingly she further states that “I have sought clarity in each painting”. This declaration of faith in the role of painting in its ability to express inner feelings allows us to understand the sense of enjoyment and engagement that this artist derives from her work. The sombre layered washes of oil refer to landscape but appear to be about a quiet internal quest by the painter to develop a personal melancholic language.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Gráinne Ni Chuirrin

Gráinne Ni Chuirrin

## Jean O’Farrell

I loved the width of these canvases, which gave a real feeling of objects to these luscious paintings. The work reminds one of the drip paintings of Morris Lewis, the US painter prominent in the sixties and seventies. He was coming from an abstract expressionist background but was obviously influenced by the pop art movement. This work revisits the central idea of using drips of paint on untreated canvases to great effect. The large works, five in all, use big green and red blobs of colour allowed to form on the surface with lots of white empty unprimed canvas to allow you to enjoy the intensity of the colour combinations. The quality of the pigment is quite luminous and luscious and summed up well in her titles such as ‘Beta Blackberry’, ‘Sugar Syrup’ and Lactic Strawberry’ It such a relief to see someone enjoy their work and bring a visual rush to painting- great abstraction revisited - drip on...

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Jean O'Farrell

Jean O'Farrell

For an old fan of the painting of Morris Louis and Sam Francis, Jean O’Farrell’s work is a pleasure, if a somewhat embarrassing and obscene one. Lactic Strawberry, a painting in bright colours set on an open swathe of canvas is the best example. Though one sees the formal vocabulary of modernist painting what one quickly realizes is that the figuration (not to mention the mimetic effects of the paint) spells ejaculation. Poking in from the right hand side of the frame and showing its true colours, one follows the course of a slightly sticky spurt in floresent red, pink and green over to clean, white, immaculate canvas. O’Farrell sets up a nice dialectic between figure and ground and it is difficult to tell which is the temptation most in need of being overcome. Given my aesthetic prejudice–and I’m going on the propensity of my eye to come to rest in pure sections of canvas gently framed or cut through by drizzled purple lines–it seems it is the truth that can be found in the medium, a question which is interestingly feminized in O’Farrell’s practice.

*Shepherd Steiner*

## Ellie O’Flynn

O’Flynn’s work consists of childlike, almost surrealist drawings made in colour crayon and felt tip pen. I found some of these images worked

Patricia O'Flynn

surprisingly well - especially on the occasions where image, text and markmaking were brought together in an intense and overworked way. This suggested a way of progressing the development of drawing into the kind of problematic and emotional language that O'Flynn seemed to be striving for. However, the presentation of these images didn't work at all well. The space had been covered with layers of wall-paper which had been torn away to reveal the drawings – obviously a way to suggest the layering of memories caught up in a now derelict and dishevelled room space. There was just too much contrivance here. As with the old newspaper on the floor, the bed head and the old teddy bear, window dressing and cliché overpowered content and subtlety. Perhaps if the video monitor - also partially hidden behind a hole in the wall - was actually showing some other imagery then this installation would have all made sense. I was disappointed it wasn't on either of the two occasions I visited this show. This is a pity as I wanted to at least get some purchase on this installation. But I guess that's something to be learnt. If your going to include moving images in your installations, it's a good idea to make sure they're at least in working order.

John Byrne

Fergal Gaynor

The ‘dusty remains of a child’s bedroom’ environment was effective enough, but I was completely baffled by the drawings of insect people in the patches where the wallpaper had been peeled off. Somewhere between a child’s drawings and the products of industrial cartoon design I couldn’t work out what style they were supposed to have. The video-piece was of a kind that I’m not very fond of: it seems to me that endless representation of the self just doesn’t set enough challenges for the artist. Then again, there are lots of people around who’d argue that point with me.

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Once again, which came first–the drawings or the setting?? My bet is on the drawings. How can one have such attention to detail and a real sense of environment and atmospheric conditioning, but then lose it with this plethora of faux naïve drawings? I can forgive the heavy handed iconographic stereotypical use of the large toy panda and even the children’s bedpost, but I can’t forgive these doodles littering the space. O'Flynn has admirably competed with the likes of Kabakov, high praise indeed, her depiction of the scene was so deliberate and acute, but unlike Kabakov, is no illustrator and has no understanding of the pictorial language of the child. I am loathe to say this as I was taken in, led down the garden path, eating the forbidden fruit but unfortunately ejected before I could even swallow.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Patricia O'Flynn

**Patricia O’Flynn**
I liked the artist statement for this work and I peered wondrously into the fresnel lenses, it was all that the statement suggested, fluid, melting, nervous images that resisted easy interpretation. Patricia O'Flynn has conjured up a world of nightmarish spider people and allowed her ideas to unfold in a number of ways. More could have been made of the space in that I am not sure a white gallery laboratory is the best solution for ideas about messy lives. To sleep perchance to dream was a sculptural work that deserved more than to be placed in the corner. Overall an intriguing show with a novel use of magnification and perception.

*Brian Hand*

Patricia O'Flynn

Of all the works in this show, this was the most professional. It was extremely well presented, well executed and intriguing. The artist had obviously expended a lot of energy and money on these pieces and it worked. Despite really liking this work, both on a formal level and in terms of what seemed a dark autobiographical subtext (?), her choice of magnifying glass to envelope her prints although interesting, was not entirely successful. I can imagine this artist will not find it hard to get exhibitions.

*Tara Byrne.*

## Muireann O’Neill

These were hit and miss. The choice of subject matter seemed a bit haphazard. The strongest of the lot were Pinholes IV-VI, which I quite liked. Instead of building up abstraction out of relations of forms, etc., these took architectural scenes and, by means of the pinhole process, emptied them to the point of abstraction. Most of the other images didn’t show such formal awareness and seemed just happy to borrow the pinhole photograph’s lyrical feel.

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

The images in the catalogue had teased my interest. Always a dangerous thing to do, check the catalogue first, as catalogues rarely have anything to do with the final physical exhibit. It sets a precedence, very often impossible to live up to in the flesh.

This concoction of a series of long exposed photographs, prints on both canvas and glass would be difficult enough to exhibit anywhere and this is always a factor in these large degree show scenarios, space is of the essence and tough decisions have to be made. To some level she found success in the strangest location – a black cube. While illuminated, there was always going to be a loser. O'Neil has obviously mastered techniques for the long, double and pinhole exposures, the quality of her photographic technique is not in question but the subject matter lacked any real substance and just left me yearning to see the more aesthetically inviting triptych from the catalogue.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Muireann O'Neill

Muireann O'Neill’s work displays an intense preoccupation with line and composition. This interest is explicit in the grid-like division of space in one of her smaller images. In other photographs she employs the form of a Venetian window as a catalyst to explore the picture plane. Darkness outside means the window does not frame an external scene but is unambiguously employed as a partitioning device, and distinct blocks of black are boldly contrasted with stark white internal walls. This sense of austerity is echoed in studies of what appear to be industrial settings, although the overall composition of these images is evocative of a moody landscape.

*Nora Hickey, Lewis Glucksman Gallery*

### Vanessa O’Neill

Digital Images printed on canvas. With her use of these digital images and the mild steel framing sides there appeared to be a real ownership of the

Vanessa O'Neill

processes employed and some real learning going on. It’s too early to say where this work may lead to but it reinforced for me once again how much of the work in this degree show was influenced by references to modernist art practice, which was for this reviewer almost nostalgic. The work images that had been used are re-photographed and removed from their original context. There appears to be a conscious effort to rid these photos of their image quality, Vanessa wishes to use the colour, the shapes and tones that remained as solely for their compositional and colour harmonies. Overall a tight body of work developing a succinct use of visual language that will hopefully lead to more ambitious projects in the future.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Vanessa O'Neill

Vanessa O'Neill uses photography as painting. Through the repeated exposure of the film, the enlargement of small details and the combining of colour and black and white photography she creates abstract compositions inspired “by an interest in colour, reflections and shadow” as she describes her work herself in the catalogue. The different layers of the production process melt together in one flat surface like an abstract painting. While the different image layers are creating a new unit, the pieces show an indecision between the medium of photography and painting. As Vanessa O'Neill is already tackling questions of painting within the photographic production process, it is not necessary to mount the prints again on canvas with a metal frame turning the lightness of the image layers in heavy objects.

*René Zechlin, Lewis Glucksman Gallery*

### Stephen O’Shea

Four pieces of ‘straight’ sculpture: four variations on ribcages, entitled ‘Knowledge is the Fuel and Intelligence is the Engine’ (I-IV). Together, we can take them as representing some sort of evolution – forward or back, depending on where you view from, as the skeletal torsos change shape, and go from upright to a more lateral position (or vice-versa). Cast in bronze, there is something dry about this work, its efficiency destining it for the type of science or natural history museum it may or may not be commenting on. If we take the title seriously, then we might wonder how the pieces work individually, as the work and title emphasize motion, drive, and the physicality of inspiration. Admirable but uninteresting.

*Paul Hegarty*

Stephen O'Shea

It took me a couple of minutes to work out what was going on with this sculpture, which was a human figure (skeleton of a torso) in degenerative states of falling (or was it the evolution of man?). Each bronze skeleton was suspended from the ceiling at a different level and to be fair, this series of sculptures looked impressive from a distance. On closer inspection, the technical proficiency was called into question and I felt that the uneven contours of the ‘bones’ looked messy rather than sculptural. I have to say I didn’t like this work (why am I embarrassed to use this word ‘like’, although like many other works in the show, it was well presented.

*Tara Byrne*

Stephen O'Shea

### Ciara Power

Mixed media sculpture, using natural or close to natural materials, drawing on the imagery of archaeological artefacts, has been done a good few times before, but I liked these. They seemed more delicate than their past equivalents. The room was full of sunshine when I visited it, and the pieces with their stripped wood and white ceramic became opalescent in the light. The gong-like piece, specially, seemed hardly substantial. This is work in progress, still between a new vocabulary and an old. The fact that some pieces were referential, while others, though very similar, were more or less fully abstract, also made this evident.

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Ciara Power

To try and review 8–10 artists/students (ah! you decide), and allow yourself to view each person as a separate agent is something I think you would like to aspire to, but here is a classic example of how outside influences permanently corrupt one’s vision. My history with this institution and furthermore this department clouds this independence. For this type of mixed media sculptural practice is endemic within this department. To master one medium is difficult but many is dangerous. That said Power has made a good stab at it. While the porcelain never seemed fragile enough, the selection of wooden material a bit random and the sculptures appeared more pseudo-scientific than age-old artefacts, the introduction of the contemporary copper building material and the aurora from the jade coloured glass gong, counter posed the ‘old dead wood’. Power has a sensitivity for materials and an aesthetic eye and with a little refinement, more thorough enquiry and some experience of practice can achieve a lot more.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Ciara Power

A beautiful sense of calm and composure permeates Ciara Power’s work. Its contemplative stillness is coupled with a deep sensitivity to the selected media of porcelain and wood, and an uncompromising attention to detail. The self-assured simplicity of design emphasises the intrinsic beauty of the materials and the sinuous flowing line, be it organic or man-made. When colour is introduced austere white porcelain or pale birchwood is boldly juxtaposed with black shale or oxidised copper wire. More subtle contrasts are evident in the work’s inner primitive force which is coated in an air of sophistication and refinement. With titles such as ‘axe’ and ‘vessel’ functionality is suggested for these objects and yet their form belies such use and, like the archaeological artefacts that inspired them, these artworks possess an almost iconic quality.

*Nora Hickey, Lewis Glucksman Gallery*

## Deborah Reynolds

‘It’s not what I expected either’, the length and height of the corridor, over and over, in neat lines, but also sometimes more messily stencilled, and sprawling over light fittings etc. And that’s it. This is a bold statement, but who to? Is it a mistake? Is it to tutors, who know she does other stuff? Other ‘better’ stuff? Maybe it’s statement about avant-gardism, maybe it’s a statement about display in general, or about the fussiness of some other displays. Maybe it’s a radical reworking of Situationist politics, or an ‘engagement’ with contemporary advertising and/or contemporary politics (i.e. sloganeering, the medium is the message). It plays a safe corporate

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Deborah Reynolds

game: galleries love this stuff, as it’s cheap, big, easy to look at, and ‘it makes you think’, and it can’t back up its initial bluster.

*Paul Hegarty*

Deborah Reynolds

This simple, effective installation of a repetitive stencilled, often voiced mantra ‘It’s not what I expected either’ appeals to me. Visually rhythmic, the work rides roughshod over detail but in doing so the artist reveals her judgement and reads the space well; she does not saturate the work by extending the text to the full height and width of the walls. Reynolds has intercepted the mantra-like phrase and throws it back at the viewer. For a degree show the work is a bold and confident statement that leaves me intrigued–if not a little fearful–to investigate the rest of the body of the artist’s work that I hope exists.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

### Ciara Scanlan

These photos immediately struck me as the kind of work that seems to unfortunately wear its post-adolescent and ultra-feminine heart on its sleeve. With languorous and seductive images of angst ridden young women (I am assuming it is the artist) in self-conscious, ‘coming of age’ poses, it was hard to see in it anything but a cliché. It’s also the kind of work too commonly seen in this context, i.e. a graduate show, and therefore runs the risk of being easily dismissed. The most engaging of the series was the work that most self-consciously pillaged a common art-motif. That of juxtaposing or mixing ready-made old and beautifully crafted objects (in this case a kind of lens within a wooden frame), with high tech video work. I always feel slightly cheated when I encounter this.

*Tara Byrne*

Ciara Scanlan

Ciara Scanlan’s presentation of short films and photographs lit from behind examine terms of seeing and memory. The photographs are printed in a brownish colour, as if they were from an old family photo album. The presentation of the films behind small holes or binoculars is reminiscent of the first attempts of stereographic photography. But instead of repeating stereographic techniques Scanlan uses this form of presentation to enhance the photographic image and to create an aura for the images. The interest of the artist is the space of time and feeling rather than the 3-dimensional space of the stereography.

With such a large number of works the presentation somewhat loses its focus. This could have been avoided by showing a smaller number of works, such as the small black and white film that best unites Scanlan’s different interests. Behind historic stereoscopic glasses one sees twice the same black and white film loop of a girl dancing around with a house-shaped box on her head. This simple film explores the question of the relation of seeing and memory and abolishes it at the same time with the naivety of the child.

*René Zechlin, Lewis Glucksman Gallery*

Ciara Scanlan

### Aidan Smyth

Some of the photographs, which maintained a balancing act between abstract designs and images of reality, were quite interesting and showed a real feeling for the aesthetic. When the realism became too obvious, as in Photograph VII, the balance was upset and they failed. But I couldn’t work out what was supposed to be happening with the paintings. There was a big clutter of them, trying out various styles without committing. Did the artist feel that photography wasn’t enough in itself, that it was only a preliminary for the real art (painting)? Or was there some anti-painting gesture involved that I was completely missing?

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Aidan Smyth

For years there has been a little joke within art colleges if you want sculpture you’ve got to go to the painting department, now seemingly if you want painting you have to go to the print department. Can we just rename the departments or is this just too simple a solution? On first appearances this seemed like two different shows, on top of that, were the photographs triptychs, singular prints or a series??? Were the photographs exemplary of texture or just representative of the world of colour field painting??? Were the paintings representations of the photographs??? Which came first the paintings or the photographs? This room was covered with contradiction. The reason they still have departments in art colleges is so people can receive a tutored apprenticeship in a certain area or field. Just pick one. The incongruity between one side of the room and the other generate a question mark over what the artist was really trying to say to us. There is enough in either side of this room to suggest a great journey to be travelled. Just pick one. Just pick one.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Aidan Smyth

Two main bodies of work feature in Smyth’s show; a photographic series of prints documenting corrosion and decay and a fairly comprehensive body of paintings that allude to a similar subject matter. Smyth demonstrates his ability to create simple and engaging photographic compositions that focus on mundane landscapes such as the moss growth in between double yellow road markings. He plays with line, colour and tone effectively to create strong images that reveal more on each viewing. However, the paintings fail collectively to respond both visually and technically to photographs. In the catalogue Smyth says ‘look and see’, but, for me, only the digital images are worth a second look.

*Dawn Williams, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery*

### Kevin Tuohy

An artist who is wary of the system he finds himself in sets up ‘The Sausage Factory’, a piece where cardboard litters the space, but with purpose. He occupies the space, making or keeping it playful. There are listening tubes, odd boxes, seemingly arbitrarily chosen pictures on offer. This is work about work, which is not a bad thing, and the clutter is pleasing, whilst matching one of the claims made by Tuohy, that he wants to be in the space between art and storage, at the margins of the things and practices we think of as art. I think we’re supposed to ‘engage’ with the stuff and the artist, and, as with all ‘interactive art’, this channels and limits our responses. I didn’t think there was much going on here beyond a shallow concept ‘challenging’ notions of art not actually held by anyone aware of experimental art, or art

Kevin Tuohy

as experimentation. Its casualness is way too serious, just like its ‘sense of fun’.

*Paul Hegarty*

Kevin Tuohy

It was clear to see that the artist wanted you to spend time in this installation, it took over a large room and was packed with various curiosities and things to touch and think about. It was definitely interesting, but in the sense of needing more time to find out what it was that the artist wanted us to do or what he wanted to communicate. It could have done with more of an apparent ‘logic’, or something to hold on to. At worst, it seemed like a disparate group of objects that you knew were supposed to be disparate but which seemed like they thought they were more.

*Tara Byrne*

Kevin Tuohy

### Fiona Walsh

I found this installation appealing and it was obvious that Walsh had spent a lot of time getting the lighting right for her elongated etiolated female figures. These figures were suspended in stillness and each contained traces of materials that in turn held other narratives about work, the body and women’s experiences. What was less resolved was how these sculptures addressed the floor of the installation and it seemed a missed opportunity not to push this aspect of the work. But this a minor complaint in an otherwise carefully made work, that had a sense of integrity and single-mindedness.

*Brian Hand*

Fiona Walsh

One enters a dark chamber through a curtained entrance; a series of tall figures could be made out in the murky light, lit unusually with what appeared to be bicycle lamps. These series of Giacometti-like figures were constructed rather delicately from recycled paper including it appeared from some type of maps. I was puzzled by the artist selecting to show these figures in a tight circle in this darkened space. As the works were predominantly white, perhaps a white space where one could focus on the detail of the works and enjoy the subtlety of the white work against a white background might have been a better strategy. The works themselves resembled a circle of figures from classical antiquity delivered with the aforementioned mannerist form. The quality of the making was excellent but the overall concept seemed a little clouded.

*Mike Fitzpatrick, Limerick City Art Gallery*

Fiona Walsh

### Tanya Williams

I liked the approach of this work especially the use of black and white, close up and layering and found works like No. 7 quietly magnetic. However I was not taken with the overall realisation of the show as it showed a lack of editing and clarity in narrowing down the preciseness of what Tanya Williams’ worldview as an artist might be with this medium. It seemed as if the artist was given a space with four walls and then simply proceeded to fill up the walls with uniform prints, surely the content of this work demanded a more considered and innovative approach in terms of exhibition design.

*Brian Hand*

Tanya Williams

This work, which admittedly was one of the last pieces I saw, did not invite my engagement. It comprised of a series of prints (lambola?), some of which were black and white and some of which were tinted. Layered and superimposed images hinted at depth but delivered less. I felt that this work would have benefited from more selection and less work and I was unclear how the attendant video installation related to the rest of the images.

*Tara Byrne*

Tanya Williams

### Wendie Young

This should have been clichéd: the monitor against the beam of wood, the photographs of in-between places, the scary art noises, the slowed-down figure moving in a landscape. But they communicated such raw energy, and were so unremotingly black, that there was no question of these old devices making for hackneyed work. This is a talented individual.

*Fergal Gaynor, Art/Not Art*

Wendie Young

Where do you start? Quite a substantial body of work, following in the footsteps of some illustrious predecessors, the likes of Steve McQueen, Shirin Neshat and even Rebecca Horn. The video techniques could be conceived as naïve, the art noises too undefined, the photographs jump around a bit, some work as beautiful Aronofsky type moments in movement and time, some documents of the past, the after, the remains while others unfortunately are merely picture postcards. The inclusion of the book also, added nothing to the experience but I can be critical and nit-picky purely because all told it’s a worthy exhibit, and there will be many more plaudits. This is a praiseworthy show that would not go a miss in some larger more significant venues. I wait for more.

*Dobz, Art/Not Art*

Wendie Young

Young’s diptych video installation shows two films on a loop. The ‘Wheatfield’ piece is the one I am interested in.

The left hand screen shows a woman running into a wheat field to a fixed point then returning. Simultaneously the right hand screen shows the same woman walking into a wheat field to another fixed point then walking back. As both women return to the centre of the diptych, they both converge into each other and disappear. At this point the fixed camera on the right hand screen pans right to reveal for the first time the same farmhouse on the horizon as the left hand screen and it is at this point only that you realise the origin point for each trip is in fact the same. This is a clever piece that requires you to understand not just the visual narrative of the piece but also the spatial. You need to work out the plan (in other words put yourself above the piece as well as in front of it) to understand the geometries of each route. You would be lost without the ‘farmhouse clue’ and therefore you may imagine that there is either a game at play or a realisation by the artist that this reference is essential otherwise the piece is meaningless.

The soundtrack is excellent and evokes a sense of foreboding. Its a little bit bleak and I don’t know why but guess what, I start thinking of Van Gogh’s ‘Wheat Field with Crows’.

*Paul Sullivan, Static*