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The time was spent totally immersed in the stunning architecture, culture and lifestyle of Italy. "I was never out of the churches and some of the best art was to be found tucked away in the back streets," she says. "For me, the best part was discovering special places and sites that I felt no one else knew about. The light and climate were unbeatable too."

Consequently, the Italian artist Caravaggio is Rosie's favourite painter and to be surrounded by his work was sheer bliss. Known for the development of 'ciaroscuro' (the Italian term for light and dark tones), his skill can be seen to have a dramatic influence on the work of this Belfast artist.

However, Rosie is keen to point out that she is not concerned with monotone light and dark as colour and personal issues have been developed to play a pivotal role. "Y'know, it's funny," she quips. "When I was away all did was think and paint about home and my life here."

And although Rosie is not keen to reveal any meaning behind the paintings, she does suggest that "home" is a predominant theme. Concerned with her environment, much time and research has been spent investigating what it means to be Northern or Southern Irish. Without touching on any political standpoint, the main concern is one of perception. "The rest of the world sees these clichéd images of Ireland and not what it's really like," she comments. Elaborating, she adds, "But I'm not being pessimistic; I'm looking for a realistic representation."

And, it seems, this representation and sense of reality is to be found in her work. Again, these trains of thought are of course personal to Rosie and she emphatically insists that viewers can make up their own minds as to what a particular painting 'means'. "If you create an expectation about a painting, then there's bound to be someone who doesn't agree," she explains. "I like to let the work stand on its own." What do you think?

For further information, telephone Belfast 01232 243145.

COMPETITION

the chance to win an original painting worth £500.

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following questions correctly:

1. In which city did Rosie McGurran complete an art fellowship?

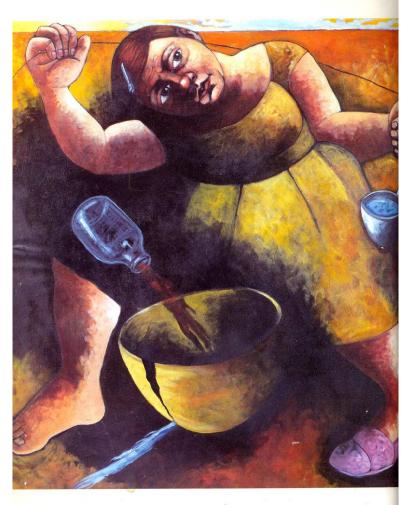
2. Name the Belfast studio in which Rosie now works.

3. Name her favourite and most influential Italian artist.

Place the answers, together with your name, address and telephone number on the back of a postcard and send it to October Arist competition. Ireland's Homes Interiors and Lying magazine, P. Die Av 25, Banger, Co. Down, BTI9 7AD. Enrifes to be received no later than Order enry enry located to the State of the Control of







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