

THE ART OF FASHION

BROWN THOMAS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE KENNY GALLERY



Two of Galway's best known firms have joined forces to produce a unique exhibition of high fashion, paintings and sculpture.

The windows of Brown Thomas' iconic store in Galway, will be decorated with artworks by a number of artists from The Kenny Gallery.

Works by artists Pádraic Reaney, John Behan RHA, Dean Kelly, Michael Gemmell, Katerzyna Gajewska, Leah Beggs, Marja van Kampen and Mick Flaherty will be on show for the month of May.

Each artist will have a dedicated window, providing pedestrians with a visual feast.



WINDOW 1

John Behan RHA & Pádraic Reaney

Pádraic Reaney was born in Carraroe, Co. Galway in 1952. Basically self-taught, he went to art college for a few years encouraged by the well-known sculptor Oisín Kelly and has been a full-time artist since leaving college. He painted for several years in Galway; later he built a studio in Moycullen, where he now lives and works.

In addition to his painting, he has worked widely in graphics (etching, silk, screen etc.) and has done sculpture in bronze and stone and ceramic with a rich use of silver and gold leaf. His work is in great demand for book covers and illustrations, and he has recently created a series of striking wall hangings done in the studio of V'Soske Joyce.

A film was made of one of his very successful exhibitions based on the Tain, which was R.T.É's entry in the Pan Celtic International Film Festival for 1988 - it was one of the three top films in the festival. This film and an interview with the artist were shown on R.T.É., where several short features on his work and interviews with him have appeared throughout the last years.

John Behan RHA

Born in Dublin in 1938, and now living and working near Galway city where he continues to vary his style of expression, John Behan is firmly established as a sculptor of international stature.

After an apprenticeship in metal work and welding, the foundations for Behan's success were laid in the sixties, when he trained in London and Oslo and began to exhibit widely. But he also had a wider artistic vision, which saw him challenge the elitism of the art establishment and seek to popularise art. He was a founder member of the New Artists' group in 1962 and Dublin's innovative Project Art Centre in Dublin in 1967.

He has been awarded many honours and became a Member of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1990, having been an Associate of the Academy since 1973. He is also a member of Aosdána.

Celebrated for his early bull sculptures - described by playwright Brian Friel as 'enormously solid artefacts, 4-square on the earth, confident, assured, executed to a point of absolute completion' - Behan's style is still evolving and growing. In a general sense he can be credited with playing a major part in the development of sculpture in Ireland over the last forty years.

In June 2000 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the National University of Ireland, Galway on the same day his large commissioned sculpture, Twin Spires, was unveiled at the college.

His major public commissions include Flight of Birds, Famine Ship, Tree of Liberty, Daedalus, Millennium Child, Arrival and Equality Emerging, unveiled in Galway city in November 2001.

A film documentary of John Behan's work entitled 'Famine Ship' was broadcast in Ireland and the U.K. in 1999 and is distributed in North America by The Cinema Guild Inc. and the rest of the world by Network Television.

The poet and Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney has said of the artist: "There is something psychologically salubrious about John Behan. It is as if you are encountering what the Upanishads call the ancient self, something previous to an underlying individual character, some kind of psychic bedrock."

A founder member of Western Artists, Island Connection, and Drimcong Press (with Brian Bourke and Jay Murphy), he was awarded the Padraic Mac Con Midhe Prize at the Oireachtas in 1979 to do a series of etchings recording the rapidly disappearing thatched houses in Ros an Mhíl, Connemara. He also represented Ireland in the XVth Grand Prix International d'Arts Contemporain de Monte Carlo in 1982.

A founder member of Western Artists and Island Connection, he was invited to Scotland by the North Ayrshire Council in 1996 to do a series of exhibitions on the Isles and the West Coast of Scotland. He was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Galway Arts Centre in 1996 and served on the Board until 1999.

His work is in public and private collections in this country as well as in Europe, Canada, the United States, Brazil and Japan.



John Behan RHA
Tree of Life
Cast Bronze (3of 5)
€ 17,000



John Behan RHA
Donkey (22/50)
Etching, 21x16in
€ 500



John Behan RHA
Goat (27/50)
Etching, 16x21in
€ 500



Pádraic Reaney
Bird Watchers,
Bronze, 82in tall,
€ 11,000



WINDOW 2 Dean Kelly

Dean Kelly loves to draw, and relies on traditional methods in an increasingly loose painterly style. The graffiti inspired paintings of Jean Michel Basquiat, along with the child-like work of Paul Klee and Jean Dubuffet influence him greatly. Expressive colour and mark-making, are combined, collaged, layered and juxtaposed using mixed media with elements of graphic design, tight representation, symbolism, imagery, and allusions to mythology, history, religion, politics or images of everyday family life. The end result express Dean's ideas and notions. He increasingly finds worth in the accidental, harnessing the intentional or directed 'mistake' – looking to Bacon in his application.

Dean Kelly was born in 1977, and grew up in Loughrea, Co. Galway. He studied for a Diploma in Art & Design under Hugh McCormick at Galway RTC, and for a Degree in English and History at UCG. He began working with the theatre and spectacle company Macnas in 1995. With workshops on college grounds lectures could be juggled with the latest parade, theatre set, prop, mask making, design or other project. He was commissioned to make numerous 'Massive Heads', continuing a Macnas tradition taken up from els Comediants. He went on to design, model, cast, paint his large caricature masks for the likes of Robbie Williams, Chris Evans, Boyzone & Tom Jones - all of whom delighted in his creations. The organizational skills involved in coordinating large projects led Dean into the field of arts administration, and he has worked as Exhibition Coordinator with the Kenny Gallery since 2001. He has exhibited in numerous group shows - most notably with John Behan RHA in 2005. His first solo exhibiton was held at The Kenny Gallery in 2008 - to significant critical and popular success. His work is held in public and private collections in Ireland and abroad.



Dean Kelly
Sisyphus
(Tis Worse We're Improvin' Comrade)
 Acrylic on Canvas, 20x30in,
 € 1700



Dean Kelly
The Soul Selects
Her Own Society,
 Mixed Media on Canvas,
 20x30in, € 1250



Dean Kelly
Pin Up,
 Acrylic on Canvas,
 50x37in,
 € 2250



Dean Kelly
Negative Equity,
 Acrylic on Canvas,
 36x28in,
 € 1950



WINDOW 3 Michael Gemmell

Michael Gemmell studied at the College of Art, Limerick and Dublin. He exhibits regularly throughout Ireland, and he is represented at the annual RHA exhibition.

Gemmell works in oils, and his quest to capture colour and light led him to interpret bogland and mountain landscapes in varying atmospheric conditions. With high keyed colours, his work is unmistakable. Flashing yellows, deep saturated blues and vivid orange flow sensually together in his paintings. Not satisfied with a naturalistic rendering of a scene, wide brushstrokes of dark slabs of earth float on thickly painted and contrasting lighter diverse textural surfaces giving his work a monumental serene aspect while evoking sensations of vast spaces.

The beauty of his work lies in his ability to express a spiritual peace through the landscape setting that is common to most of his work and the vibrant luxuriousness of the paintings convey a calm beauty revealing the power of nature in all its glory.



Michael Gemmell
Landslide II
 Oil, 36x36in
 € 15,000



Michael Gemmell
Land Shapes
 Oil, 36x36in
 € 15,000



Michael Gemmell
Sections of Land
 Oil, 36x36in
 € 15,000



WINDOWS 4 & 5 Katarzyna Gajewska

Katarzyna Gajewska a contemporary artist and painter, born in Warsaw, has been steadily building quite a name for herself in the Irish art world.

She graduated from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts as a Master of Fine Arts in March 2005 and was awarded a Ministry of Culture Scholarship. Her painting process is something between her dreams and documentation. Her art is situated in the middle – not in the realistic and not in the abstract, in popular meaning.

Katarzyna says of her work, *‘I am looking for human simplicity and complexity in the same way. I am trying to catch the casual feelings, naked and defenseless in their realism and then with understanding and patience I start to build portraits. My portraits are like multilayered cocoons, profoundly intimate, sexual or innocent. Psychological topography; still glances, crucial in their expression are uncovered in layers of my paint. Bold, rich and dramatic faces are like language; pulsing and inspiring. My portraits are my form of communication. For me no subject is sacred. The role of provocative feelings, persuasion, as well as the human impulse to beautify compels my works of art. I don’t use any tools besides my hands – to be closer. I could say that my art is a first-hand emotion – and that’s why I am painting only with my hands. It allows me to make close ups much deeper than they really are. I love using extreme zooming in – in life and in my paintings. My inspirations are deeply rooted in myself. I’m trying to search for inspiration every day: To reach for the deep feelings hidden below the surface of appearances, to pull them out from behind the window pane. It is a permanent record of fleeting sensations. This release from naturalism is a real struggle between the forces of creation and destruction.’*

Irvin Welsh, author of ‘Trainspotting’ has commented on Katarzyna’s work: “Katarzyna’s paintings are haunting and emotional, all the more visceral due to her methods of painting. The fact that she uses her hands gives the paintings an amazingly powerful primitive feel. The figures feel as if they are emerging or disappearing. They occupy a peripheral world like ghosts and this gives them a stunning intensity and power”



Katarzyna Gajewska
Frozen Morning,
 160x120cm
 Mixed Media on Canvas
 € 8,000



Katarzyna Gajewska
Black Tulips
 100x100cm,
 Mixed Media on Canvas
 € 6,000



Katarzyna Gajewska
Une Femme and Une Femme,
 137x160cm, Mixed Media on Canvas
 € 8,000



Katarzyna Gajewska
Morning Odysseys,
 100x100cm, Mixed Media on
 Canvas
 € 6,000



WINDOWS 6 & 7 Leah Beggs & Marja van Kampen

Leah Beggs graduated from Dun Laoghaire College of Art and Design (now DLIADT) in 1996 with a diploma in Fine Art. She is a member of Engage Art Studios in Galway since August 2005 and is a professional member of Visual Artists Ireland. Originally from Dublin, she currently lives and works in Connemara, Co. Galway.

Her work forms part of various collections in Ireland including Garda HQ, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, An Bord Pleanála, Microsoft Irish Art Collection, Charleville Hotel Rathmines and The Stephens Hall Hotel Leeson Street. Leah was also commissioned by the OPW to develop ten specific pieces which currently hang in the National Concert Hall and the Department of the Taoiseach.

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

However there is a noted change in the direction of her latest body of work. Whilst the subject matter is acknowledged as landscape, the way in which it is executed captures the climatic essence that is present at that moment in time. The surrounding landscape and inherent weather is seeping into the subconscious of her work. This latest exhibition is a series of works harnessing this change.

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

Marja van Kampen was born in The Netherlands. She is a full-time painter and printmaker. She received her degree for Painting, Printmaking and Art History from the Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Arnhem, The Netherlands in 1972. After pursuing her art, there, for a number of years Marja traveled through Europe and settled for a while in the South of France before moving to Ireland permanently in 1982.

She is a co-founder of Artspace Studios, Galway, and was a driving force in its development, before setting up her own studio. Her work has appeared in numerous group exhibitions in Ireland, Europe and as far away as China. Solo shows include the Irish Museum of Modern Art, (IMMA), Dublin, a National Touring Exhibition, Centre D'Art Azilien, France, Worpswede, Germany, Galway Arts Centre, among others. She represented Ireland in the Aalborg Triennale in Denmark..

Her work is in many public collections including The Arts Council of Ireland, The Department of the Taoiseach, Office of Public Works, Microsoft Irish Art Collection. Some of her very large paintings are in the Radisson SAS Hotel Collection and the University College Hospital Galway Collection.

She is the recipient of Arts Council Awards, a DAAD Scholarship for a residency in Worpswede, Germany and, a Travel Award from the Department of Foreign Affairs. In 2008 she received an Arts Council Travel Award to visit Museums and Galleries in New York.



Leah Beggs
Fenced Off
 Oil, 39x39in
 € 1,950



Leah Beggs
Night Pool
 Oil, 39x39in
 € 1,950



Leah Beggs
Water's Edge
 Oil, 24x24in
 € 985



Marja van Kampen
Cascade of Fruit
 Acrylic on Canvas, 60x60cm
 € 1,300



Marja van Kampen
Plaisir d'Amour
 Acrylic on Canvas, 95x75cm
 € 1,800



Marja van Kampen
Mellow in the Garden
 Acrylic on Canvas, 100x100cm,
 € 2,350



WINDOW 8 Michael Flaherty

Michael Flaherty

Mick Flaherty was born in Cloghane on the Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry in 1950. Michael studied in Maynooth, Cork and Sligo before returning to Kerry in 1989. Here he developed his distinctive style of painting to convey his love of the Kerry landscape.

His work has featured in many group and solo shows around Ireland, Britain, Europe and the USA. His work is represented in a wide variety of public and private collections including Irish Life, ESB, Dublin University, Kerry Food, various Government Departments, New York University and Commerz Bank of Frankfurt.

On Flaherty...

"Michael Flaherty is best known for his landscapes, spontaneous, lyrical compositions that bring to mind aspects of the work of artists as diverse as Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Henry and Sean Mc Sweeney. He is uninhibited in use of paint, that is of the physical stuff, the pigment itself, which he has on occasion worked in layers of imposingly thick impasto, and of course in his use of paint as colour... Flaherty's work clearly doesn't set out merely to record a scene in terms of its appearance, it enacts the excitement of the sexual experience of an environment and, equally, excitement of painting."
Aidan Dunne - Irish Times Art Critic. Kilcock Art Gallery, 2000.

"Michael effectively conveys a sense of panoramic space by simplifying his subjects rather than getting bogged down by fussy details. Elemental shapes saturated with intensive colour - red, blues, greens, lilacs and pinks, earthen colours vary according to the changing conditions, communicating to us not only the artist's perceptions but also his powerful feelings for his native Dingle Peninsula."
Green Lane Gallery, Dingle.



Michael Flaherty
Breakwater,
 Oil on Board, 30x32in
 € 5,500



Michael Flaherty
The West Wind Standing on it's Head,
 Oil on Board, 25x37in
 € 5,950



Michael Flaherty
One Small Sigh, Then the Madness,
 Oil on Board, 25x34in
 € 5,785



Michael Flaherty
Stories from Old Brandon Mountain, from Ballyguin,
 Oil on Board, 24x48in,
 € 7,500



Michael Flaherty
They put Snow on...,
 Oil on Board, 24x12in
 € 3,500

BROWN THOMAS

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G A L L E R Y

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