



Brian Ballard, Dark Trees, Cyprus Avenue (2023), Oil, 80x100cm

Brian Ballard

CYPRUS AVENUE & OTHER WORKS

Galway International Arts Festival | The Kenny Gallery, Galway | 15 July – 14 August, 2024

Opening as part of Galway International Arts Festival 2024, an exhibition by Brian Ballard at the Kenny Gallery marks the welcome return of this renowned Belfast painter to the west of Ireland. *Cyprus Avenue and Other Works* is a remarkable collection of paintings, new and retrospective, with particular focus on the artist's own neighbourhood of Cyprus Avenue.

Born in 1943, Brian Ballard studied in his home town at Belfast College of Art and went on to further studies at Liverpool College of Art.

Best known for his contemporary treatment of the traditional genres of the still life, the nude and the landscape, and his distinctive use of bold yet evocative colour, he now works mainly in Belfast and on Inishfree Island off the coast of Donegal.

The artist prefers those moments when the sun infused the landscape with colour and chiaroscuro. He is a rich colourist, interested in the contrasting colours and textures in simple subjects.

Painting directly onto the canvas with vigorous brushstrokes, he uses bold slashes of rich colour across a solid and heavily laden with fluid paint in which the bristles always leave their mark of speed and pressure, they are subject to a structural order, as well as a pictorial depth.

He strives for balance in his work and his struggle is always centred on a concern to create a subtle harmony of colour and form, a search for the 'structure of a painting' and a desire to entice and lead the eye where he wants it to go.

He handles paintbrush and palette knife with a sense of purpose, suppressing details in order to capture an object in bold, decisive strokes. He is concerned with the essence he sees in things. His subjects are always recognisable, but his treatment of them is invariably painterly. He admires artists like Bonnard, Matisse, Picasso, who painted in hard strokes with courage and audacity - this is his way too.

Ballard may paint the same subject several times, a change of light, of weather, another viewpoint, a difference of scale or proportion of canvas being sufficient to prompt another exploration of the theme. The landscapes he paints are often harsh and untamed such as those off the west coast of Ireland.

He paints the same scene repeatedly in order to gain the confidence to express its many moods in paint. We see that in this collection, where the artist turns his focus on the iconic Cyprus Avenue, on his own doorstep in Belfast.

Examples of Brian Ballard's work can be found in the collections of the Arts Council of Ireland, Art Council of Northern Ireland, Crawford Municipal Gallery and the Ulster Museum.

Gallery hours: Monday to Saturday, 9:00-17:00. Admission is free and all are welcome (official opening details TBC)



Brian Ballard, Rock And Sea, Yellow (2013), Oil, 100x120cm



Brian Ballard, Evening, Cyprus Avenue (2021), Oil, 70x50cm



Brian Ballard, Poppies With Clock (2024), Oil, 81x122 cm

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