



JOHN BEHAN
A TERRIBLE BEAUTY

OPENS SATURDAY 20th SEPTEMBER

You're warmly invited
to the official opening
of
A TERRIBLE BEAUTY
an exhibition of new works in bronze
by
JOHN BEHAN
at
The Kenny Gallery, Galway
on
Saturday 20th September, 2025
at 2:30 for 3:00pm

Guest Speaker:
LOUIS DE PAOR
Poet

- Free Admission
- Refreshments will be served



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JOHN BEHAN A TERRIBLE BEAUTY

NEW WORKS IN BRONZE · 20 SEPT - 21 OCT 2025

In 1969, a young John Behan took part in what was likely the very first sculpture exhibition in the West of Ireland – or certainly in Galway – hosted in our gallery in Salthill. It was a bold innovation, and as the artist memorably said, “*we’re sowing seeds here tonight.*” Those seeds have since grown into giant oaks, as Behan has become one of Ireland’s most important and influential artists. This standing is due not only to the quality and originality of his own work, but also to the encouragement and guidance he has given to generations of younger artists.

Behan’s remarkable work ethic has produced a steady flow of creative output: countless exhibitions and significant public sculptures now located across the world. An inveterate traveller, he immerses himself in the cultures of the places he visits, carrying those experiences into his art.

The 150th anniversary of the Great Famine in 1995 inspired Behan’s first famine images, which evolved into his enduring exploration of the emigrant. This theme continues to echo Ireland’s complex history of displacement and diaspora, and has expanded to encompass universal reflections on migration, identity and resilience. Particularly striking in this exhibition are sculptures responding to recent humanitarian crises, including powerful pieces inspired by the tragedy of Gaza, which convey themes of loss, hope and survival.

Alongside these works, Behan revisits some of his signature motifs – dynamic flights of birds and powerful bulls that embody freedom, strength and endurance.

A Terrible Beauty presents a compelling new series of bronze sculptures that reaffirm John Behan’s position as one of Ireland’s foremost sculptors, blending technical mastery with deeply felt narrative.



Illustrations:

- (a) *Boys Escaping Gaza on Trolley*, bronze, unique, 18x21x6in
- (b) *Morrigan*, bronze, unique, 11x20x4in
- (c) *Tents in Gaza*, bronze, unique, 8x18x10in

Illustration front: *Children Pleading for Food*, bronze, edition of 9, 15x24x9in

Below: *McGinty's Goat*, bronze, unique, 11.5x14x4in



The Kenny Gallery

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