

Kelly, Dean

Dean Kelly (b.1977, Galway, Ireland) makes paintings and photographs. His representational and layered symbolic works chronicle changes in Irish society through recent years. Often concerned with the poignant ebbing of ephemeral culture, his paintings show a contemporary approach to traditional materials, and lean increasingly towards the expressive. Colour, texture, drawing and various forms of mark-making, are collaged, layered and juxtaposed using various media. In his work, elements such as graphic design, tight representation or painterly expression make allusion to mythology, history, politics, pop-culture or simple images of everyday family life. He increasingly finds worth in the accidental, harnessing the directed 'mistake'. Kelly's photography unabashedly records his locality and forms an ongoing resource for his paintings, as well as distilling through to finished works in their own right. He has exhibited in numerous group shows - most notably with John Behan RHA in 2005. His first solo exhibition 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 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 and figurative expressionists such as the later Jack Yeats influence him greatly. Expressive colour and mark-making, are often 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'. VIEW WORKS BY THE ARTIST "I am impressed with the graphic skills as per usual, and also by the expressive power of the imagery. The work is strong, being both subtle yet positive at the same time. The ones that satisfy me most are the portraits - Self Portrait, Study towards the Head of a Boxer and Ophelia. The 'Boxers' and 'Pin-up' series are very successful and well realized." JOHN BEHAN RHA, August 2008

"Dean Kelly's paintings are strong - very male. They are original, and he is very much himself in this collection... he is interested in everything, and I like him." PAULINE BEWICK RHA Aosdána, July 2008

"I must start by drawing your attention to the work of Dean Kelly. I was particularly struck by this important work. It chronicles and evinces the rapid change of our society of the late 90's and is an important record. It deals with the constant ebb of ephemeral culture... that history and constant stripping away. One can also see a developed sensibility - like the work of a young Willie Doherty - capturing what we live with - an abiding account of life. His paintings show a confident treatment, with a contemporary approach to traditional materials, media and modes." PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, 2004

"These are really layered images... powerful... complex and interesting. Although, I'm particularly fond of 'Dog's Abuse' - a lovely composition reminiscent of Gwen John. In this one less is more - much has been eliminated. Well done!" JOHN KINGERLEE, June 2008

"Dean Kelly... Gamekeeper turned Poacher" CAROLINE WALSH, Literary Editor, The Irish Times, 2007

"Ophelia, Starlet and Negative Equity are very solid, with excellent tone and construction. Use of texture of particular interest; mature, whilst still retaining an experimental innovative design". KENNETH WEBB RUA FRSA RWA, July 2008 VIEW WORKS BY THE ARTIST