

Crazy Jane

inspired by the Crazy Jane Poems of W.B. Yeats

Pdraic Reaney

Galway Arts Centre

Padraic Reaney

Still Crazy about Jane

For this exhibition at Galway Art Centre, Padraic Reaney explores the poetry of WB Yeats, in particular using the 'Crazy Jane series' as the inspiration for the work. This allows him the opportunity to play with the wonderful imagery of the poetry and engage with fluency in his broad range of media and skills.

The characters in the 'Crazy Jane Series' are earthy creations that are perhaps composites of individuals throughout Ireland of its time. Living in small isolated rural communities individuals whose behaviour fell outside the usual norm became the stuff of tales that were told and retold in what was then a media free era. One can imagine Yeats encountering these colourful and entertaining stories on his sojourns around the country including his time at Coole Park. The particular poems that emanate from these tales seem more robust, racy and somewhat oppositional to our usual perception of Yeats more intellectual reflections on mysticism and romantic nationalism.

Crazy Jane and the Bishop

Bring me to the blasted oak
That I, midnight upon the stroke,
(all find safety in the tomb)
May call down curses on his head
Because of my dear Jack that's dead.
Coxcomb was the least he said
The solid man and the coxcomb.

Nor was he Bishop when his ban
Banished Jack the journeyman.
(all find safety in the tomb.)
Nor so much as parish priest,
Yet he, an old book in his fist,
Cried that we lived like beast and beast:
The solid man and the coxcomb.

Padraic Reaney is captivated by the strength of the imagery that these lines convey. Particularly by the characters of Jane and the Bishop and he uses the woods of Coole Park to site many of the works. Central pieces in the Exhibition include the ambitious "Did he die or did she die" which employs oil on gesso on board. The work is made up of four separate elements each framed with a broad black frame. The central shape is a 'T' shape and the other three elements fit around that shape forming a rectangle. Such, is the sculptural nature of this construction that its design becomes a very strong formal arrangement. The four painted elements are separated; the central 'T' panel is filled with a tree shape with ambiguous breast-like growths, two broken tree/figures are alone in the panels at either side and in the bottom panel a skeleton in the grave. The format of the piece works successfully in the sense of isolation that is created by the use of the framing construction.

The other largest work in the exhibition is a four-part painting where again the woods dominate. The horizontal nature of the work is contrasted by the almost abstract depiction of columns of vertical trees. "Nor grave nor bed denied" depicts the tiny figures of Jane and the Bishop heading towards one another from opposite ends of the wood on a zigzag trail, where Jane has passed a tree that has a breast-like contour the bishop will encounter a rather ominous looking phallic shaped tree derived from studies of cancerous wood growths.

The block prints such as "Jane under the autograph tree, Coole" are perhaps some of the most fluent works in the show in terms of their strong graphic quality and simple pared down simplicity of reflections on his chosen imagery. The freshness of this work is the sense of excitement, which Reaney brings to combining new technologies with traditional means. His series of dry point prints using CD discs display a wonderful organic ease of materials. Using the shape of the disc itself and making the discs his actual printing plates demonstrates a sense of freedom with materials and a willingness to experiment. This show with its large body of work and combination of differing processes reveals Reaney's joy and humour in the act of physical dream weaving.

Mike Fitzpatrick

Pdraic Reaney

Reaney has, for instance a lively interest in graphics, particularly noticeable in a series of quite complex monoprints. He delights in using and extending the craft but this delight is kept in its place and never allowed to become an end in itself, so that his prints are never just a display of craft but rather show how this has been exploited to contribute to the image and thereby become integrated into his expression and his total oeuvre, not just another description of this.

In fact it can even provide a means of access to his creative world demonstrating how this is in a continual state of becoming; reacting and extending itself as it feeds on each new challenge of subject or medium. His imagination runs free but it always resolves itself into a solid image. He is very clear in the realisation of his imaginative world: everything, however fantastical, even evanescent, becomes specific, exact. This inner world is rooted in his interests of which a fascination with birds is uppermost (when I visited there was, probably still is, a wounded merlin contentedly tethered in his livingroom) and also his reading.

Desmond MacAvock



Crazy Jane
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



"Nor was he Bishop"
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



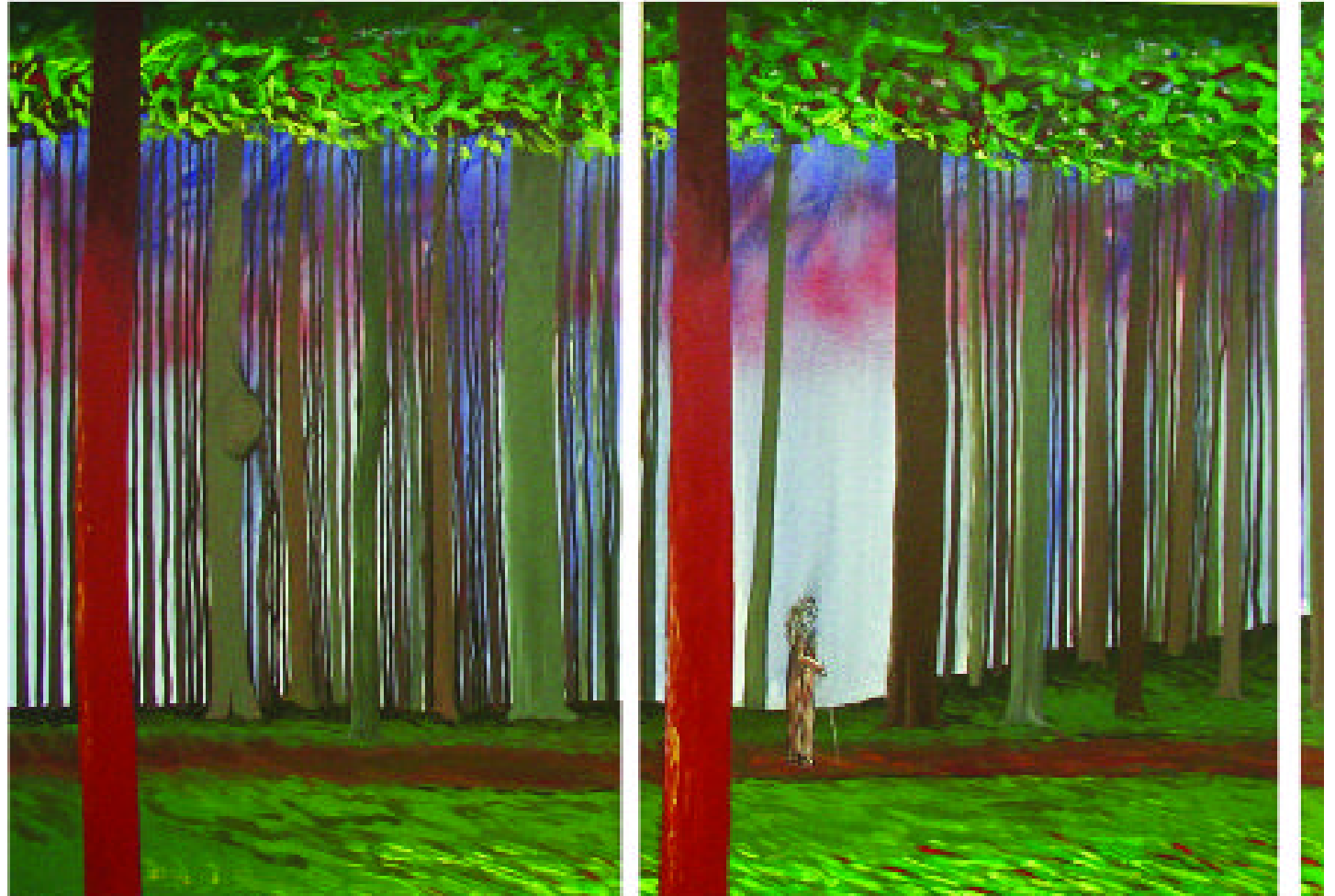
The Bishop
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



The Blasted Oak
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



"Fair and foul are near of kin"
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



"I met the Bishop on the road"
oil on canvas
129 x 280 cm





"Jane waiting for Jack"
oil on canvas
125 x 92 cm



"Jack waiting for Jane"
oil on canvas
125 x 92 cm



"Nor grave nor bed denied"
oil & gesso on board
187 x 119 cm



"Did he die or did she die"
oil & gesso on board
196 x 123 cm



The Bishop
mixed media
77 x 51 cm



"But should that other one come, I spit:"
mixed media
77 x 51 cm



"Cried that we lived like beast and beast"
Watercolour & Charcoal
36 x 26 cm



Under the Autograph Tree, Coole
Watercolour & Charcoal
36 x 26 cm



Jane under the Autograph Tree, Coole
oil on canvas
115 x 92 cm



"And much said he and I"
block print
38 x 31 cm



"Nor bed nor grave denied"
block print
38 x 31 cm



The Bishop walking in the Woods, Coole
block print
38 x 31 cm



Crazy Jane in the Garden, Coole
drypoint on CD disc
12 x 12 cm



Jane Walking in the Woods, Coole
drypoint on CD disc
12 x 12 cm



The Bishop
drypoint on CD disc
12 x 12 cm



The Blasted Oak
drypoint on CD disc
12 x 12 cm



The Bishop
Mixed Media
49 x 38 cm



Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2002** "Exhibition of Graphics," Glyn Y Weddw Art Gallery, Wales.
"Exhibition of Graphics," Harlech, Nr. Wales.
"Painting/Sculpture," Castlekirk, Isle of Arran, Scotland.
"Tribes of Galway" Féile 2002, Town Hall, Galway.
"Famine," Virtual Exhibition, Kennys Gallery, Galway.
- 2001** "Ros an Mhíl," Carraroe, Co. Galway.
- 2000** United Arts Club, Dublin.
"Metamorphosis," The Kenny Gallery, Galway.
"Celtic Connections, 2000," Glasgow, Scotland.
- 1999** "Súil Siar," Retrospective of Graphics 1973-1999, An Dámhlann Spiddal, Co. Galway.
- 1997** "Colmcille, Prince, Warrior, Priest and Poet," The Kenny Gallery, Galway.
"Columba", University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.
"Graphics through the Years" Germany.
- 1996** "Images from the Tain" Castlekirk, Isle of Arran, Scotland.
"Images from the Tain" Ann Lenteir Gallery, Lewis, Outer Hebrides, Scotland.
"Images from the Tain" Brisbane Centre and Vikingar Centre, Largs, Scotland.
- 1995** "Inis Mór - The Landscape" The Kenny Gallery, Galway.
"Gorta Mór" The Dolan Moore Gallery, Athlone.
Famine Exhibition, Mini-exhibition, Kennys' Art Gallery, Galway.
- 1993** Retrospective 1973-1993, Galway, Sligo, Castlebar, Dublin, Wexford and Laois.
- 1992** "The Tain and Before" Pan-Celtic International Festival Galway. (invited artist)
- 1990** United Arts Club, Dublin,
"Windows on the Tain," Heritage Centre, Strokestown. (invited artist)
- 1980-91** Stone Art Gallery, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
- 1988/90/95** Clifden Arts Week, Clifden, Co. Galway.
- 1984** Carroll Gallery, Longford.
Quincentennial Exhibition, Galway.
- 1979** Exhibition of Prints, Congress of Celtic Studies, University College Galway.
(invited artist)

Selected Collections / Commissions

Glasgow Vennel Museum, Irvine, Scotland.
President McAleese
Town Hall Theatre, Galway.
Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge, Dublin.
Great Southern Hotel Group.
Brian Wilson M. P., Minister of State at the Scottish Office, U.K.
Dublin Writers Museum, Dublin.
Wall Hanging for New Irish Department Building, N.U.I. Galway
The Modern Irish Art Collection, Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone.
Bard, Ireland, Ltd. Galway.
Office of Public Works.
Udaras na Gaeltachta.
National Museum of Malta.
President Hillery.
Macalla U.C.G.
County Library Collection, Kildare. (Arts Council Purchase)
Urawa Wood-Cut Prints Association, Japan.
U.C.G. Staff Club.
Ostan Cheathrú Rua, Co. na Gaillimhe.
Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, Mount Sion, Waterford.
County Library, Carraroe, Co. Galway.
Gaillimh Le Gaeilge
Galway Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Awards

- 1979** Awarded the Pádraic Mac Con Midhe Prize, Oireachtas, '79 Dublin.
- 2003** Artists Bursary Award. Galway County Council.

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2003** Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin.
Barbara Stanley Gallery, London.
Garden Sculpture, Frank Lewis Gallery, Killarney.
Tulca Festival of Visual Art, Galway.
- 2002** Tulca Festival of Visual Art, Galway.
Barbara Stanley Gallery, London.
- 2000** Oireachtas Exhibition, Dublin.
Inishbofin Arts Festival, Inishbofin.
- 1999** "Totally Bronze," An Dámhlann, Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe.
"Fís agus Teanga," Féile 2000, Galway Arts Centre, Galway.
- 1998** International Print Triennial in Kanagawa '98. Kanagawa-Ken Japan.
18 Mini Print Internacional de Cadaqués,
Travelling Show to: England, Spain and France.
"The Sea," An Dámhlann, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
- 1997** "Famine," Guinness Hop Store, Dublin.
"Famine," Ormeau Baths gallery, Belfast.
- 1996** "In Homage to Jonathan Swift," Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.
"Oileán," An Dámhlann, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
- 1995** "Commemorating the Famine," The American Embassy, Dublin.
"On the Lake," West Shore Gallery, Oughterard, Co Galway.
"The Great Famine," George Moore Society Exhibition, Claremorris
Commemorating the Irish Famine, Roscommon
Gallerie du Frouedic, L'Orient, France.
Departures Contemporary Irish Art, Shannon Airport, Shannon
The Mill Gallery, Drimoleague, West Cork.
- 1995/96/97** Club Chonradh na Gaeilge, Dublin.
- 1995** "Conamara" An Dámhlann, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
"Oileán," City Hall, Belfast.
Oireachtas Exhibition, Guinness Hopstore, Dublin. (invited artist)
- 1994/95/97** "Iontas," Sligo Art Gallery, Sligo & R.H.A. Gallagher Gallery, Dublin
"Oileán," Daingean Uí Chúise, Co. Chiarraí.
Durrow Castle, Arts Festival, Durrow.
- 1994** "Heroes and Heroines," The Kenny Gallery (The Galway Arts Festival)
"Oileán," (Travelling Show)
"Cleiti agus Clumh," Kenny's Art Gallery, Galway.
- 1993** "Bird Art in Ireland," Feathers Gallery, Dublin.
Inishbofin Arts Festival, Inishbofin.
"Cloch," Stone Art Gallery, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
- 1992** The 10th Mini Print International de Cadaques 1990-1992 Cadaques, Barcelona, Spain and Andorra.
"Personal Theme," Touring Exhibition, Art Centre, Galway.
"Art at the Airport," Belfast Airport, Belfast.
"Music and Musicians," Kenny Gallery, Galway.
"Oileán" Oireachtas 1992, Dingle, Co. Kerry.
R.H.A. Banquet Exhibition 1992, Gallagher Gallery Dublin
Island Connection, Centro de Arte La Recova, Santa Cruz de Tenerife. (Travelling Show)
Western Artists 1992, Shannon Airport, Shannon.
- 1991** Island Connection, Travelling Show,
C. O. E. '91, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.
Ennis Arts Festival, Ennis.
Landscape of Ireland, College Art Gallery, U.C.G.
"Faces in a Bookshop," Gaeilge '91, Derry.
- 1990** "Faces in a Bookshop," Kenny's Art Gallery, Galway.
R.H.A. Banquet Exhibition '90, Gallagher Gallery Dublin.
Landscape Exhibition, United Arts Club, Dublin.
Christmas Show, Stone Art Gallery, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
Westshore Gallery, Oughterard, Co. Galway.
Dolan Moore Gallery, Athlone.
Soviet and Irish Art Exhibition, Mansion House, Dublin.
"It's a Different Story", Gilvary-Geoghegan Gallery, Galway.
An Exhibition of Illustrations for Contemporary Literature, Galway arts Centre, Galway.
Stone Art Gallery, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
Humbert School Gallery, Killala, Co. Mayo.

Paintings © Padraic Reaney
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