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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 5

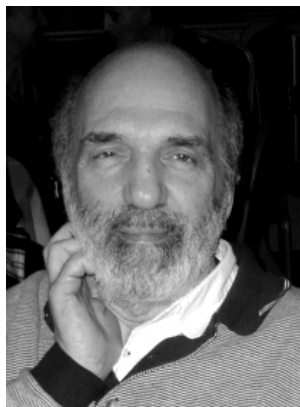
January 2011

Volume 16



## Message from the Chairman

As the new year opens, Bray Arts is looking forward to bringing the Arts further into the community and involving more young artists and supporters. During the past year, members of Bray Arts took part in Shane Rowan's Bloom's Day celebrations, held for the first time in Bray; organised and presented a major arts programme within the Bray Summer Festival, fielding 20 acts including phantom galleries in the main street, performances and workshops in the Marquee and a magnificent gala performance in the Mermaid Arts centre. In addition, Bray arts ran a fund-raising cake sale and workshops in the Little Flower Hall that was a landmark success to build on for the future. A similar event is being planned for Easter along with other novel fund-raising ideas. Bray Arts funds its activities from a modest admission fee of €5/€4 conc. to the Bray Arts evenings. Last year a small grant of €500 was received from Wicklow Arts Office. In addition, an equipment grant of €500 was received from Bray Area Partnership together with some voluntary donations and sponsorship from private individuals and businesses in Bray.



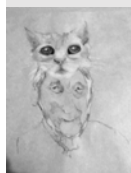
Cearbhall O'Meadhra

Bray Arts could not survive without the voluntary effort of dedicated art lovers, performers and practicing artists who so generously donate their time and expertise without charge. Thanks to their effort, everyone in Bray can enjoy the highest quality presentation of the arts each month.

Bray Arts would like to thank the following businesses for giving prizes to the Christmas raffle:

BoPeep	Smiths Toys
Hayes Butchers	Office Supplies Ireland
Frank Doyle Butchers	Health Matters
Mermaid	The Larder
Kelly Curtains	Costelloe Jeweller
Mama Mia	Beetlenut Cafe
Hilton Chemist	

Financial donations were gratefully received from The Beetlenut Cafe and from Claire Conway and Darren Darker of Bray Chamber.



Front Cover : Cat on Head - Sarah Murphy - part of upcoming exhibition in Signal Arts in early January see pg 7

## Review of Dec 6th Arts Evening

The December meeting opened in the cold and freezing days of the worst freeze-out for 25 years! Despite the cold, over 40 loyal and brave supporters attended on the night.

Two performers were unable to attend due to personal circumstances: Lorraine O'Brien was unable to attend due to a family bereavement and we send our condolences to Lorraine and hope to see her on another occasion. Joe Bollard was taken ill with flu and could not attend. We wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to his music another time.

The first act to open the evening was the **Bray Youth Choir** under the direction of **Frank Kelly**. Some of the members were unable to travel but sufficient made it to provide a stunning performance of rich harmony and strength for which this choir is well-known. Beginning with the ever-popular carol "Deck The Halls" the choir brought the spirit of Christmas into the proceedings. This was followed by "Still" – a German folk song which was sung in German to the sound of organ pipes played by Frank on keyboard. The traditional "Away In a Manger" followed and was beautifully executed with an intriguing effect of floating voices created by a clever use of harmony. The choir travels internationally and presented a Ukraine folk song "ring Christmas bells". This rich, harmonious piece was arranged by the choir to create the sound of bells in the setting of the many voices used building up to a powerful finish.



The Bray youth choir gave such a wonderful performance that an encore was demanded. For answer, the choir sang "A Spaceman Came Travelling" by Chris De Burg who is a friend of the choir. Closing, Frank appealed for more young people who might like to join this lovely choir who made such a rich opening for Bray Arts.

**Eamon Sweeney**, guitarist, followed. He plays a Baroque guitar and played a range of pieces from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Beginning with "Oh Come All Ye Faithful", Eamon remarked that Christmas music is the only form of music that is so related to its time that it evokes feelings of the festival which it celebrates.

Eamon explained that the attraction of early music for him lies in the fact that it reaches back to a time that modern influences cannot get to. His next piece, "Chaconne", dating from 1671 and written by *Francesco Corbetta*, featured some curious strumming and arpeggio runs leading to a pleasant, delicate ending.

Eamon remarked that Irish music was at a high peak in the baroque period and he played a piece from 1603 known as "Túir Don Do Lámh", attributed to Ruaidhri O' fCatháin who was the famous • Royal Blood• harper.



Reaching even further back to 500 years ago, Eamon played a piece written for the Guitarra Espanola entitled: "Guardame Las Bacas". With this lively piece he brought his presentation to a close to rousing applause from all present.

During the break, the Christmas raffle took place. Prizes were sponsored by many traders in Bray and the generosity of those Bray Arts members who provided an excellent range of prizes from picture frames to Christmas cakes.

Photographer and graphics designer, **Aoife Hester**, displayed her photographs of familiar scenes around Bray. She sees everyday objects in a fresh way that conveys a rich panorama of colours, unusual shapes and plays of shadow, turning ordinary objects and

scenes into something magical and unique. She makes use of objects like trees and shadows to frame particular distant objects. Her macro shots are quite startling with extreme close-ups of tiny insects and birds. Her picture of a Stormy sea coming over the Bray harbour wall captured the power and bleakness of the scene in a very dynamic way. She was applauded for her success with the vibrant image of a guitar player viewed from an unusual angle which was used for a Portuguese tourist poster.

Redmond O'Toole, Cello guitarist, took the stage next and delivered a feast of musical notes for the delight of his audience.



Redmond has a unique style that gives one the sense that he really believes in the sound of the guitar. He opened with Bach's Adagio and Fugue with a clear rhythmic delivery that brought out the richness of the piece and drew tremendous applause from his listeners.

The next piece, Fantasia no. 1, was a Renaissance piece from Dowland that was originally set for flute and which Redmond had arranged for the guitar.

Redmond likes to play Irish music and is European resident guitarist with the Chieftains. He particularly enjoys the harp music of Turlough O'Carolan and performed "Miss Bailey" by way of example of this music.

Redmond described the "Castle Of Dromore" as a lullaby that his mother sang to him and remains a particular favourite of his. His playing was sweet and gentle and finished with a delightful tremolo.

Redmond closed by remarking that his performing career had begun in Bray Arts some years ago. He recalled that his first piece was "Asturias" – a well-known piece that is a challenge to all guitar players. Redmond delivered this beautiful piece with a ringing sound demonstrating his complete control of the guitar. His reflective playing brought out the profound depths of Spain and its soft nuances and romance.

Responding to the loud calls for an encore, Redmond and Eamon played together, in a wonderful symphony of melody, rhythm and pathos that demonstrated their mastery of their instruments and brought the final performance of the year to a rich and thrilling close.

Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra

## Preview of Arts Evening on Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011

Upstairs at The Martello, Seafront, Bray  
Doors open 8:00pm Adm. €5 / €4 conc.

### Music

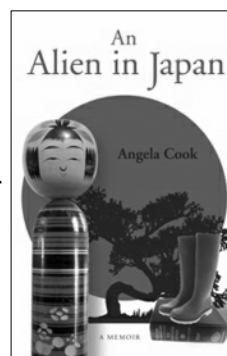
**Michael Monaghan** and **Chelcy Mc Dermott** will perform songs that they have written, and several covers of the Beatles, Otis Redding and The Rolling Stones. Chelcy will be singing and Michael will sing and play guitar. Michael's newly finished album will be available for sale on the night.

### Art

**Dermot Mac Gowan** will show and discuss his artwork and maybe more. See Profile of an Artist in next column.

### Literature

**Angela Cook** will read from her book *An Alien in Japan*. At an age when most people might consider 'slowing down', Angela took off for Japan, determined to master the Japanese language and discover the secrets of that elusive and mysterious culture. She immersed herself in the ordinary life of several Japanese families, often with very amusing mishaps and misunderstandings. The book is an inspirational account of a courageous woman stepping out, as it were, on a high wire without any nets.



"This is one of my books of the year, a truly inspiring story that keeps the reader gripped all the way. I can't recommend it highly enough." *Christine Dwyer Hickey.*

*An Alien in Japan* is available in all good bookshops and for more information you can go to [www.ashfieldpress.ie](http://www.ashfieldpress.ie) Angela will also have some copies of her book on the night.

### Music

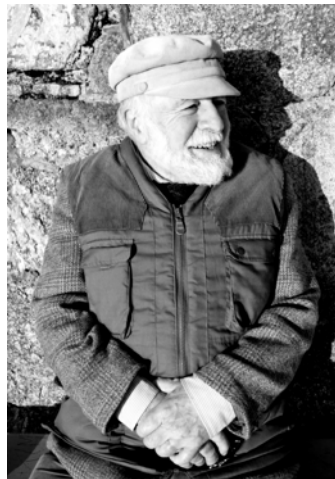
**Chaos In Harmony** is a community based, voluntary, not for profit singing group dedicated to promoting the joy of singing, music making and creativity. Based on the principles of Natural Voice Work they aim to assist each other and others to access and uncover their creativity in as inclusive and gentle a way as possible. The group meet every Monday Night in Gorse Hill, Cliff Road, Windgates, Greystones at 8pm. This is open to all. For more info [www.singsite.com](http://www.singsite.com)



*Natural Voice Workshop in  
Cae mabon, Wales*

## Profile of an Artist

Dublin born artist, **Dermot Mac Gowan** received his initial training in the National College of Art, which was then located on Kildare Street in Dublin. He studied there by night for a number of years during the 1950s, under the training and supervision of famous Irish artists Maurice McGonical and Sean Keating. During the day he worked as an apprentice lithographic artist with the printers Cherry and Smalldridge.



He completed his training after five years and then entered the Capucian order in Kilkenny as a novice where he remained for two years. He soon realized that his own particular calling was to be an artist and not a friar. After leaving the order he began a ten year career as a lithographic illustrator with the publishers Browne and Nolan which were based in Clonskeagh in Dublin.

Finally, in 1982 Dermot opened his artist's studio in Marlay Park Craft Courtyard and began to

work as a self-employed visual artist. At this time he created a series of twenty sepia prints of locations around Dublin city. He also created a series of eight scenes of the west of Ireland, one of which was inspired by the famous play 'Riders of The Sea' by JM Synge. Over the years he has shared the courtyard with antique book binders, a harp maker, metalworker, glassworker, carpenter, guitar maker, antique clock restorer and many other talented and specialised craftspeople. The courtyard is located in Marlay Park which is beautifully situated at the foothills of the Dublin Mountains in Rathfarnham.

Dermot's work consists of prints, private commissions, originals and portraits. He prefers to work on location; sketching the scene



*Marlay Sketch*

and then completing it in the studio. Some of his commissions include a scene of the Royal College of Surgeons on St Stephen's Green. The work was commissioned by the Registrar as a presentation piece. He also created a series of six drawings for the Motor Tax Office in Nutgrove, they can be seen hanging in reception and depict local scenes from the surrounding area. The credit union commissioned Dermot to do a picture of the private residence of former President Patrick Hilary, which was presented to him on as he opened their new offices in Bray in the early 1980s. He has also completed commissions for former Taoisachs Garret Fitzgerald and Charles Haughey. One of his more unusual commissions was to design the sign for the famous pub Dirty Nellys which is located next to Bunratty Castle in County Clare. he based the lettering and image on details from the Book of Kells. The sign was commission in 1968 and has become somewhat of a famous landmark now and is featured in Irish postcards.

Dermot's other passion is music. He trained as a bell canto tenor in the Royal College of Music and was a member of the Dublin Grand Opera Society for a number of years. He now sings with 'Il Coro Italiano', an Italian Choir based in Dublin.

At 77 years of age Dermot still works as a full-time artist and can be found in his studio in Marlay Park where his work can be viewed and sold. He can be contacted on 086 8668407 and is available for commissions..

Alva Mac Gowan

## Bringing it all back home

Recollections of their gigs by the trio Mairin O'Donovan Carmen Cullen and Gerry Anderson in The Irish Center in New York and The Irish Embassy in Washington on the 4th and 7th Dec 2010

If America is a patch-work quilt of different identities the Irish communities make up many of the squares. The Irish Center in Long-Island Queens is one of the promoters of everything Irish that helps to colour the New York Square a vivid green.

The Irish Center boasts a performance space, that along with a number of other areas is also used for classes and workshops. It is run by Director Paul Finnegan and a large number of volunteers and they welcomed our show 'I'll Live 'til I Die, on the singer Delia Murphy, with open arms.



*Carmen Cullen*

The people who attend the Irish Center in some ways are the lucky ones. There is a fine line between being bored and being lonely in a big city and these emigrants, usually first generation Irish, have made a positive choice. The centre helps them link into what are their own reference points of being Irish; perhaps the county they come from or town or parish and they can also acknowledge their American experience. This adopted country has provided for them well and paradoxically by giving them a new identity makes

them mindful and caring of the old.

These new Americans enjoyed our show. They dipped back into the honey-pot of their past with feeling and a sense of pride. If they didn't remember the songs that wasn't the point because music, fun and the story of an Irish singer set their past selves soaring into the present like kites. At the end of the evening there were congratulations all round and a sense of heady relief at the successful completion of an arduous task. Our next stop will be The Irish Embassy in Washington where as ambassador Delia's husband Thomas Kiernan was one of the leading lights in bringing John F. Kennedy to Ireland and where Delia herself through her singing brought her own sense to all who heard of what it was to be a musical ambassador for her country. Let's hope we can rise to the challenge is the unspoken thought as we set out.

A cold wind is blowing through Washington when we emerge from Chinatown Metro station for our hotel, The Red Roof Inn. A beautiful ornamental Chinese Gateway to the area meets our gaze. Unlike New York there are no high-rise buildings, a city planning regulation has decided that nothing can be higher than government buildings on Capitol Hill and the wide street creates a sense of ease. Later on, walking through the city, the sweep of Pennsylvania Avenue and the vista stretching from Capitol Hill develop the theme. This capital sets out to welcome rather than impose a sense of power and despite the appearance of policemen outside the house of government bristling

with guns a sense of normality, business as usual and a vibrant social life prevails.

Our gig is not in the embassy but the ambassador's residence and the friendly spirit of my aunt surely welcomes us in. The flesh and blood figure of ambassador Michael Collins is equally welcoming and soon a murmur of voices, the clink of glasses and laughter tell us a full house can be expected. Our presentation is to take place in a beautiful reception room overlooking wintering gardens and a view of the city spread beneath.



Gerry Anderson & Máirín O'Donovan

There is a sense of expectation in the air, an anticipation of a good evening ahead because both Tom and Delia are remembered and their achievements appreciated in this house. Swinging into action there are moments of doubt and hesitation. It becomes daunting to hold the attention of such a sophisticated audience but there is laughter at our comedy and applause for songs and we steer ourselves successfully towards the final number.

Afterwards at the reception people crowd round to chat and reminisce. Another link with the past has been made and as these old Irish begin to talk there is a sense of undiminished love of home, ready to be taken out and viewed again with pleasure, from warming hearts.

Carmen Cullen

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## January Guitar Session

Martello function room, Bray Seafront

Free Admission – everyone welcome to spectate or participate.

Why not drop in to hear **Eamonn Sweeney** and friends on Jan 31<sup>st</sup> at 8:30 pm.

The guest guitarist is **Mark Anthony McGrath**. Mark will be promoting his new album 'Champagne and Onions'



Mark Anthony McGrath

Mark Anthony McGrath's original interpretations of music from the ancient harp compositions of Turlough O'Carolan to the Chansons of Jacques Brel have become a regular feature on RTE Lyric FM, Radio France Musique, Radio Scotland and similar radio stations throughout Europe.

Described as 'an unquestionably gifted, always inventive guitarist'

by Hot Press magazine, he has performed extensively throughout Europe and the US as a solo artist and session musician.

'Champagne and Onions' is Mark's fourth solo album and alongside original compositions, features contemporary traditional music from Scotland where he has recently resided and a 10 minute solo guitar piece entitled 'Lyric Epiphony' which was originally commissioned by Lyric FM.

Mark's last appearance in Kilkenny was with English organist Christian Wilson at St. Canice's Cathedral during Kilkenny Arts Festival 2010 and for his launch at 'The Set' he will be playing both solo and with guest musicians.

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## Poetry Book Review

### Scaling the Heights

By Rosy Wilson

Boland Press €10

Scaling the Heights is no ordinary collection of poems; it is a hymnal of one person's journey through love, loss, despair, redemption and finally a calm facing up to the realities of living and dying.

The opening poem, *Paps of Anu*, is a prayer to Anu, the Celtic Goddess and Earth Mother.

But we trust ourselves  
to you, Anu, kneeling  
on hillocks, believing  
you hear our prayers.

Throughout this book of poems Rosy Wilson weaves a rich word tapestry of landscape, water and all things natural confirming her faith and trust in the healing power of nature.

In the opening section of the book entitled Scaling the Heights, Rosy contemplates the life-giving power of water. Central to this idea is the birth of her granddaughter Rosalina in *Waterbourne*.

Rosalina was born from  
your Breaking waters.

and yet in the same poem she remembers her own near fatal drowning while swimming. This is nature giving and taking away with a calm indifference. There is real joy in the birth of Rosalina who comes into several other poems *Autumn Flowers*, *Holding my Granddaughter* and *Through Winter Window Panes*. Set against this is the reference to darker days in the poem *Birthday Present*

At full moon I entered  
the mental hospital

But even here there is redemption and the last line of this poem could be the theme of this book of poems.

I know it's time to dead head.

The final poem in this section, *Five Days Before Chris's passing*, is a searing picture of Rosy's husband in a hospice. The last two verses are raw with emotion:

before she leaves 'I'm pregnant. Dad,  
due in September' he heaves himself up

gives her a hug, cracks a smile so large  
It almost breaks his face, her heart.”

The next section of the book is **Welcome Home**.

There is obvious healing in these poems and the healing comes from an intimacy and a surrendering to nature and the familiar surrounds of her home in Wicklow. Family and friends are all part of this. But even here the appearance of a small bush from under the melting snow reminds her of Chris 'in a plain oak box' buried in Kilmacreehy cemetery in the West of Ireland. She honours her friends, the Shed Poets, in Bunch of Poets in Caheraderry. The word Bunch in the title clearly indicates that Rosy sees them like flowers in a garden.

In this section we are fully conscious of the importance of nature to Rosy and her poetry. In *Old Friend* she reveals the source of her words:

... forgotten words which hide  
under the larch needles...

And she also reveals where she entrusts her own words in the poem *Scholarship*:

I place my learning on the river  
in a hollow branch of knowledge

The third section of this book is titled **Still life in the old ones**

This section deals with the harsh realities of age, loneliness and sickness, but, throughout, there is a defiant note and a belief in the power of words and nature: in the poem *Seeking Solace*, Rosy, with her friend, surveys the landscape from the vantage point of Carraigoona and despite personal tragedy for them both she exhorts her friend:

we need to greet this day  
occasion of ancient prayer  
ask pardon of our planet.

In this same section we see Rosy

...playing with  
her new pink netbook, Windows Seven  
and Hewlett Packard scanner.

and raising a glass of whisky in defiance of advancing years. Rosy deals also directly and honestly with the brittleness and frailty of the mind in her poems *It is Not Me*, *Diagnosis* and *ECT*. She openly acknowledges a sense of desolation and loss in *Where is my home*:

I'm afraid on the streets  
...  
I'm afraid in the mountains  
...  
I'm afraid in the sea  
...  
I'm afraid in my bed

This section ends with the poem *Fugitive*. Rosy seeks refuge from the painful reality of a dying husband in music, poetry and

nature but one can sense that it is only a temporary respite, a brief hiding “within art forms.”

The final section of this book of poems is titled **Afterwards**. In this section Rosy reflects on significant milestones in her and Chris's life. There is sadness here but also a calm acceptance of the ups and downs of life. Her beautiful poem *Marriage* is like an incantation on the vicissitudes of two people living and surviving together.

The growing tired and older of it  
Is the love there enough for it?

And there is love enough and a longing deeply expressed in the poems *Serenade* and *I dream tonight*. This brilliant book of poems closes with *Double Plot*. Rosy contemplates on Chris buried in Kilmacreehy cemetery overlooking Liscannor Bay:

He'll be lonely out there on his own  
Atlantic storms, slanting arrows of rain  
and guillemoths' cries blowing over  
the perilous cliffs of Moher

And she envisages with a certain wry humour how her family will finally transport her, in a van, in a wicker coffin, to be laid beside Chris in “the double bed on Liscannor Bay.”

This book is a beautifully sustained evocation of the natural cycle of life, the coming into, the going out of, human frailty, fear, loss, love, the consolation of nature and the life enhancing power of poetry of which *Scaling the Heights* is such a powerful example.

Dermot McCabe

## Marriage

By Rosy Wilson

In the duration of it

The arc and the ache of it

The broken Dreams of it

The seeking and the losing of it

The stops and starts of it

The together and the apart of it

The growing tired and older of it

Is love there enough for it?

## New York, New York! & The Cujo Family

The Cujo Family who played in our 2010 Bray Arts Summer Festival Concert have taken the Dublin band scene by storm. On December 9<sup>th</sup> after months of preliminaries, heats and semi-finals The Cujo Family emerged as overall winners of the King Kong Club battle of the bands.

As winners they will play 3 shows in NEW YORK CITY during the 2011 St. Patrick's weekend, with flights and accommodation included! And if that wasn't enough, they'll also get a photographic documentation of their trip AND a photo shoot at the Empire State Building taken by RUTH MEDJBER (Ruthless Imagery - Flaming Lips, Rage against the Machine, Mercury Rev, Hot Press, etc.). They'll also get a spot on Balcony TV NYC in TIMES SQUARE. Their success is due, in no small part, to the fantastic following they have amongst young music lovers in Bray and Dublin.

In his review of the Cujo family and the contest between the final seven bands, Phillip Ó'Baoighealláin wrote:

"They may have opened up with a song called "The Hours Of The Wake", but they certainly opened with a performance full of life. The final was all about giving it your best shot at getting that big shot in New York in March, and as soon as they kicked off they were in a confident stride that exuded pomp and confidence ...

"Bray Head Hotel" was a song that brought the hoe down to the show down that was the final. This was a song that sent out the message that this band was serious and had a belief that they were genuine contenders on the night. The remaining song in the set called "Where The Blue Flowers Grow" came straight at you like a bat out of hell ... They wore their heart on their sleeves with this one, and put the heart, blood sweat and tears into it with the performance."

If you want to catch some of the excitement of the finals of the King Kong competition you can find it on utube under "The Cujo Family Mojo, KingKong Club final.mp4"



*Some of The Cujo Family on Balcony TV Brighton Christina Gallagher (seated), Joni Kelly and Luke Deignan (directly behind), Will Slattery and Gavin McCabe*

Bray Arts and Bray congratulates The Cujo Family on their fantastic victory and wishes them every success in New York.

The other members of The Cujo Family are:



Hook & Reuben Pouch



## Signal Arts

### Dress Up In You

Exhibition of Illustrations and Sketchbook Work by **Sarah Murphy**

*From Wednesday 5th January to Sunday 16th January 2011*

Sarah's love and appreciation for animals, combined with a huge interest in research has led her to develop a series of work based on Native American Indian myths and legends. Taking the original stories, she has interpreted them in her own way, and though quite often ending up with images quite abstract from the original story, she has still tried hard to portray the emotion and lessons that these stories teach us about, from loneliness and isolation to playfulness and trickery. As nearly all the stories feature animals, she wanted to explore the relationship between them and humans and this has led her to create creatures that are neither human or beast... a woman with the head of a doe, a lonely man hiding behind a bird mask.



*Opening Reception: Friday 7th January 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.*

### Sneachta

Exhibition of Paintings by **Helen McNulty**

*From Tuesday 18th January to Sunday 30th January 2011*

Helen began painting from an early age under the tutelage of her uncle Edward McNulty, a traditional artist from Fermanagh. She graduated from DeMontfort University, Leicester with a BA (Hons) in Performance Art and Arts Management. Through images collected from snowfall in Ireland and on the fjords of Norway using sketches, video and photographs Helen has been studying the elements of snowfall that have the ability to change the mood of the onlooker.

The works in this exhibition explore the textures and habits of water in its frozen and snow form, how the light reflects and refracts on frozen landscapes and the myriad of colours held within.



*Opening Reception: Friday 21st January 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.*

## The Sonic Love Project

The Sonic Love Project is a new initiative being organised by Michael Monaghan to kick off in February with the goal of inflaming the imagination with the use of sound while awarding up-and-coming musical acts with the appreciation that they deserve. Bands, solo artist's and poets will entertain in a place where musical ideas can be shared, discussed and performed. More details will be available in next month's journal.

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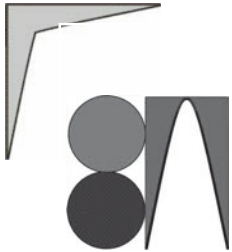
## Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : [editor@brayarts.net](mailto:editor@brayarts.net)  
Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald :  
[annefitz3@gmail.com](mailto:annefitz3@gmail.com)

Email submissions to the above or post typed  
submissions to :

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## Bray Arts Evening Monday 10th Jan 2011

Upstairs at The Martello on the Seafront  
€5/€4 conc. Absolutely everyone is welcome.  
Doors open 8:00pm

Michael Monaghan and Chelcy McDermott : music and song

Dermot Mac Gowan : Talks about his Art and Life

Angela Cook : Reading from her novel *An Alien in Japan*

Chaos in Harmony : natural voice workshop

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