
Bray Arts Journal

Issue 2

October 2006

Volume 12



Mermaid Exhibition

22 Sep - 21 Aug

EDITORIAL

Here's a question. What does the term *contemporary art* mean? Does it imply a style, fashion or type of art or does contemporary simply mean 'belonging to the same age' or 'occurring in the same period of time' as defined in the dictionary. I ask this question because the word contemporary crops up so often in the art world. We hear about contemporary galleries, contemporary shows, contemporary magazines and journals, competitions for contemporary art and so on. Is a landscape or portrait, painted in a classical style by a painter today, not contemporary? When an artist is invited to submit contemporary work for say a competition or show does this mean that the more academic or traditional style of painter need not apply. I believe that this in fact may be the understanding that is most prevalent amongst artists and the public, so unless the work is highly abstract, conceptual, performance or multimedia based it does not fit the criteria of being contemporary.

It is important that people involved in the arts, administrators, and arts organisations have some clarity about this and I would urge them to think carefully next time they use the term *contemporary art*. Are they by chance excluding some very fine artists who use more traditional or classical forms to make their statement about the contemporary world.

If you have any views on this please feel free to submit them to the journal. Submission details are on the back page.

Front Cover :- 'Obsession' (partial) by Pat Burnes, see preview for Oct. Arts Evening opposite

NEWS AND VIEWS

Fergal Flannagan who gave a presentation to Bray Arts some time back has an exhibition of his work coming up shortly. The title of the exhibition is 'Ricepaper'

The show consists of 30 paintings-all oil on canvas- of scenes of Thailand and Laos.

It opens on Sunday October 1st at Kilcock Art Gallery, School street, Kilcock at 3pm and runs for two weeks. The exhibition can be viewed on www.kilcockartgallery.com



GLENCREE VALLEY BY FERGAL FLANNAGAN

Eleanor Philips

This exhibition will reflect a personal investigation into the meaning of community and trying to locate both her own and others place within that meaning. When so much of every day life is experienced in a dislocated, fragmented manner how can we identify our own actual community. Work is separate from family, family is separate from neighbours whom many of us increasingly do not know. Leisure is something we buy or fill time with.



Where is the communal experience, how do we recognise it, what are the commonalities that bind? Who are the people that surround us and do we accept them as a part of a larger community?

Eleanor will also give a talk at 3:00pm in Mermaid on Friday 29th Sept.

A VOTE FOR JAMIE

(A grandfatherly rack from Peter Donnelly The Racker)

On that amazing morning
Of the 18th of July,
As blazing day was dawning,
Jamie dropped out of the sky

Into a birthing pool;
Sailed across it, like a sailor;
Cool
As NELSON, fellow birthday boy; not Horatio:

MANDELA.

Inspired by an A Team of livewires:
Three fellow 18th of July-ers:
FEARGUS O'CONNOR, champion Chartist;
w.g.grace,
Ace
Cricketer; THACKERAY,
Rackery
Artist.

On the same date
As the first Secret Ballot (in 1872),
JAMES CONOR CLINE
His weight?
In pounds: just under eight.
JAMES CONOR CLINE,
Determined not to miss
World Kissing Day, dropped in to share the bliss
And cast his vote for a world less asinine;
So, Jamie, here's a loving X (and a hug or two)
For you!

SOME REVIEWS FROM THE SEPTEMBER ARTS EVENING

Debut Reading

Belinda Kelly's first area of interest in the Arts was in Drama; she trained as a classical actress in Stratford on Avon amongst other places, appeared in London productions and worked in Theatre in education, but she believes the current novel she



is writing engages her creativity in a deeper and more basic way. Belinda hasn't wasted her time in the Dramatic Arts, a rapt Bray Arts Club audience discovered, listening to her Reading at the September Evening. Her talent as an actress to take on many parts stood her in good stead as she brought us through the first chapters of her current novel-in-progress. Apart from Belinda's expert delivery, the quality of the writing, her engaging characters and

the comic overtones of the work ensured this would be a reading worth listening to

If the extract we were treated to is typical of the rest of the work readers are in for a treat when Belinda Kelly launches her first novel on the literary scene. The Bray Arts Club will no doubt be delighted to ask her back when that inevitable event takes place.

Carmen Cullen

He Didn't Dance



It's about the only thing Jimmy Cullen didn't do. He played the Mandolin, Tin Whistle, Guitar and sang. The audience really loved **Jimmy Cullen**, his warm personality and delightful mix of instrumental music and song. In the very best tradition he left everyone wanting more, so Jimmy you can expect Bray Arts will be knocking at your door again.

PREVIEW OF NEXT ARTS EVENING

8:00pm Mon 2nd Oct Heather House Hotel Seafront

Pat Burnes' art practice is driven by obsession: obsession with memory; obsession with the landscape and history of her hometown, Bray; obsession with making art. Exploring old family black and white photographs the artist makes and remakes the images through print and a variety of paintings



As a returned emigrant, Burnes also is awakened to the dualities and complexities of Irish culture. In her work *Obsession*, which is 6ft. by 8ft., an original image is excessively blown up. The bigger it gets the more the image is distorted and disappears; the closer you

get the less you see.

Pat Burnes will show and talk about her obsession and her art.

Robbie Overson has been a great friend and supporter of Bray Arts over the years and when his busy schedule, as a professional musician who tours extensively with Karen Casey and Niall Vallely, allows, he very generously responds to our requests for return visits to Bray Arts. On his last visit to Bray

Arts (2004) Robbie launched his beautiful CD *Overdue*.

Siobhán Long in her Irish Times review of Robbie's CD describes his music as "reflective, moody and hugely melodic capsules of music Late night music to still the soul."

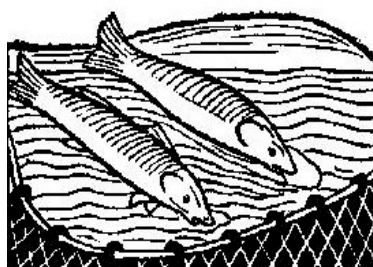
You cannot but be moved and delighted by this man's music; truly not to be missed. If you want a preview of his music go to his Website :

www.robbyoverson.com/

Playing with Robbie is **Martin**

Dunlea. This highly regarded guitarist and composer teaches at Newpark Music Centre. His guitar playing can be heard on the Gavin Friday's and Maurice Seezer's original soundtrack to the film "Disco Pigs" (Berlin Film Festival, February, 2001). His credits are too numerous to mention here but a quick search on the internet will show that this man 'gets around'. We are delighted to welcome him to Bray Arts.

Two Trout on a Draining Board



Yes, I know, what's it about? Well it's funny but also dark. So I am told by Lorraine O'Brien, the Bray playwright and having experienced some of her work in the past I just can't wait to hear this monologue, read by Lorraine herself.

Domino

by Alva Bedmarczyk

Taking no more lessons
Closing the door
On the disappointed look of sour frustration
Laid on my aching mind, each time you misunderstood
Behaviours and motivations
I thought of you as you told yourself to me
Purged by lessons of pain
Of the august return tricklings shallow deep thinking
This time embraces to its plastic bosom, and is proud to call
wise
I gave you no show, no posturing controls
Embracing only in the freedoms you asked of me
Putting down my suitcase to take your hand
Ring drops, ease stops, bangle as a shackle
Believing eye in costume spoon-fed a honey trap
Dropped biscuits in the forest, heart enveloped, witches craft
To cook you in a cauldron of leaden responsibility
No point to asking if you mean what you can't grasp
Mocking echoes, morning moonlight traces
Blindfolded, you led me to the chasm shelf
Mistaking twisted dropping fearful falsehoods
For stoic sagacity, I let myself
But I could never ask you to hold me lightly
To let me reveal to you at my own pace
Blistering in the hungry fire, as you tore
Crowbar to oyster, hatchet to an onion,
I gave to you freely, open hands and eyes,
Terms and conditions never need apply
Drew me on a trapstring wire over all
Eating of my desire and confidence, grew strong
Black-fingered seeds of doubt in all you planted
Projected futures on an earthquake foundation wall
Compressing myself to be embraced, choking down
Hypocrisy of your empty vessel surrounds
Chest caving in, legs giving out
The taint of blame all over the ash-strewn table
All I saw in your eyes was a swift escape
But if you meant it as love, then why did you never say?
Too removed in your safety to ever really be touched
Push, push, push, because I am not, I am not,
No purpose to the pain
That almost split my whirlpool head apart
While all the grace you gave
Was an express ticket to a haunting
And an empty page.

The Telephone Museum

By Matt Kirkham

When I called you from the Telephone
Museum- 'please don't hang up, speak after the tone,'
only to get your answering service-
'see, it's dragging me past the fresh bread and fresh veg,
this ill-designed, unmanageable
Tesco's trolley' - did it matter that A.G.Bell

designed the set I was using a replica of, you handcuffed
to the shopping, your voice saying don't hang up?

I thought that of all the phones I could be using
to call you from the Telephone Museum,

the mock-up of the phone used in The Maltese Falcon by
Humphrey
Bogart would be the one to give your work number

a try on, to listen to your voice saying 'Most valued
caller, don't hang up, I'm welded

to a screen and keyboard whilst my chancer
of a boss, please wait, caller, to answer,

is preparing to slice
his shot as he can't help but think of the slight

depression on the inside of my left knee' -
I will answer, I really want to, if you let me-

'when he should be focused on the ball in the semi-rough,
please, caller, don't hang up,

do speak after the tone.' But I will
hang up and call

you again from the Telephone
on a reproduced version

of the model used by Kennedy to phone Khrushchev,
because you know how I just love

to hear your mobile's message saying, 'Most elusive
caller, I'm in yet another spit and sawdust dive,

don't hang up and leave
me two-two-six-seven-eight-nine-five

sheets to the south-south-west wind
as when I step outside it's to find

both my left and my right ears ringing
but I can't hear this thing

in here, please
don't hang up, do, do speak

after the tone.' But I don't know.
Didn't he use this phone to call Marilyn Monroe?



Matt Kirkham's poetry collection 'The Lost Museum' is published by Lagan Press

BARCELONA

by Shane Harrison

Over five hundred years ago Columbus sailed from Barcelona to the ends of the earth. His voyage established the New World and was, perhaps, the watershed in the regeneration of western culture. His statue stands atop a column and gestures out to sea, significantly, not westwards but to the east. Our culture is born of this Mediterranean cauldron: a confluence of Egyptian and Minoan, Greek and Roman, Jewish and Moslem - but never a melting pot. In places the threads of the European tapestry may tend towards a dominant tone, elsewhere it is a raucous explosion of colour illuminated by vibrant strands - seldom more startling than can be found in Spain.

Catalonia is not Spain - some say, others vehemently reject separation. Barcelona is capital of the region but is very much its own city; an oasis, even, in its complexity and uniqueness. Framed by an arc of parched hills it clings to the gentle sweep of a dazzling bay. Above hangs an azure sky which, on the day we arrive, is partly cloaked in the clouds of a waiting storm. Lying on the beach at Poble Nou we watch lightning crackle beyond Vila Olimpica's twin high rise hotels. There is a relaxed retreat to partial shelter beneath the peeling plane trees. The storm passes, but the tangible electricity lingers in the air.

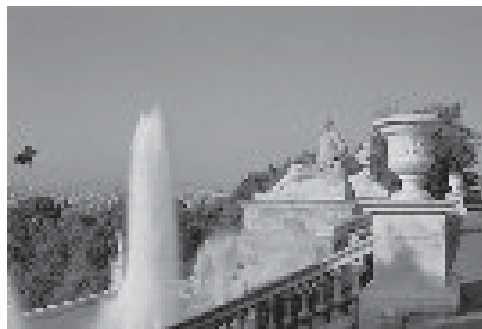
Above the port the spires of the Barri Gotic are Barcelona's signature, stone and iron as finely wrought as lace, imposing towers and gilded globes. Devious gargoyles guard serpentine lanes where people spill from tapas bars and cava bars. Improbable statues stand on rooftops and slash at the skyline, below along the Rambla, flesh and blood street performers turn into statues as we watch.



The Rambla is the main artery - part carnival, part market, part gallery, everchanging and never dull. The Boqueria market is halfway along and offers all sorts of fresh produce in a seething atmosphere. I stand for an espresso at a stainless steel counter, assaulted by the scents of coffee and tobacco, flowers and fruit, spices and sweets.

There is a tangible sense of the fearlessness of the Iberian. The past and the future are embraced with equal enthusiasm. There are bullfights at Monumental where you can steep your senses in blood and wine, contemplate death in the afternoon - and live. Thrills are a commonplace. A startling cable car ride across the harbour to Montjuic pales beside even more vertiginous experiences in the rides at Tibidabo funfair teetering on a hill above the city. Danger is for sale too: my children thrill to find fireworks for sale legally at outdoor stalls. The upcoming feast of San Joan is the occasion. The thunder and lightning was a mild rehearsal for what lies ahead.

The magical fountains beneath the Palau Nacional are a sedate interlude, we are drawn fascinated as moths, with several thousand others, to the sublime son et lumiere of



the fountains and surging classical music, including of course the kitsch duet of Montserrat Caballe and Freddie Mercury.

Along the beach on the night of San Joan madness reigns. Trance music thumps from beach bars, fireworks flower in the sky all along the seafront, people light Roman candles, catherine wheels spin, screamers and firecrackers punctuate the music and laughter. The sky is draped in a filigree of cordite as explosions echo between the twin towers. Risks are taken so that life can be lived at its zenith.

There is an order to the city's fabric underpinning all this gaiety. The Eixample, conceived by the Modernisme movement, imposed a rigid grid as the city expanded beyond the Barri Gothic. The grid is pierced by the Diagonal, a vast avenue at last reaching the seafront and completion a century after its inception. Out of this geometric frame fantastic castles flower. This is the city of Gaudi, a man who turned dreams into buildings and who forged tangible fantasy all around Barcelona. The church of Sagrada Familia, also over a century in the making, is an impossible flourish of spires, their fingers spreading upward to the



sky. Each facade is designed around a theme with twelve spires dedicated to the apostles, four central spires representing the evangelists and the giant central spire for Jesus. Eight spires and two facades - Gaudi's original Nativity facade, and the recent, more basic Passion facade - are built over a century later. The calculation that it will be completed in twenty years looks optimistic. Perhaps it will never be finished.

Perhaps that's the point.

Tradition has it that we hail from Spain, the land of the dead, with a mixture of Egyptian, Greek and Spanish blood. It is fanciful, I suppose, but it resonates with truth. It cannot be that we take naturally to the feint hearted conservatism that has bedevilled us since independence. If really we are to look to Europe why must it always preference the sterile rationalism of the the Eurocrats, or Sweden - why not look towards Spain instead? Gaudi, stepping back to admire his great work in progress, was knocked down and killed by a tram but he lives on in his work. Barcelona has that quality of the eternal. Some places you may see and die, but here you must see and live.

**MY MOTHER CAME TO ME ON A COLD MARCH
DAY AT THE END OF HER LIFE.**

By Millie Purwin in memory of her mother
Mabel Penrose Hill b. 1893 - d.1980

Exhausted from her recent confinement in hospital in Miami, and from travelling so far on a stretcher by plane to Boston, then an ambulance to a little bed in a little room upstairs in my house.

Tiny. Frail, Mother asked me. "Am I on my way to someplace?" "No Mother, you have arrived. You are here at home with me."

For many days she slept or would be awake, very still. Each time I came to her, she greeted me with a smile. Each time I left her, she thanked me for whatever small thing I had done for her.

All activity was kindly refused. She only needed to rest. Her room was attractive, furnished simply with paintings and drawings on the walls.

At Easter time her grand-daughter Sara and three great-grand children from Holland came to visit. Mother's new great-grand daughter came with Zan from Ireland at age three weeks. Mother kissed the baby's every toe and every tiny finger.

This was an occasion for which she left her bed for the rocking chair. Mother played her harmonica for the children, then put it away.

One small dormer window looks out into the woods. The view in March is rather bleak, only grey branches against a grey sky.

As the days lengthened into June, the events outside her small window began to encompass a world of light and



shadow; birds and song, leaves of every hue of green as spring flowered into summer.

Facing east, the window brought clear light and sunshine in the morning. As time progressed and the sun moved over the house, the shadows deepened, so the green, with

shafts of sunlight streaming through. A breeze moved through the trees making the leaves dance in the sun or the rain; little birds flitting in and out, chased by larger birds or any sudden movement or sound.

Then came the setting sun. The little window and the woods became the scenario for the afterglow, the reflection of the sunset in the western sky. This light reflected back to the woods in scarlet flashing light. Mother called to me, "Come see, the wood is on fire!"



Each day she sat in the rocking chair for a little while. She watched as spring stole into April.

The dead black berries of the old honeysuckle disappeared as white buds and green leaves emerged.

With the honeysuckle came the birds. It was the birds as much as anything that supplied her with the impetus needed for her to want to breathe, to move.

So frail, so feeble, she can summon the strength of her spirit to move to the rocking chair by the window to watch the little birds come to the finch feeder that Sig has bung outside her dormer window.

Then the finches arrived making it imperative to consult the book "Birds of New England" for identification.

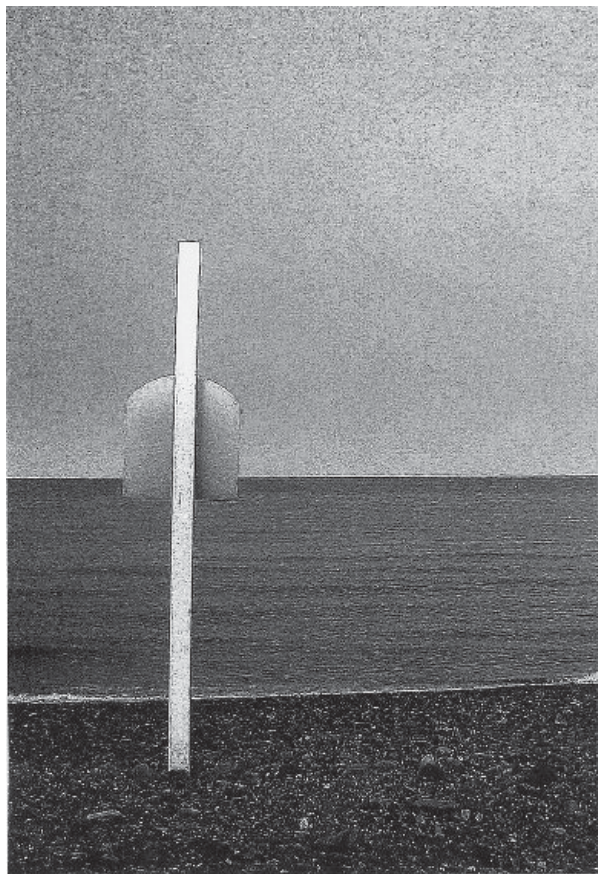
There were tiny finches of every ilk. We have identified the American Goldfinch and his mate. She blends totally into the tree. Her feathers are the exact colour of the new spring leaves and the tree bark. Her mate is brilliant yellow with black and white on his wings and his head.

We see and identify a Black-capped Chickadee; also a House Sparrow sometimes called an English Sparrow and not a Sparrow. He has a soft grey belly and lovely brown and tan wings. He is of the family of Weaver Finches.

It seems that mother needs to identify the birds. I now know their names and for some obscure reason it has become a small joy. It can only be our shared experience that has made it so for me.

It was her last springtime, the first northern spring for many years. She shared with me her delight at the blossoming of the yellow and white honeysuckle.

To be with mother, to know how to help her to live- so late, but not late. Each day is a new day for her and for me. All my life has prepared me for this time and I am comforted, satisfied and unafraid of the predictable time ahead that is death, but in dying I am able to give her life.



Received this very fine* photographic print from **Caitriona Douglas** of Ardmore Lawn Bray. Sometimes you don't have to say anything.

MORE FROM THE SEPT ARTS EVENING

Yanny Petters

Yanny's art demonstrates how powerful and beautiful realism can be. Her paintings of fruit, flowers and vegetables have the energy and vitality of pure abstract work and at the same time the fascination of the intimate close-up examination of nature. In her presentation Yanny clearly demonstrated to a very appreciative audience her passion and dedication to her art.



There is another opportunity to see Yanny's work. Her solo exhibition at Airfield Trust, Dundrum.

Natural Patterns is an exhibition of paintings and prints inspired by the environment of Airfield House by Yanny Petters.

Opening 4th October at 7pm. Exhibition runs til 22nd October.

Opening times at Air-

field Trust: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 4pm, Sundays 11am - 4pm

Airfield Trust, Upper Kilmacud Road, Dundrum, Dublin 14 01 298 4301 www.airfield.ie

Oliver Marshall launched his beautiful and moving poetry collection on CD called *Father's Day* at the Sept. Arts Evening. He read the title poem *Father's Day*. Apart from the indisputable quality of his writing, Oliver is also a superb reader which adds another dimension to his work. Quite rightly, Carmen Cullen announced on the night that this CD would be a collectors item. If you want any information or a copy of the CD (10 Euro) or the book (10 Euro) you can contact Bray Arts at bacj@eircom.net.

The Racker (Peter Donnelly) on a brief visit home from London dropped in and ignited the audience with laughter when he performed his hilarious Monkstown Rack. How the man remembers these long intricate racks is beyond a mystery. We thought the Racker might appreciate a rackette in response to his *Vote for Jamie* rack on page 2.

A rackette for the Racker

The racker grand-fatherly
Ses you are a part of me
To James Conor Cline
New minted
Of Rackerly kine.

VIDEO VOYEUR

Harold Chassen

United 93 is not that new to video/DVD but with the 5th anniversary of 9/11 upon us I decided to review it. The film speculates about the details of the fourth plane that was hijacked that day and how some of the passengers tried to take it back from the terrorists. It has are no big name stars and it is told in a semi-documentary fashion. It is an



emotionally charged fast moving film. Like watching horror films as a child I couldn't look at it and yet couldn't take my eyes off it. A gripping film well worth a look.



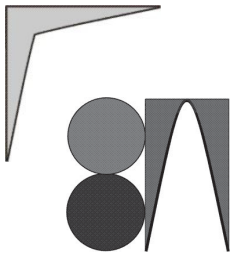
The Labour Party has issued a pamphlet on their national cultural strategy. It is a very interesting document which sets out the concept whereby art in all

its manifestations is integrated into the life of communities, youth, artists themselves and government, local and national. There are some very specific and creative proposals in the pamphlet. The party are holding a consultative Arts Forum in the Devil's Glen Equestrian Centre, Ashford. By the time this journal is issued the date for making an application to attend will have passed. However the Journal would hope to get a report from the forum by the next issue.

Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : bacj@eircom.net
Creative Writing Prose/Fiction Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : afitzgerald3@ireland.com
Poetry Editor : Eugene Hearne : poetrybray@yahoo.ie

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to
The Editor BAJ 'Casino',
Killarney Rd. Bray,
Co. Wicklow
Visual material: Photographs by Post. Digital Images by Email or CD in JPEG format.
Deadline 12th of each month.



***Bray Arts evening Mon 2nd Oct Heather House
Hotel Seafront : Doors open 8:00pm Everyone welcome
Admission : 5 Euro / 4 Euro Concession***

Art : Pat Burnes local artist will show and talk about her obsessions and art.

Drama : Playwright **Lorraine OíBrien** will read her comic and sometimes dark monologue **Two Trout on a Draining Board.**

Music: Robbie Overson and Martin Dunlea. Not one but two exceptional musicians to delight any audience anywhere.

Bray Arts is grateful for the support of Bray Council, Wicklow Council, CASC and Heather House Hotel.
Printed by Central Press

If undelivered please return to :
Editor, Bray Arts Journal
'Casino'
Killarney Rd.
Bray
Co. Wicklow