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# Bray Arts Journal

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Issue 7

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## REVIEW

Bray Arts Night February 4<sup>th</sup> 2013.  
by **Shane Harrison**

Cold winds from snow covered mountains, raging waves along the seafront, did nothing to deter a sizable crowd at the February meeting. Blowing the cold winter away in the snug upstairs eyrie were singing and comedy, a page or two of arts and crafts, and more singing again.

First up were **Megan Ward and Lucy Cooney**, two songbirds in magpie stripes, who sang a cappella from a repertoire including



*Megan Ward and Lucy Cooney*

Irish, Renaissance and light Operatic themes. The duo are fresh from their success at the Roundwood Talent Show and are taking their talents further afield. The girls are canny on the uses of contrast, with voices that are such perfect companions, sometimes like twins, then suddenly exhibiting all the contrasts of pitch and strength, light and shade. With one blond and the other

brunette, you think you've cracked the code as to who is deep and who soars, when they switch side again, keeping you guessing. I am reminded a bit of the twin vocals of 70s band Mellow Candle or, closer to home, Wyvern Lingo. Megan and Lucy however, stick to the pure stuff, without instrumental augmentation. The effect is ethereal, a cocoon of quiet on our storm tossed Esplanade. The audience is led along nicely, in thrall to these pied pipers, willing to follow them anywhere.

**Andrew Kelly**

expounded, quietly, on the joys of his craft - making books, and his art - making them truly unique. There are books made of ice, of steam, of balloons. Books that are sculptures, books that are stories in themselves, books of entirely abstract content and context. Conceptually, this can be hard to take. Our definition of a book is something we pick up, read it from beginning to end, then close it at the resolution of its story. Of course, we know

there are visual books, books that might tell their story with photography or illustration. They are a broad subgroup including

comic books, pop up books, children's books, the Book of Kells. Beyond this, I struggled to justify the broadening of the concept to include some of the work Andrew displayed. There are pleasing enough intellectual conundrums; a 'book' that could be read like Rubic's Cube, another where every second page is a mirror. Yet, however admirable the craft in some of these creations, there is a danger of the artist becoming too submerged in both the process and the concept.

Ultimately, the genius of the book form is its portability and accessibility. It tells a story, however obscure, and is always directly amenable to the individual. The concepts of high art can be too willfully obscure to register within these parameters. Andrew compares it with jewelry, but this analogy doesn't work for me, being too obsessed with the strictly materialistic. The question then with book art is, what are the parameters? As Andrew showed, it is an interesting, challenging and potentially imaginative form.

After the break, **Greg**

**O'Connor** the comedian did his turn. His humour stems from the curmudgeonly observations you might see on Grumpy Old Men. Rather the opposite tack than a previous comedy excursion with Des Bishop et al, who mused that the Bray Arts audience was somewhat antique. Bah! The cheeky whippersnapper! So, no identity crisis here, then. In fact, Greg has been a long term exponent of the theme, as can be judged from the shows he has toured; such as The Rant of Ringo at the Edinburgh Fringe and Old Age is a Bugger at Portumna Shorelines Festival. Greg is a retired teacher, but like all teachers is driven by a compulsion to perform. He might have been tempted to give the audience lines had they misbehaved, in fact they behaved well, laughing at the lines that were thrown out. Greg O'Connor is not the retiring type, anyway, he can't go back to the day job now, now that he's having the last laugh.



**The music of Percy French** is well embedded in the national psyche, at least in those of my vintage and beyond. A collective identity crisis of recent years may have relegated this particular form but it hasn't gone away, you know. **Anne O'Dea, Siobhan Doyle** and **Jimmy Dixon** brought their recreation of the man's wit and



*Andrew Kelly*



*Siobhan Doyle, Jimmy Dixon and Anne O'Dea*

music to life, accompanied by an appropriate narrative outlining the artist's life and times. Percy French's music was the pop of its time, catchy, comic and contemporary. The songs are also mini narratives, touching on the age old themes of love and loss, but also on heavier themes like emigration. The Mountains of Mourne is one of our most evocative ballads, told with great humour and a naturalistic vernacular. At its heart it is intensely moving, still touching a chord today as people once more take to 'the boat'.

A common mistake has been the association of French's music with paddywhackery, the feeling that certain traditions have been foisted upon us to render us foolish in the eyes of the foreigner. True, times change and with it all the attitudes and nuance that go to make our day to day. The trio did us all a favour by illuminating this particular slice of music history. The performance explained the origination of the songs and the stagecraft put it all perfectly into context. It would be impossible to include all the favourites in a short set, French was certainly prolific. But we got a good taster here, from Phil the Fluther's Ball to Come Back Paddy Reilly to Ballyjamesduff. The biggest hit, of course, was Are Ye Right There, Michael. A perfect comic playlet on the shortcomings, and long travel times, of the West Clare Railway. A bygone age evoked, or has it really gone?

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## Preview

Bray Arts Night  
Martello Hotel, Bray  
Monday 4, March 2013

### John Ivory photographer

A native of Bray and a keen amateur musician, John would never have considered himself a 'creative' person – until two years ago when he was bitten by the photography bug. He now views the world around him in a different way, constantly looking for new angles and opportunities to capture on camera. John, who mainly shares his photos through social media websites, is looking forward to presenting some of his images and discussing his love of photography.



John Ivory

### Stephen Cloak – Singer / Song-writer

will be performing some of his own folk guitar compositions on the night with his brother, **Niall Cloak**, on violin. These songs were



Stephen Cloak & Niall Cloak

composed over the last few years on his travels around Spain and South America. His music is influenced by Bob Dylan and Josh Ritter but Stephen crafts the sounds of these masters into something new.

### Liz McManus, Novelist and short fiction writer

Her first novel *Acts of Subversion* was shortlisted for the Aer Lingus/Irish Times first novel award. Her short stories are published in a number of anthologies. Winner of the Hennessy award for New Irish Writing, the Listowel Short Story award and the Irish Pen Short Story award. Liz was awarded an M Phil with distinction in Creative Writing by Trinity College Dublin this year. She is currently writing a novel: *The Disappeared*.



Liz McManus

### HueGrass is a group of five musicians

playing a contemporary mix of old-time bluegrass/country/folk music with an eclectic range of pace, performance, personality, poise



Huegrass

and beauty! They got together to form HueGrass through their shared interest in Irish and American folk music and their love of harmonising. They met through playing at a local trad session in Greystones and made their debut performance at the Greystones Americana and Roots Festival in 2012.

Cearbhall O'Meadhra

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## A Question for the Art Colleges

“When modernism made its massive assaults on the accomplishments of the past, it deprived subsequent generations of artists of any ground plan or guidance for the future. More stable traditions of art imposed certain standards on their practitioners – patterns which were accepted as the natural and right way to do things, and which became part of the individuals' practice and second nature as an artist. These standards were transmitted from teacher to pupil, handed down from master to disciple. The transmission is what has sustained practices and given them their history.

One of the unsettling characteristics of modernism, as a tradition, is that it has failed to develop the means for training artists. Nowadays, the artist has no function to transmit traditional skills, or even to impart a knowledge of art — nor is there any consensus as to what should be learned.”

*Has Modernism Failed* by Suzi Gablik

## Two Poems by Paul Allen

### When We Made Love We Built a Temple

*Lines from 1 Kings 6, after Sue went back to Louisiana*

- <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass that you and I were come  
Out from Slidell to spend a month in west Texas,  
My second month of my second year in a camper,
- <sup>2</sup> From the wilderness of east coast short roads.  
Length and breadth and height thereof are many cubits.
- <sup>3</sup> Before the temple we went the length thereof  
According to the breadth of the house. And wow!
- <sup>4</sup> And for the house we made windows of narrow lights.  
Against the wall were chambers round about.
- <sup>5</sup> And we made narrowed rests round about  
That our beams should not be fastened in the walls,  
The stone made ready before it was brought thither.
- <sup>6</sup> And we went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber,  
And then the third, and the nethermost chamber, and wow!
- <sup>7</sup> We covered the floor of the house with planks of fir,  
Both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar:
- <sup>8</sup> We even built them for it within, even for the oracle,  
Even for the most holy place. And wow!
- <sup>9</sup> And the whole house we overlaid with gold,  
Until we had finished all the house: Also the whole altar
- <sup>10</sup> That was by the oracle we overlaid with gold.  
And two cherubim of olive wood.
- <sup>11</sup> And we carved all your walls of the house round about with  
carved figures  
Of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within and  
without. And wow!
- <sup>12</sup> And the two leaves of the one door were folding,  
And the two leaves of the other door were folding.

<sup>13</sup> And the world destroyed the temple with its world,  
But each three days (or thereabout) we rebuilt it,

<sup>14</sup> Even unto the last day.

### Faith, Love...

Faith, love: You hate to admit something is truly lost.  
It's more than the cost of replacing it.  
Like the maul I bought, starting out,  
camping my way around the country,  
my fires, and getting better splitting wood  
state by state, fire by fire camping across the country.  
I set a piece on end, find a natural crack  
midway, or lacking that, dead center.  
Focus. And in one motion, I raise the maul,  
guide it with my body—guide all my self—  
through that imagined mark until the Earth stops it.  
The wood is two, as though it always was.  
A private greatness, that.

Tennessee, Alabama, across and down  
to Louisiana. In the 4<sup>th</sup> state,  
I was not allowed to burn. I don't know  
what I missed most, the fire itself  
or my making it. Then in Missouri, I was back  
in the groove. Concentrate, raise, come down. Clean.  
To raise the maul and then concentrate won't do:  
I'd send the single piece off to the side,  
or would catch a shred and all I'd cut was a shaving,  
or worse, would bring the handle down on the mark,  
sending a shattering sense up into the shoulders.  
Done right, though, everything I ever was or am leaves  
me during the one motion of raising and bringing down,  
total loss of self and other, and all mind goes away,  
as a moment in sex, a moment in prayer.  
*Moment* is wrong, since time itself is erased.

Near St. Joseph, where so many ferried across  
to a new life to find or build or steal,  
I focus, raise,  
and a terrible lightness  
happens, a foreign weightlessness in the arms.  
I'm out of pure feeling and into thinking:  
the head's come off. Three pounds

of sharp steel is coming down, unguided.  
 I wait to feel it enter my skull  
 or rip me from neck to butt.  
 This doesn't happen. I retrace the seconds,  
 try to remember hearing it land.  
 I didn't, and it has had time  
 to do one or the other, maim me or land harmlessly.  
 Now I can bring my arms down, naked handle.  
 I look on the ground behind me.  
 Not there. Look on the ground to either side.  
 In front. No. I look up. I allow myself  
 to move. Step here there, no and no.  
 I search the edge of my site, the brush,  
 pushing the weeds aside with the lonely handle  
 as though the head might be drawn to its handle.

The radio preacher's been saying  
 that this is the month of the rapture—perhaps...  
 But I wouldn't wish that on my maul,  
 forged solely for function,  
 lost in that gaudy New Jerusalem with all  
 its chichi chrysolite, jasper, sapphire, amethyst, pearl, gold.  
 And no iron cousins anywhere?  
 No, my maul would stay down here.  
 So each day for the rest of my rented week  
 I looked for it. In morning waking,  
 I'd think, *maybe*... dress and go look  
 at a spot I dreamed about. I stirred  
 through the same cold ash every day.  
 I crawled under my trailer, my truck,  
 borrowed a ladder and looked atop my camper.  
 At week's end, I pulled out, looked back at my site.  
 How can something be so thoroughly lost?

In the next state I did without fire. A kind of grieving?  
 Self-punishment? Remnant of hope it could turn up?  
 Probably all of the above. But crossing  
 into my 7<sup>th</sup> state of the year, I knew I had to get another.  
 Found a local hardware.  
 Before handing the woman my card, though,  
 as our hands were about to meet, I pulled back—  
 I admit the stupidity—  
 and looked up just once more.

*Check out Paul Allen at*  
<http://www.myspace.com/paulpoemssongs>

THE HOLY COW OF WAR  
 by Jay Ramsay

She's not beautiful and honey-brown on an Indian street  
 she's the front end of a bus covered in khaki  
 (and weapons advertisements) randomly leaving the road  
 to mow down pedestrians as the radiator becomes a mouth  
 a maw, then a tank phallus emerges—  
 before she backs off ready to charge: her eyes  
 full of hate-filled street faces fuelled  
 on an eye for an eye, retaliation at any price  
 rage denying grief, and more rage, and if she  
 ever had a just cause she's a runaway whore  
 that needs lampooning, and more, and more  
 no space for any posturing or the lie of justification  
 the endless excuse that leads to the death of more innocence  
 more fractured ruined lives the world over,  
 SHE MUST BE OUTLAWED—so we have to  
 find another way, to talk like human beings  
 not calculating monsters, sociopaths  
 legitimate squaddies on a psychotic pub-crawl  
 called defence of any realm—Hell—indefensible;  
 SHE HAS TO BE STOPPED like a ranting patient  
 reaching his end-sentence while everybody waits  
 holding the space, more more glorification  
 no more retro nostalgia dressed up as poetry either,  
 Ms Ostrich...imagine Bob Marley being right  
 and not just dreaming off the end of a spliff:  
 NO MORE WAR between nations or neighbours,  
 but the far harder labour of loving peace  
 that goes on everywhere unreported  
 and climbs on my podium to take gold  
 for thousands of years, and an age to come.

4th Dec 2012

## Mermaid

### Programme highlights for March include:

#### Vyviene Long & The Balanescu Quartet

Sat 9 Mar @ 8pm €18/€16

An Irish lyricist, a Romanian virtuoso, and a cutting edge all-strings band – what happens when these musical forces collide? Songwriter and cellist Vyviene Long tours with the world renowned Balanescu Quartet for the first time on Irish shores. Vyviene has composed original material and arranged her beautifully disarming and intensely personal songs for the newly formed string quintet.



Vyviene Long

#### Knick Knack & Doo Dad (Children's Theatre)

Sun 10 Mar @ 2pm €10 (One adult goes free with two or more children!)

Join Lyngo Theatre Company for this magical, captivating children's show. On the North Atlantic Garbage Patch lives Knick Knack, endlessly sorting through all our rubbish that we have thrown into the sea and forgotten about. This show is all about renewal and regeneration and, of course, recycling. Knick Knack and Doo Dad will be making the most marvellous geegaws and thingumyjigs out of the floating flotsam and jetsam all around and they'll even be asking the audience if they have anything to throw away and will be using it in the show.

#### Johnny Duhan

Sat 16 Mar @ 8pm €18/€16

For many years Johnny Duhan's songs have been sung all over the



Johnny Duhan

world and translated into a variety of languages. His most famous songs have been adopted by great artists like Christy Moore, The Dubliners, The Irish Tenors and Mary Black. There is, however, always something captivating about a song sung in its first voice and Duhan's

music is no exception in this regard, he continues to attract critical acclaim and a growing cult following for his beautifully written and passionately performed music.

#### Transitions

Tues 19 Mar @ 8pm €12

Graduates of the Laban Dance School bring us Transitions. Twelve of the best young dancers from across the world will perform a mixed bill of choreography devised by international artists: Lauri Stallings, Tom Dale and Augusto Corrieri.

#### Iarla Ó Lionáird

Sat 23 Mar @ 8pm €16/€11

Music Network Presents..Iarla Ó Lionáird

Iarla O Lionaird- voice Cleek Schrey –fiddle Ivan Goff- uilleann pipes & harmonium

Whether floating over ancient rhythms or pulsing electronica, there's no mistaking the sublime, utterly compelling vocal talents of Iarla Ó Lionáird. Ó Lionáird is accompanied by Cleek Schrey's unique style of fiddle playing, which fuses Irish stylings with the Old-time music of Virginia. Completing the line-up is All-Ireland champion piper and fellow New York resident Ivan Goff, who has performed in many theatrical productions as well as playing with Riverdance, Whirligig, Cathie Ryan and Lúnasa.

#### The Fantasiest

Wed 27 Mar @ 8pm €16/€14

*'Astonishingly powerful, exquisite theatre. Be prepared to overturn your sense of what is real and what can be imagined.'* FringeReview

Spinning together puppetry, physical theatre and original music, Lecoq and LISPA trained Theatre Témoin team up with War Horse's Robin Guiver, exploring the murky depths and glorious heights of bipolar disorder. Nominated for an Off West End Award following 5 star sell-out runs at London's Blue Elephant Theatre. Theatre Témoin



The Fantasiest

## Signal Arts Exhibitions

### People, Nature, Fruit and Flowers

An Exhibition of New Works by **Dave Flynn**

From Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2013

**Dave Flynn** is a Fine Arts graduate from the Byam Shaw School of Art, London. Dave is a professional artist and art teacher living and working in Bray, Co. Wicklow. He writes art reviews for various publications, and, as well as teaching art classes in counties Wicklow and Dublin, he mentors artists with special needs for South Dublin Community Arts.



*Still Life on Wooden Table*

Dave says of his work: “Over the years I’ve come to realise that there has to be a struggle to keep faithful to process rather than having too predefined and limited a vision. When I manage to do this, it’s very freeing. For me, this means doing all I can with drawing, colour and the

visible honesty of mark making, in order to keep a tension between the potential of exploring whatever is inspiring me while staying true to its beauty.

The components of this exhibition, ‘People, Nature, Fruit and Flowers’, not only cover the types of work included, but also refer to always painting directly from life which is, for me, nature in the broadest sense.

In the intimacy of the portrait and the human figure, I try to share what I’m experiencing, including the relationship built with the sitter. This is also true when I paint a figure from a distance as part of a seascape, for example, trying to apprehend the figure’s dynamic in relation to the elements. In either case, painting a person is an immense privilege.

There are also, of course, the stunning seascapes and landscapes of North County Wicklow where I live. The artistic possibilities are endless. Folly Beach in the USA, south of where I was born, is another inspiring place for wonderful and at times dramatic seascapes. It’s an impressive Atlantic coastline near Charleston, in South Carolina’s ‘Low Country’ with some great landmarks, including an old pier and pavilion. I paint land and seascapes with immediacy there and then, so there’s little chance to plan anything other than composition. Rather than commit one moment in time to paper or canvas, painting from nature is an experience of a drama unfolding.

Finally, there is the meditative and intimate work of still life. I start from the intention, especially in the setting-up process, of getting across particular ideas. This could be a harmony or tension between the objects and the interior space, a strong contrast of colours, or a dynamic composition.

My main mediums have tended to be pencil and oil paint, but in the last couple of years I’ve been using a lot of watercolour as well. Watercolour is particularly great in quickly capturing high contrast,

light and mood, such as a land or seascape changing due to cloud cover, or a darkening sky.”

Opening Reception: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 7pm – 9pm

The Exhibition will be opened by Joe Dunne,  
Principal of the Royal Hibernian Academy

### "Walk in our Shoes"

An Exhibition of Multi-Media by the members of The Meeting Place

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March - Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April

Opening Reception: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2-4pm

Closing Afternoon Tea: Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2-4pm

The Meeting Place was founded to bring our Older People together and break their isolation which is all too common in today’s society. It began in September 2011 and soon developed into a group of 19 friends whose creative talent emerged under the guidance of Denis Dunne.

Growing in strength and confidence this very special group of Older People stepped outside their comfort zone and embarked on a variety of creative activities which included Ceramics, Photography and mixed media art. They had a fantastic showcase of this work at their ‘Young at Art’ exhibition opened by Niamh McNally from the National Gallery of Ireland in May 2012.



*Lady Sitting in a Garden*

To ensure their creative juices kept flowing, every couple of weeks there was a break for Sing Songs, Bingo and the like. Now this group of friends from Loughlinstown, Dun Laoghaire, Sallynoggin and Glenageary have gone to a new level of creativity and will showcase a whole new range of work. Again under the tutorage of their Artistic Director Denis Dunne, the group will display tremendous works of Ceramics, Photography and Art. For us Volunteers it really is an honor and privilege to join this group of Older People each week.

Walk in our shoes is very symbolic of the journey of life but also the journey that the groups have taken together in revealing their artistic and creative skills. The body of work is an exploration of the self, it includes self portraits, silhouettes, and ceramics, all work are made individually then brought together in an inspirational body of work, the journey continues..

Opening Reception: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2-4pm, Closing  
Afternoon tea: Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2-4pm

## Mermaid

### Open Submission Exhibition 2013

Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre is delighted to invite submissions from artists who are living in, working in or originally from County Wicklow for a Visual Arts Open Submission Exhibition, to be held in Mermaid's Gallery from 18 April – 23 May 2013. A launch will take place on Thursday 18 April at 6pm.

Mermaid Arts Centre will present €1,000 to the overall winner and two runner-up prizes of €250 each. The exhibition will be selected by Patrick T. Murphy, Director, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. The selector's decision will be final.

The exhibition is open to artists working in all visual art practices including all 2D and 3D work, craft, video and audio works. The deadline for entries is 5pm on Saturday 9 March 2013.

To apply, you can download an application form from Mermaid's Website or email .

Bray Arts welcomes this initiative by Mermaid. It gives – and rightly so – an opportunity to Wicklow based artists to show their work in their own county arts centre. It also gives the public a chance to view the work of local artists. We hope this will be a great success and will lead to many more such endeavours.

<http://www.mermaidartscentre.ie/>

## The Voice of Ireland



Eoin Dixon Murphy

Well done, Eoin, for getting into the mix with your great performances at The Voice of Ireland competition. Not going further at this stage, but you have youth and talent on your side, should you wish to go again.



Front Cover  
*Still Life on Wooden Table*  
by Dave Flynn

Exhibiting at Signal Arts see pg 7

## Bray Arts Night Mon Mar 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

Martello, Seafront, Bray Doors Open 8:00pm Adm: €5 /€4 conc. Everyone welcome.

**Stephen Cloak, Singer/Songwriter** will perform his own compositions, accompanied by his brother Niall Cloak on violin.

**John Ivory, Photographer** will present his own unique view of the world around him

**Liz McManus, Novelist and Short Fiction Writer**, will share her experiences in writing and introduce her latest novel *The Dissappeared*

**HughGrass – Five piece Blues Band** will celebrate their interest in Irish and American music and their love of harmonising. Old-time Bluegrass/Country/Folk.

More on Bray Arts on facebook and [www.brayarts.net](http://www.brayarts.net). Information 2864623

### 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 to :

Editor Bray Arts Journal  
'Casino', Killarney Rd., Bray,  
Co. Wicklow

Text in Microsoft Word  
Pictures/Logos etc Jpeg preferably 300 dpi

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