
Bray Arts Journal

Issue 1

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Portrait of Grandmother by Holly Pereira

Slán Leat Maureen

Galway's gain is Bray's loss. Unfortunately for Bray and specifically Mermaid Arts Centre, Maureen Kennelly is off to Galway to pursue post graduate studies in Literature and Publishing in Galway University. Maureen Kennelly made a difference in Bray. She and her team in Mermaid have created a cultural hub that has engaged the community and engendered a palpable sense of pride in the range and variety of activities in this vibrant centre. Bray Arts extends its warmest wishes to Maureen in her future endeavours and since she is donning the robes of a scholar we cannot say better than the unknown bard who wrote:

Aoibhinn beatha an scoláire
bhíos ag déanamh a leighinn;
is follas díbh, a dhaoine
gurbh dó is aoibhne in Éireann

Sweet is the scholar's life,
busy about her studies
the sweetest lot in Ireland
as all of you know well

PREVIEW OF SEPTEMBER ARTS EVENING

8pm Sept 8, Heather House Hotel, Adm. 5 Euro / 4 Euro
Poetry

We welcome back **Shed Poets** with their latest anthology of poetry called **Tidings**. This is their third collection and like its predecessors is modestly but beautifully produced with the consistent high quality content that one expects from Shed Poets.



ART : Holly Pereira's work investigates cultural stereotypes, migration and intercultural interaction through a range of media, including painting, drawing, installation, video and sound. Holly is also a musician and singer. Currently she has been developing a series of portraits of her female ancestors, as she traces their migration from Portugal to South East Asia, Australia and Ireland.

Music: A very big welcome back to **Jimmy Cullen**. Jimmy performed in Bray Arts in Oct 2006 and was very warmly received by the audience. He played the Mandolin, Tin Whistle, Guitar and sang. Jimmy will, no doubt, give us a taster from his new album released on June 27th 2008. "Messed Up," a track from that album was selected for release on Acoustika Vol 11 compilation album in America.



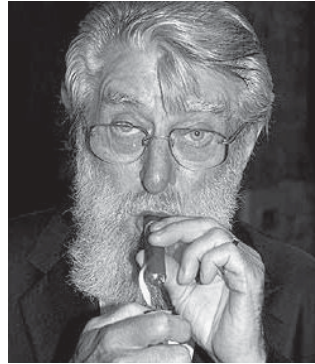
North Wicklow Singer's Circle was formed last April, to promote the ancient art of Impromptu Singing. We meet

the third Saturday of every month in the very suitable atmosphere of the back lounge in The Strand Hotel, Seafront, Bray at 9.30pm.

There is no 'standard' set, no unacceptable genres, no cover charge, no microphone, and listeners are very welcome!

Dates for the diary are: October 18, November 15 & December 20. Contact : Alan Stout, 286 5553 / 087-229 5489

RONNIE DREW (1935 - 2008)



Ronnie Drew has passed on but his songs will remain with us!

Sadly, Ronnie Drew passed away on Saturday 16. of August, 2008. His death was unexpected and he will be greatly missed by all who care about the arts and folk music.

Ronnie supported the Bray arts club when he generously made a guest appearance and enthralled his listeners with readings from the works of James Joyce.

He moved to Greystones and lived quietly and unobtrusively there. He kept in touch with local activities and supported many artistic initiatives including the Senior Citizens Information Card produced by community groups to assist senior citizens to keep in touch with social, practical and fun events. Ronnie also supported the activities of the young by contributing his unique singing to the recording of the "Magic of Christmas" released by the choir of Saint Cronan's Boys' National School, Bray.

Ronnie Drew and his friends in the Dubliners broke the mould. Launching themselves on the music scene in the early sixties, he gave the humble ballad a voice of strength and asserted that ordinary people had something to say about life. By the mid seventies Ronnie's gravelly voice could be heard all over Europe and the United states. At home, the Dubliners echoed the desire of all free thinking young people in the sixties and early seventies to break free of the old formal ways of compliance and gave an insight into the bohemian world of Baggot street, the canals and the world which Patrick Kavanagh portrays so poignantly in his poems.

Even though he was seriously ill with cancer, his good humour and dry wit prevailed right up to his last breath. His impact was enormous. He had an extraordinary basso voice that nobody else could imitate. He was such a strong character but he never used his strength over anyone else. Modest even about his own guitar playing and his own singing he was loved by all who came near him. Earlier this year, many well-known Irish musicians came together to record the "Ballad of Ronnie Drew" which now stands as a powerful tribute to him that will ensure that he will never be forgotten.

Cearbhall O'Meadhra

BRAY ARTS EVENING MONDAY JUNE 9TH 2008

Review by Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra

It was a gloriously sunny day on Monday the 9th of June. As I made my way along the seafront to the Martello Hotel for the Bray Arts final meeting of the season, I felt sure that we would have poor attendance on account of the fine weather. I was surprised by the buzz of excitement in the room as I entered. It was clear that there were more people in the room than the Bray Arts had seen for a long time. The humour was bright and cheerful and the room beautifully decorated by Una McCabe. I noticed quite a few women in long dresses and wondered what was going on.

The first presentation was given by Kerensa D'Arcy-Barr who is a painter. This painter was different. She had started painting as a wife in South Africa who decided to draw the wonderful scenes of nature that surrounded her in the Jungle. She set up her drawing table and was immediately surrounded by children clamouring to have a go. She then brought more crayons, chinks and charcoal so that all could have a go. She moved with her husband to many exotic parts of the world and recorded images of her experiences in oils, watercolour and photography. Her descriptions were so entertaining that I was captivated and felt drawn into her world. Back in Bray for good, she now paints abstract forms using fabrics paper and gemstones to generate unusual patterns in the drying medium of the painting which she then enhances in a variety of ways.

Next up was a famous DVD of our own Gladys Sheehan called "*Would you believe*". This DVD was first shown on RTE television to loud acclaim. It proved to be a powerful documentary of a remarkable woman. Dedicated to theatre and to drawing children into the world of performing arts over the past 40 years Gladys said, "if I retired what would I do? I'd only grow old!" She is now 89 and has had a hard life with many difficulties that tested her and which she rode with unstinting energy and resolve. She had one son who was deaf and a daughter with downs syndrome. Gladys did not see their condition as a disability; only a way of being. The audience laughed and sighed with



Karena & Gladys

all her triumphs and trials and above all her good humour and clever wit. The DVD closed to thunderous applause and pride in a great person who knows how to live life to the full.

Zan O'Loughlin presided in her usual charming style and called the meeting to order after a short break to deal with the serious matter of the AGM of Bray Arts. Generous to a fault, she ensured that the AGM passed as quickly as pos-

sible. The audience applauded the work of the outgoing committee and promptly urged them to go back and do more for the coming year.

Back to the show! The second half opened to the exotic strains of Eastern music pre-recorded but beautifully performed. On the stage were six exotic females forms draped



from head to toe with bare midriffs dancing an enthralling movement fit for an Arab sheik. This was **Indiivara** led by Deirdre Fitzgerald and featuring Mary Mippichip, Ailish Farragher, Natalie Price, Valerie McDonald, and Florence Danbricourt. The audience loved their graceful movement, beauty and colourful costumes. There were dances from Turkey, India, the heart of Africa and even some Flamenco from Spain. They were cheered and applauded loudly as they slipped away from the stage.

The final act put the lid on a magnificent evening. We were introduced to the Song Circle of Windgates. The singers were Anna Felton (leader), Tessa Van Ebden, Fionnuala Griffin, Nicola Reeves, Anne O'Loughlin, Eleanor Dawson, Natalie Carnec, Mary White, Rose Seymour and Judy Wyley. The group gave an outstanding performance of unaccompanied singing in close harmony. They insisted on audience participation declaring that the music lives through the audience and needed everyone to participate. The whole audience willingly joined in and raised the roof! The Song Circle brought songs from Africa and the middle East. Their singing inspired one of the dancers to accompany them in a spontaneous performance of an exotic Eastern dance.



This was one of the best evenings in Bray Arts and a fitting close to the season. We look forward to further exciting performances in the Autumn.

The Overwhelmed Samaritan by Paul Allen

(From *Ground Forces*, Cliffs of Moher, Salmon, 2008)

Not everybody is born, but everybody does die. You don't have to be a doctor to give the prognosis of every cancer, bullet wound, hangnail, toe-fungus, hemorrhoid, or mid-air collision: Terminal. Every person—named, unnamed—is terminal. What if you make fun of the faggot cook at Waffle House? Mid-laugh, pre-asshole-comment to impress your friends—what if some inner voice told you, clearly and irrefutably, “He’s terminal. He’s trying to work one more night, but he’s dying right now.” Might you not swallow your joke with the bite of hash browns you’re holding? The bitch at the light in her fucking Land Rover chatting on her cell—ok, there’s an ichthys on her tailgate and a Bush/Cheney sticker on her bumper, but still...she’s trying to make one last call before she dies. Is your horn that necessary? Get them to the hospital immediately.

But on the corner are two others in such shape. And one on the opposite corner. They’ve been beaten badly. Their injuries don’t show, all internal. They are not going to make it. Pick them up. Get them some help. Pray for them, pay for them. And your mother, your children, your hairdresser, the guy who’s trying to help you adjust. On your way to the hospital, stop at City Hall; the mayor you didn’t vote for is dying. While you’re at it, load up his staff. Hurry. Hurry. They’re all dying. You might not be in time.

Be prepared, though: Everyone’s a TV, a car engine, an air conditioner. Get us in, wait with us, then when the doctor says, “I can’t find anything,” it’s up to you to convince him that he’s missing it. You can hear it in their breathing or their laugh. “I don’t hear anything.” You don’t have time to argue; tell him to run another test. Your watch ticks off minutes. Tell him that your car is filled with such cases, they’ve been violently attacked, and you’re going back out to get more when you’ve unloaded those. Darfur, drive-by shootings, lepers in Bangladesh, flyers off the twin towers—no more dying, these, than the boy behind the cash register at The Dollar Store or the girl after school running laps.

As you leave to go get more, and the automatic door hisses open, turn back to the Doc. Tell him to get help but not to set up a triage—there’s just the one category. And tell him that this is spreading. Tell him to give himself a check-up while he’s at it, and put it on your tab.

Ground Forces is about brokenness – brokenness and, with richly explored theological implications, everything in the broken world, the fallen world. The voice of these poems is wildly funny, often profane (and sometimes that profanity is ironic and sometimes it’s pure rage) but always exact, smart, self-aware, and driven to a song like nothing else I know in contemporary poetry. **Andrew Hudgins**

*In writing **Ground Forces** Paul Allen enters with terrific energy into the tradition of the mystic poets: In a poetry by turns ecstatic, searching, and raw, Allen examines the religious experience found in the everyday trials of living. Perhaps it’s an osprey on a high-power line fringed with light, or the boy hitchhiker with a bad tooth that most shy away from, or the alcoholic undertaker who pieces together the suicide’s skull. What we learn from Allen is how each of these “least of these” enhances and tests our own humanity. It’s brave work he’s done for us here.*

*Carol Ann Davis, author of **Psalm**, editor of **Crazyhorse***



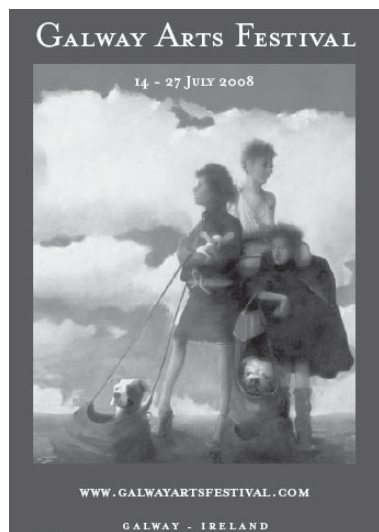
Paul Allen will be in Ireland in early October to promote *Ground Forces* amongst other things. We are delighted to say we will see and hear the man himself at our Bray Arts Evening on Oct 6th.

VISITING GALWAY AT ARTS FESTIVAL TIME

by Eugene Hearne

Glimmering shapes reflected on the curtains. The moon seemed to have fallen into the canal. I wondered if anyone would have noticed. It was Arts Festival time in Galway. Connemara landscapes were coming out of the walls. Not a sheep in sight...and what had they done with all the dogs? A few furtive cats bent themselves around doorways, as if they were made of some kind of plasticine that required constant kneading.

Giant inflatable humanoid figures lay on the ground in the booking office, as if they had been floored by the prices. Periodically they tried to get up, only to fall back defeated. Close up, these Max Streicher creations



were deceptively complex structures. The blow-up white horses seemed to be trying to flee up the stairs. Were they running away from Joni Mitchell's paintings or Bill Viola's videos, or trying to get to the exhibition upstairs?

The video of the little choir, with its choreographed cheerfulness, was particularly touching, but maybe that's a personal thing. The main work: *The Passing*, about his mother's death was strangely

reminiscent of Arthur C. Clarke's 2001. The kind of fish-eye view of birth and other familiar scenes, the shots where you felt surrounded by water echoed the way the music wrapped itself around you in the film. The dying woman's breathing was strongly reminiscent of Hal the computer's eerie voice. In another short a man with a rifle seemed dwarfed by the urban landscape, as if he had landed in a city on Jupiter. He loosed off a few shots into the air. The first echoed noisily but the next seemed to be followed by an electrical storm as if to ridicule his puny efforts further. The almost emptiness of the streets added to the sense of dislocation. The credits said the works had been funded by...x and x. For all its glossy image, the artists uneasy relationship with money was a presence in the fest, hinted at perhaps by the exquisite juxtaposition of "bill", and "viola".

Joni Mitchell's lyrics did more for me than her visual work, but they are a protest against war so who will argue. But I didn't want to think, I wanted to see. I made my way to the Aula Maxima at NUI Galway. All the doors were open, suggesting there was an exhibition in every room. Through the first door I tried I found myself in an empty meeting room. A more hopeful looking entrance on the opposite side of the square led to - the Accounts Dept. Oh well, universities have to make money. In a dark basement videos played, and a dog barked outside...or was it on the sound track? It flipped eerily from one to the other. Upstairs I happened on an exhibition of Depression

era photos, and a piece of luck 'Contempo', a classical music ensemble rehearsing in the room. Cello, violin, viola, flute and piano. The sound was to...for, and the music took the Depression out of the photos. I had one of those Sunday morning moments, you know - 'I must get that book, music or whatever'. And no, I haven't got it. But I got it then, and that was wonderful. There was something in the faces in the photos that was not depression, something unquenchable. Maybe they had raised their game a little for the camera—but isn't that saying the same thing? A strange electric blue object, a sort of take-off of Liverpool cathedral seemed to have landed in one of the fields beside the river, a brand new venue. People lined the bridge to listen from outside, in a kind of inversion of a talent show.

To say the river in Galway is misleading, as there is water everywhere. It runs over weirs, shimmers down stone slopes, seems to emerge from under people's living rooms and disappear again into restaurants. At last it collides with the sea in a great sheet of hammered silver, like something that might have been touched by Midas before he gave way to the greed. Beyond, the wonder of Galway Bay appears with the lunar landscape of Co Clare rising on the other side. But that's another day's work.

Like one of the metal shavings in Bill Viola's scrapyards I'm drawn to the bustling life of the streets, the hucksters, artists and musicians. A guy sporting braces and sun hat does card tricks, chattering all the while in an Australian accent. His movements are slick and you instinctively feel for your wallet. Another man stands hopefully beside some paintings, but the competition is hot. Perhaps he's picked a bad time.

A friendly looking character sits and plaits balloons for impatient children. He pumps them with a device which he takes from his pocket. I wonder what other gadgets he carries about him. Is he a fan of the clockwork radio perhaps? Given the original cost of the balloons you think he must be making a good profit, but one look at the happy face of a child, as he heads away with his sausage-shaped cat makes it look like worthwhile commerce. Further up the street a little girl with a Spiderperson face paint job passes by. Who's going to put her to bed? I don't envy them the job. I wandered into one small un-hyped exhibition, which I enjoyed. On being offered a glass of wine or tea I realized I had stumbled on the opening. The artist was easy to pick out. In the midst of all the determined seriousness of the art scene with its frantic quest for originality, the idea that there is a stereotypical artist look added a touch of levity.

As to what I didn't see in this line-up of world class artists and entertainers, there is the wonderful promise that next year's will be even better.

The big parade starts late for children—10pm. It's a skilled creation of complete unreality, if such is possible. Just how do you un-reality? Large children regress to adulthood to see that small ones aren't trampled. Small children leap up onto shoulders in one sweeping movement, brushing aside this feat to stare goggle-eyed at the real wonders. What will pass through these tiny minds when they go to bed? The moon falling into the canal might be just the pipe-opener.

My Father was a Humble Man

By Billy Mooney

My Father was a humble Man
He never got what was due
In fact He got a terrible punishment
And left this earth at Fifty Two

He liked the simple things in life
He never bragged or boasted or deceived his Wife
Always letting others take the cake
Why did he die, Oh what a terrible Mistake

He was quite famous in his day
But always let others pave the way
In the background all the time
They used his name, the swine

At the end of his life on earth
He left his Wife, He had proved his worth
A change of religion, a change of Heart
He had found the answer from the start

He died a convert I'm glad to say
Straight to heaven, He paved the way
Of all the memories that are left behind
His so called friends they don't mind

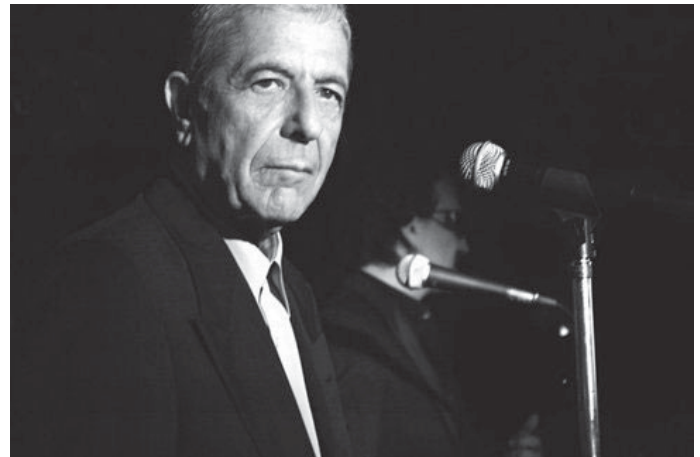
They're convinced they know it all
Not to me though, they are really small
To hell with them and their stupid grudge
One day too, they will face the judge

My Father died at ten forty five at night
A pitiful, brave and wasted sight
I say to you and your'e so called answer
Try Living with Terminal Cancer

LEONARD COHEN LIVE AT THE RHK.

By Shane Harrison

It's about thirty years since I first saw Leonard Cohen live when he played Dublin's National Stadium in the mid seventies. I went backstage afterwards to see the great man. Patiently, he saw us all and signed my P and T wageslip, the first and only autograph I've ever hunted. Only right, therefore, that I should find myself in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, for what could be his last Irish concert. God knows, he was no spring chicken then but, when I think about it, I am older now than he was then.



Cohen's music chimed with my youth, not with the super-heated, rock and roll part which might have scorned such introspection, but with another, altogether more complex soul. I've grown up but so has Cohen, in fact the most magnetic feature of his music is that it is never still but shadows the changes in his life and times.

A common dismissal of Cohen is that he is 'depressing', that he groans lovesick dirges for hopeless romantics. It's like characterising Yeats as a writer of poems about fairies. The problem his detractors have is that they can't understand a body of work complex enough to embody sex, love, friendship and intelligence. The Rock and the Folk idioms are inclined towards slogans, the simple expressions of youthful love and the linear ballad. I'm not knocking that, and granted the music of Springsteen, Dylan, the Stones, the Kinks and the Doors (and many more besides) is brilliant and essential. But Cohen takes his expression into more personal areas, not just in exposing his own personal history and psyche, but in the way his songs infiltrate the minds of the listener.

Not rock and roll then? Well, that's another argument, I see Cohen in a similar vein to Frank Zappa, Steely Dan, Talking Heads and Patti Smith: a troubadour of the zeitgeist, a writer who can be weird and wonderful and, crucially, accessible. Yet he can achieve this on a level that is uniquely personal. Cohen's songs belong to the listener, they are theme tracks for the lives we're leading.

Perhaps Cohen's detractors prefer the simplistic, the hedonistic notion of pleasure without consequence, or they opt for the sterile opposite - the political over the personal; or they simply have no soul. Fair enough, you can't

VIDEO VOYEUR

Harold Chassen

After several years of mediocre films the James Bond franchise has hit a winner with Casino Royale. This film has a storyline and relies less on gimmicks, explosions and car chases of the past few films. Some are still there, but they are more of the storyline than relying on them to push the



film forward. Daniel Craig is the most believable Bond for a long time and puts in a great performance. The plot revolves on the premise that Bond has just been given his 00 status and is on his first few assignments. Bond girls are still prominent but they seem to blend into the story rather than being shoved in as eye candy. I look forward to seeing the next film in the franchise with relish and hope I won't be saying "Oh not another Bond film."

win them all. For those that like music with depth and poetry, with an unresolved cauldron of love, lust and loss, then an evening with Lenny holds a lot of promise. So, there I am on the lawn of the RHK, with a beer and a woman and a shady past, waiting for a break in the clouds and the last coming of the man from Montreal. There are several thousand others, many pessimistically attired in blue raincoats, and as I would later discover, groups of freeloaders outside the walls at the Patriot and the Hilton, letting the music drift to them on the heavy air. Well, it rained, several times, but that was no dampener. Down in the Leonard Cohen mosh pit we can deal with the mud and the bumps. Meanwhile, the band are dressed to the nines in the latest mafiosa chic and Leonard doffs his fedora after each number to thank his audience, his backing musicians and 'the sublime Webb sisters'. The repertoire has changed in thirty years and only So Long Marianne, Bird on a Wire and Suzanne make it to the new century. But Cohen's secret is that he persists in writing damn good songs. Hallelujah is an all time classic as are Everybody Knows and I'm Your Man. Cohen has progressed past his seminal folk song idiom towards a more jazz rock feel with those deep tones the obvious constant, underlined by the self-deprecating lyrics. So, there's a major cheer for the line from Tower of Song: 'I was born like this, I had no choice, I was born with the gift of a golden voice.' Here, as evidenced elsewhere in the set, is the thing that sets Cohen apart from his caricature - he's so funny. It's the humour of his own warmth and the appreciation of human frailty, mostly his own.

Despite the rain there's no Famous Blue Raincoat, and Sisters of Mercy and Chelsea Hotel are also missed, but the repertoire is big enough to fill two hours plus. Over an extended encore things go more upbeat and we get First We'll Take Manhattan and later, the country twang of Closing Time appropriately ending the set. The sullen skies clear and its time to go, not that we want to. I hope we'll hear more from Leonard Cohen in the coming years, true artist that he is he's still writing to the top of his form.

SIGNAL ARTS UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

TRANSITIONS

Multi-Media Exhibition by Fiona O'Connor
From Tue 2nd Sept to Sun 14th Sept



Transition is the upcoming exhibition of a selection of work by Wexford based artist Fiona O'Connor.

Fiona's practice trades in the pathos of the overlooked: those ephemeral and somewhat immaterial ideas and occurrences that can occupy a space in the periphery of our thoughts, actions and vision. Her work invites the viewer into the curiosities that surround our existence.

Opening Reception: Fri 5th Sept 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

A YEAR IN BRAY

An Exhibition of Paintings by Raymond Osborn
From Tue 16th Sept to Sun 28th Sept

His preferred medium is watercolour, which he likes for its unpredictability and the 'happy accidents' which occur in most paintings, and his technical ability to fully exploit the



vibrancy and immediacy of the medium, together with his accomplished draughtsmanship combine to produce work which is both atmospheric and accessible. However, he is

equally proficient in acrylic and pastel. In all of his work his design background is apparent, enabling him to realistically capture the most complex subjects. His technical ability with watercolour gives him the confidence to fully exploit the vibrancy of this most exciting medium, producing light filled paintings full of mood and atmosphere. This exhibition consists of a series of urban landscapes of Bray based on a one year time line. Raymond lived in Bray for 12 years and was very aware of how in a seaside resort the contrast between winter and summer is so much greater than in other towns.

Opening Reception: Thur 18th Sept 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

TOPOPHILIA

Installation and Prints Exhibition by Pat Burnes
From Tues 30th Sept to Sun 12th Oct

Topophilia, "love of place". Artist Pat Burnes continues her perspectives on hometown Bray in her second solo exhibition at Signal Arts Centre.

Once again, Burnes references the traditions of artmaking through print, employing both relief and intaglio. Burnes expands on her paper sculptures, drawing from them individually to create new realities in print.

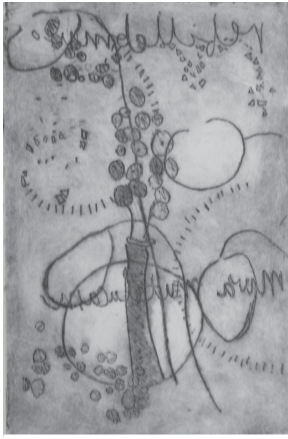
The raw material for the sculptures is the local newspaper *The Bray People*. The newspaper in itself details the



history of Bray, it's layers of life, it's past, it's future. The layers of everyday Bray mirror the sedimentary layers inherent in the geography and history of the cliffs of Bray Head that are visually expressed in Burnes' sculptures and prints.

Opening Reception: Fri 3rd Oct 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

SYLVIA HILL



Cuckoo

Exhibition of paintings and Prints at the Crow gallery, Temple bar from 28th Sept till the 12th of Oct . Sylvia lives on a mountain in Co. Wicklow surrounded by nature, 2 young children and her husband Neil. She is dedicating this show to her mother- Patricia, who died last October. 10% of the proceeds will go to The Irish Heart foundation.

Submission Guidelines

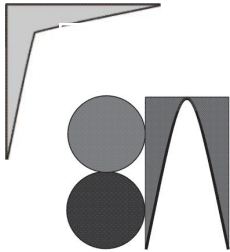
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Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald : afitzgerald3@ireland.com

Email submissions to any of the above or post typed submissions to

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Killarney Rd. Bray,
Co. Wicklow
Visual material: Contact editor
Deadline 15th of each month.

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*Arts Evening Monday 8th Sept
at the Heather House Hotel Strand Road 8:00 pm
5 Euro / 4 Euro Conc. Everyone is welcome.*

Shed Poets : Reading from their latest compilation *Tidings*

Holly Peirera : Talks about and shows her inspirational Art

Jimmy Cullen : Singer/Songwriter

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