

Telling Images

An Exhibition of Paintings by Peter Burns and Mary Noonan

From April 17th to May 8th Claremorris Gallery will present *Telling Images*, A Selection of Paintings by Peter Burns and Mary Noonan.

A preoccupation with narrative runs through the work of both Mary Noonan and Peter Burns. Mary Noonan's paintings relate to orally transmitted Irish folktales which have transcended generations and crept into the Irish collective unconscious. She has playfully explored the etymology of the tales that have become richly overlaid in their retelling. The artist's often sinister images frequently feature children and animals in incongruous situations and relate to the notion of the Changeling, prevalent in Irish folklore.

The artist's images are telling in form as well as in content. Noonan's highly textured pieces push the boundaries of the often saccharin watercolour medium. The dark stories which relay disturbing or uncomfortable subject matter are rendered by the artist with deft subtlety. The materials and processes that Noonan uses such as tearing and cutting the paper become the visual onomatopoeia for psychological aspects of uncovered narrative.

Peter Burn's approaches narrative in more epic terms. His heavily textured paintings allude to Biblical stories, art history, literature and music. Burns uses a variety of techniques to enliven the surfaces of the paintings. Chunks of old dried paint from the pallet are attached to the canvas in places, while on other parts of the canvas paint is scraped off revealing underlying layers. A woman sits hunched beneath a tree made of an old paint rag. The underworld into which Orpheus descends is the pocket in an old pair of jeans. A man with a telescope looks to the heavens. The milky way is paint flicked on from the brush.

Art critic Aidan Dunne maintains that 'While the paintings are almost sculptural in the rugged density of their textures, Burns has a light touch. His *Young tiger hunting wildfowl is a case in point*, a radiant fantasy that has a touch of magic about it [...] There's real elegance to what he does, just as his inclination towards heightened colour doesn't contradict the fact that he has really good colour sense.'

Telling Images will run at Claremorris Gallery from April 17th to May 8th.
Gallery Hours: Wed – Sat 1pm – 6pm

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