

BlueLeaf Gallery

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BlueLeaf Gallery at Art Chicago:
Marty Kelly, Tom Climent, Oisín Byrne and Sean Hillen

30 April – 3 May 2010

BlueLeaf Gallery is pleased to announce its participation at Art Chicago 30 April-3 May 2010 exhibiting works by Marty Kelly, Tom Climent, Oisín Byrne and Sean Hillen. These Irish artists recently participated in a major international exhibition of work by Irish and New York artists presented by BlueLeaf Unlimited in Dublin.

Marty Kelly's new body of work addresses the impact on the human spirit of those living in regions of conflict, chaos and uncertainty. His paintings exemplify the spiritual strengths of people he encountered during his most recent travels to the Middle East through illuminated portrayals on a magnified scale. Evolving from small intimate formats, Kelly has turned to over-sized canvases to project his portraits of vaporous faces that emerge from dark voids. These portraits are not intended to be vestiges of chaos, rather they reflect the essence of the human spirit that remains intact despite dire circumstances. Marty Kelly was born in 1979 in Carndonagh, County Donegal, and studied at Ulster University, Belfast. Since 2009 he has worked from his studio in Barcelona. Kelly's work is exhibited in London, Ireland and Barcelona.

Tom Climent's recent paintings explore properties of built forms in the context of light and colour with the intent of introducing a "sacred space embodied in the landscape." Irish writer Deirdre Purcell describes Climent's work as having "evolved from the more abstract end of landscape depiction towards a mystical worldscape containing recognizable architectural shapes, spires, churches and towers, seen to be almost floating as though detached from the bonds of earth". Climent explores these elements in grand-scale works as well as in small compositional formats. Born in 1970 in Cork city, Climent abandoned engineering studies to devote himself to art full-time. He studied at the Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork and has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Victor Treacy Award in 1996, as well as the Tony O'Malley Award. His work has been widely exhibited in several leading Irish galleries. Tom Climent is based in Cork and shares his time working in his studio in Spain.

Oisín Byrne's practice is international in both exhibition and production. Byrne uses various media to suit his projects. His practice has incorporated film, photography, performance, installation and painting. In reviewing Byrne's work Irish Times art critic Aidan Dunne has noted: "An art which is the product of play, Oisín Byrne's 'chilled, blissed-out vision' is tempered with humour and lightness and takes influence from varied eastern perspectives and cultural traditions." An installation of the artist's fantastical origami constructions will be presented at Art Chicago. Byrne has become known for working with paper, making large scale origami installations, giant back-lit pinprick drawings, maps of the visible universe humbly pierced into a cardboard box and paper ball gowns for performance projects for film and photography. His work has been described by Padraic E Moore, curator of the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, as "being distinguishable by a rigorous, almost obsessive but meditative production process." Byrne has collaborated with astrophysicists, fashion designers, micro-sound composers and cinematographers. Oisín Byrne was born and lives in Dublin. He has worked in Montreal, Paris, LA and most recently New York. He will be working from a studio in Tokyo later this year.

Sean Hillen is known internationally for his powerful series of small-dimensional photomontages in which he reconstructs elements of political, religious, social and economic periods and events from Ireland's history to present witty assemblages of contradictions. Hillen was born in 1961 in Newry, County Down, Northern Ireland. He was eight when the troubles erupted in 1968-69 and grew up witnessing the turmoil of that period. His 'Troubles' 1983-1993 series piece together imagery such as the Virgin Mary appearing above a British Army patrol, watchtowers in Piccadilly Circus, masked militants of the Irish National Liberation Army parading alongside the Queen's mounted guard and London buses in Newry. On two occasions in the past exhibitions of this work in London were censored; the Imperial War Museum, London has since acquired works from this series for its permanent collection. Responding to the process and concept of these works Soko Phay-Vakalis, art critic and associate professor at the department of fine arts of Paris 8 University, has

noted that Hillen “transcends and subverts the traditional tool of propaganda in order better to reveal the complexity of history, which cannot be understood in any Manichean manner. His plays on meaning, half-subversive, half-surreal, display in the end the fragility of the human condition faced with the traumas of history.” Fintan O’Toole, Irish Times assistant editor and author, has written: “Hillen has visualized contradictions by splicing together the mythic and the mundane, hilarity and horror, the local and the global, vitality and violence. What his work most emphatically is not is reverential or solemn.” Hillen’s work has been exhibited internationally and is held in major public international collections.

BlueLeaf Gallery gratefully acknowledges support from Culture Ireland in its participation at Art Chicago 2010.

Further information:

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