

# BUTLER ■ GALLERY

## David Godbold

*The end of the beginning of the beginning of the end*

August 8 – October 4, 2009

The Butler Gallery is pleased to present *The end of the beginning of the beginning of the end*, an exhibition curated for the Kilkenny Arts Festival featuring one hundred and twenty works from 1999 to the present, by internationally acclaimed artist, David Godbold.

Godbold is an artist of great accomplishment – skilful in both drawing and painting with a keen intelligence; he makes work that is irreverent and thought provoking yet ultimately beautiful. Using found drawings and texts of unknown authorship, Godbold's layered drawings employ appropriated images with ease and flair as an underlying foundation on which to add his own renderings and texts. This graphic matchmaking produces some unforgettable results, all of which form bold and iconoclastic commentaries on the philosophical struggle with daily life.

Despite being a non-believer, Godbold delights in the use of religious iconography. In this exhibition, he includes a wall of singular works featuring a proliferation of holy crosses that hammer out disconcerting and challenging theological debates. Godbold's sources are diverse and range from philosophy to popular culture where he takes perverse pleasure in elevating the lowest of sources, in both his images and texts, to apparent philosophical significance.

*Every evening I plan to enjoy the sunrise, and each morning I fail to get up*, is the nocturnal version of a painting entitled *100,000,000 Angels Singing*. A castle is perched on a hill in the distance, surrounded by bucolic countryside by day and by night. These two large canvases, placed opposite each other, offer us an opportunity to conjure up a journey through this fantastical landscape and insert our own narrative.

The exhibition is architecturally cornerstoned by a re-constructed installation of the wall-drawing, neon and text work; *'A little of what we FANCY does us good'* (2000), originally created for PS1, New York. The neon title glows over Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, with a notably interesting text to ponder. New works include a salon hang, or as the artist describes it, a 'cloud bank' of recent paintings and 'black' drawings. On first encounter Godbold's work may look as if it is routed in the antique – with his painstaking adaptations of classical draughtmanship and faux-religious imagery but his employment of found paper materials, texts and subversive detailing reveals a very contemporary devil, only slightly hidden in close-up detail. His recent canvases of pastiche, sublime landscapes frequently reveal talking animals lurking alone in pastures, or television aerials and broadcast masts mounted on churches and fabled mountain-top castles. Generally speaking, things in Godbold's work are rarely as they initially seem and he revels in the quiet and careful subversion of the viewer's expectation.

It is often hard to place the voice of author or narrator, as Godbold uses complex linguistic knots and layers of quotation, all bound up by comic invention, fabrication and misinformation to take the audience on a darkly humourous journey down increasing tight alleys of visual and textual jokes. *Epistemology* asks the question "How do we know what we know?" In *The end of the beginning of the beginning of the end*, David Godbold is ever curious and engaged in seeking out the answers to these fundamental questions with a wit and intelligence that is a constant delight and revelation.

*David Godbold was born in the UK, was educated at Goldsmith's College, London and holds a PhD from the NCAD, Dublin. He moved to Ireland in 1990, from where he has exhibited extensively worldwide, with recent solo exhibitions in Antwerp, Dublin, Hong Kong, Munich and New York. His work is represented by the Kerlin Gallery, Dublin.*

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