

BUTLER ■ GALLERY

Mairead O'hEocha

WHISPER CONCRETE

March 19 – May 1, 2011

The Butler Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition by Dublin based painter Mairead O'hEocha.

In 2004, having spent several years dividing her time between England and Ireland, Mairead O'hEocha settled in Dublin. Trying to find ways to treat the subject of environment and place in Ireland, O'hEocha chose the ahistorical timeline of castles, fields, garages and housing estates in the semi-rural South-East of Ireland. This area became familiar to the artist as she commuted by car between Dublin and Wexford. For her, the backroads seemed to be retreating in time and in tandem with the acceleration of motorway traffic leading to Rosslare. These new motorways which link to the European mainframe had, she says, dramatically reduced the traffic and enhanced a sense of 'stillness' which seemed to be more in harmony with the rhythms of rural life. For O'hEocha and her interest in 'the specifics of place', the parallel existences of these roads afford real sites for questioning what is unique and what is universal.

Her paintings display meticulous balance. They are as aggressively simple in their finish as they are densely layered and precise in their execution. She employs first-hand visual information through notes, drawings and photographs. This process combines: collecting, absorbing, re-cycling and re-arranging. O'hEocha brilliantly mimics the variances of our Irish skies; from the stillness of an unyielding Winter to the unpredictable movement of cumulus clouds. She chooses sites for her paintings that are simple and everyday, yet deliberate and considered. She understands 'local' to be an increasingly abstract term and creates images that convey human feelings of longing and belonging.

The oil paint on flat board shows brushwork and layered decisions with the clarity of an architect's structural plans. Such self-contained and modestly-scaled works have to be experienced in person. To spend time in their presence is to be affected and rewarded, as there are few contemporary Irish paintings that demand attention in the way that O'hEocha's paintings do.

Mairead O'hEocha received a BA from the National College of Art & Design, Dublin in 2000 and an MA from Goldsmiths' College, University of London in 2004. She has exhibited nationally and internationally and was a recipient of an Arts Council Visual Art Award in 2009. Most recently, she exhibited in Armory, New York, a two-person presentation by mother's tankstation gallery with Nina Canell. Solo exhibitions include *Co.Summer*, Angles Gallery, Los Angeles, 2008; *Home Rules*, mother's tankstation, 2007; Group shows include: Hudson Franklin, New York, 2008; *Visual Fictions*, Fenton Gallery, Cork, 2007; *Utopias*, Eigse, Carlow, 2006. She is an assistant lecturer in Visual Art at Wexford Campus School of Art, Carlow IT. Her work will next be seen in a related exhibition at The Douglas Hyde Gallery this June 2011. The artist is represented by mother's tankstation www.mothertankstation.com

WHISPER CONCRETE, the title of this exhibition, describes a type of concrete that is specifically designed to absorb traffic noise.

Many thanks are extended to the private and public lenders to this exhibition. With grateful thanks to the Arts Council for essential annual funding and to the OPW, FÁS, The Heritage Council and Kilkenny Local Authorities for additional assistance.

Butler Gallery, The Castle, Kilkenny, Ireland

t: + 353 56 7761106 f: +353 56 7770031 e: info@butlergallery.com