

Irish Examiner arts reviews

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By Marc O'Sullivan

Art: Nova, CIT Wandesford Quay Gallery, Cork

Nova features new work by members of Cork Printmakers, whose workshop adjoins the gallery at Wandesford Quay. Each piece was hand printed specially for the exhibition, in a range of techniques that include etching, lithography and photo intaglio. The subject matter is more varied again, with different artists experimenting with landscape, figuration and abstraction.

There is a certain conservatism about the work, a reluctance to push the boundaries of the medium, but that aside, it's an impressive review of activities.

The natural world looms large in much of the work. Jo Kelley's is most topical. Her lithograph, *Tropical Storm*, has a terrified woman, dogs and a great black bird, all caught up in a gale of wind, such as we have known these past few weeks, distant and all as we are from the tropics.

Zoe D'Alton's *Harvest Moon* is more sedate, an etching of round bales of hay in a field at night, while Nikki Tait's woodcut, *West Cork Estuary*, has cormorants drying their wings on the rocks. Both belong firmly in the tradition of Irish landscape lyricism. Jessie Malone's lino block *Couldn't Give A Hoot* is more dramatic: a bloodthirsty-looking owl bursting into the viewer's vision.

More of the works are playful. Sean Hanrahan's *Moth* features the circular flag employed on British war planes, transposed to the outspread wings of its subject; Helen O'Keeffe's *Lollipop Trees — Forest* is a gleefully garish work; while Gary Dempsey's *Untitled* has a hairy big toe protruding on the bottom left of an otherwise abstract image.

There are just two works in the gallery vaults. Noelle Noonan's *Hideout* is an archival pigment print of a wigwam with trees in the background, a mysterious image that suggests children's games or the more adult activity of eluding the authorities.

Conall Cary's *Miles To Go Before I Sleep* is more nihilistic, an image of a man falling backwards through space. It recalls Max Beckmann's depiction of human helplessness and terror in his iconic painting, *Falling Man*.

* Nova runs until Jan 11.

Star Rating: 4/5