

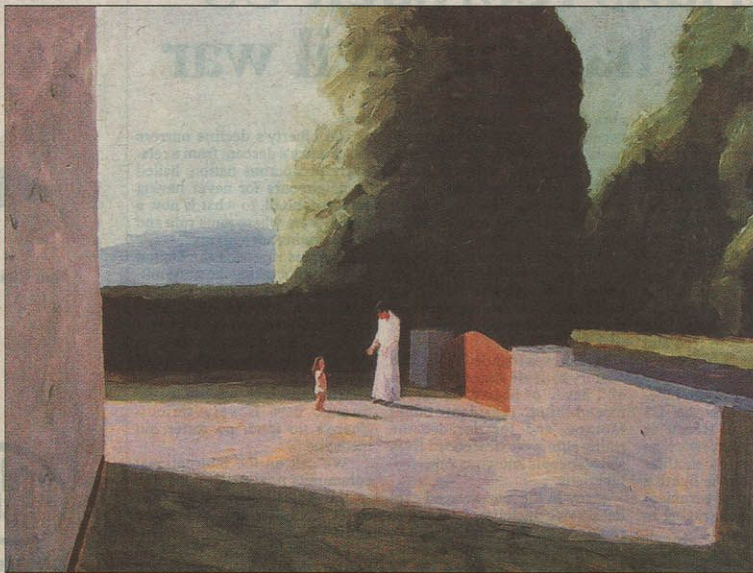
Reviewed

Charlie Whisker: Elected Silence, Solomon Gallery, Dublin, ended on Wednesday (01-6794237)

Brian Bourke: Women Giving Birth To Men, Taylor Galleries, Dublin, ended on Saturday (01-6766055)

David Quinn: The Far Garden, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin, ends tomorrow (01-8740064)

Christine Bowen & Mark Adlington: From The Waters And The Wild, Origin Gallery, Dublin, ends on July 4th (01-4785159)



**Spare domain:
Garden Gate by
David Quinn**

which feature multiples of the show's central, startling image. This is of a stylised, wooden-doll-like female head and torso in the process of giving birth to a mature male, only the head of which is visible. Visible and looking, variously, bemused, irritable, weary, strained and surprised. By contrast the woman looks serene and untroubled. It is a strange image, allowing a fair degree of interpretative scope.

Although restricting himself to a severely repetitive format, Bourke has been exceptionally inventive in terms of pattern and colour, which is unusually

bold, extending into fluorescent pigments. This applies individually, piece by piece, and to the work as a whole, an all-encompassing environment that is endlessly engaging for the eye. A series of related polychrome wooden sculptures are striking totems. Not for the first time, Bourke has made something remarkable and idiosyncratic.

In *The Far Garden*, David Quinn conjures up a world in which spaces and objects have an enhanced presence and clarity. The paintings describe a spare domain of rural domesticity, usually

crisply defined by strong evening light. A cat sits on a chair, a mother holds her arms out for her child, a figure lingers. The spaces are comfortable, and the scenes without figures invite our habitation. Forms are simplified and blocky, as in Edward Hopper's paintings.

Where Hopper became adept at conveying the estrangement of urban living, and where a painter like Martin Gale captures aspects of the hardness and anxieties of contemporary rural Ireland, Quinn, who is based in Co Mayo, steers clear of dark undertones. There is a note of yearning in the show's title, and although there is an air of mystery to the images there is nothing essentially sinister. So much so, in fact, that they could easily come across as facile and sentimental, but somehow that doesn't happen. They are affirmative but also curiously detached and objective, icily precise.

Christine Bowen and Mark Adlington share the Origin Gallery for *From The Waters And The Wild*. Bowen's work relates to her exploration of accounts of St Gobnait and Inisheer. Gobnait is a patron saint of bee-keepers, and, using a simple shift dress as a metaphor for the figure, Bowen's mixed-media drawings explore dimensions of the saint's interaction with the natural world. It's a useful, flexible device that allows her to develop some fine images, and there is a nice, spontaneous quality to her drawings despite their careful conceptual framework.

Adlington is a more direct observer of wildlife and landscape. His studies of grey seals, a sea otter, seabirds and fish, together with views of the Kerry shoreline, are free and bold. He is clearly an attentive observer of wildlife, although some of the more finished animal studies from elsewhere that he includes are on the way to being formulaic wildlife art, for better or worse. Even so, he unflinchingly gets a real sense of the animals.

Aidan Dunne

