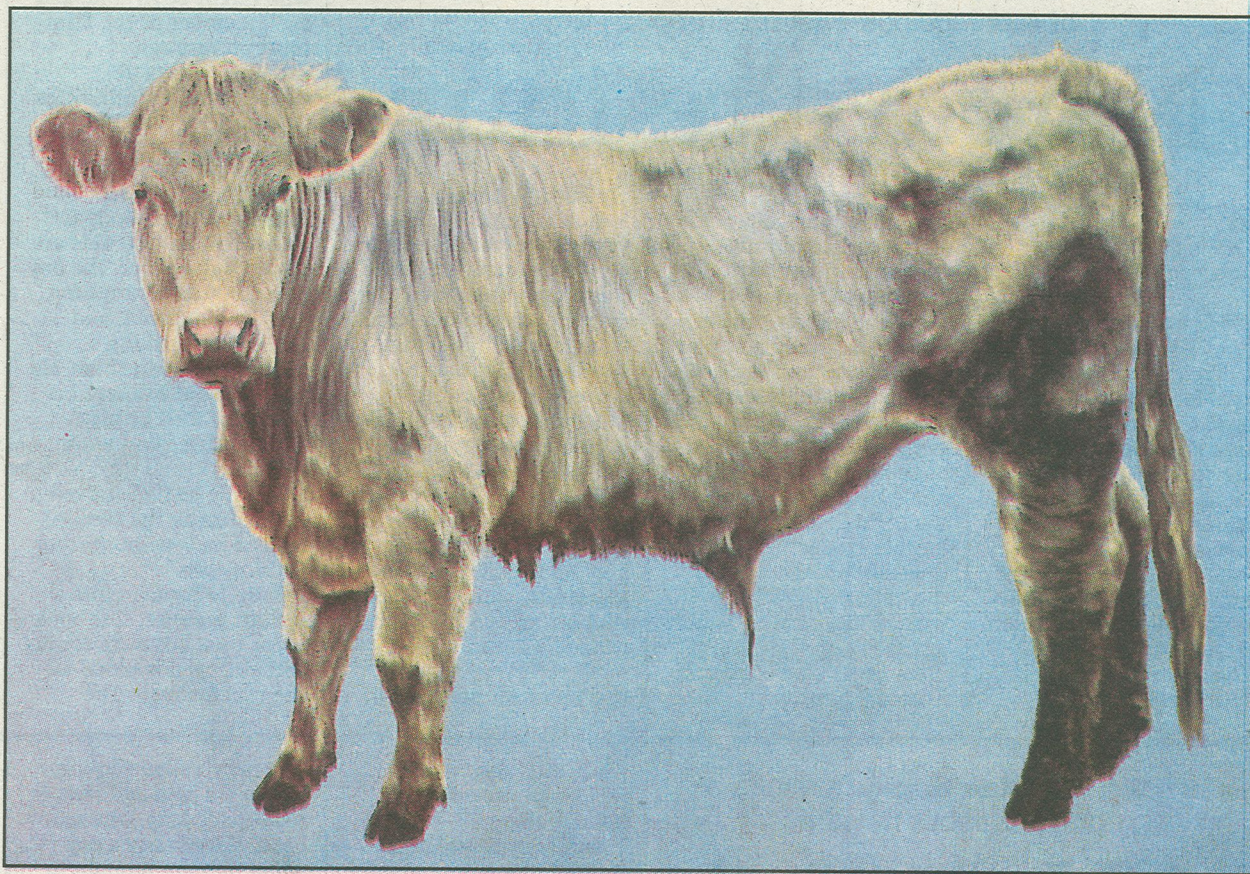


Bright ideas, light relief



'Consumed Unit of Silver', part of Dermot Seymour's exhibition at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery in Dublin

VISUAL ART: Marianne Hartigan takes a look at new exhibitions in Dublin galleries

Organic forms are also much in evidence at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery in the shape of large bovines or 'Consuming Units.'

Dermot Seymour, originally from the north but now living in the west, cites the large population of cows in Ireland as one of

the reasons why he has featured them in his work for years.

In other paintings they are usually accompanied by symbolic or political imagery or appear bizarrely out of context with human figures, but in this instance they are on their own and you can read into it what you will.

These appear to be essentially cow portraits. The individual beasts are set against plain grey, green or white backgrounds, staring at the viewer in the inimitable direct way that cattle do. They are mostly bullocks with just one actual cow featuring (although there are some considerably more surreal works in the office involving a number of animals).

Most of the cattle look like those creamy coloured Charolais which have become increasingly popular in this country in recent years.

While it is obvious that he works from photographs, Seymour's familiarity with cattle is apparent. They are good subjects to study as they are curious creatures and will turn and look at you before returning to their steady munching. Seymour has obviously spent some time gazing back.

That all is not quite as straightforward as it seems is apparent, not only in the quirky works in the office but also in the titles. 'Consuming' can mean to eat or drink, but also implies the use of time or energy. And aren't people consumed with rage? He also alters the word to 'Consumptive' for some of the works, which not only alludes to consuming, being consumed and the purchase or use of goods, but also to that awful wasting disease... It's interesting too that this show runs contemporaneously with the beef farmers' protests.