



Eye Keano: detail from 'Cork eyed' by Dermot Seymour, at the Kevin Kavanagh Gallery until October 20

You'll never beat the iris

EXHIBIT A

SOPHIE GORMAN

The eyes certainly have it — particularly when they're as intense and identifiable as this footballing pair. In case you were left in any doubt about who they belonged to, the title of this painting by Dermot Seymour will give you your final confirmation — "Cork eyed". This searing stare does of course belong to the man responsible for Ireland's own Diana moment, Keano himself.

"eyed", Seymour's new exhibition at Dublin's Kevin Kavanagh Gallery (www.kevinkavanagh-gallery.ie), features a selection of familiar frowns, gazes and ogles, all of them unsmiling and, most disturbing, unblinking. We've looked at them and now it's their turn to look back at us.

This Belfast painter has a soaring reputation for his abil-

ity to capture reality and enrich it with his own ominous and often edgy twist.

He came to nationwide prominence with his paintings that combined figures with military and para-military symbolism. Early paintings such as "Don't be vague shoot a taig" reflect his experiences in the Ulster of the Troubles.

In the 1990s, he strayed away from humans in favour of animal subjects, particularly cows, but maintained his trademark theme of displacement.

With this new exhibition, there is a unifying sense of melancholic anticipation. These are not portraits that were happily posed: these are stares that are watching and waiting. In this case, the gallery walls may not have ears but they really do have eyes, if you will.