

The Arts

Arts Editor Deirdre Falvey e-mail arts@irish-times.ie

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Painted from a pers



Diana Copperwhite, an artist of energy and flair, makes paintings without alibis from art theory, neither ironic nor apologetic. And she largely succeeds in conveying 'reality, memory, and fantasy', writes Aidan Dunne

IN 1994 Diana Copperwhite, then a graduate fresh out of the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), had a solo exhibition in the Temple Bar Gallery. It's quite unusual for a graduate to have a solo show so quickly, but Copperwhite's created quite a buzz for other reasons.

One: she was a painter, when art world orthodoxy had turned away from painting. Two: she was painter of tremendous energy and flair, capable of working on a large scale. She didn't make paintings that apologised for their own existence, that pretended to be conceptual art or ironic restatements of art history or parodies of high modernism. Nor were they self-consciously retro.

They were what they were. We could take them or leave them, like them or hate them, but they didn't look to art theory to provide any alibis.

In the event, many people liked them, a lot. These early paintings were boldly architectonic in that they seemed to mark out constructed spaces, enclosures and openings, though not in an overtly representational way.

Remarkably, Copperwhite arrived on the scene with a distinctive personal palette that has remained consistently her own. It's still evident in her current show at West Cork Arts Centre, *Eclipse of a Title*. Her palette is lyrical, tonally bright, with lots of colour, including



onal palette

