

Visual Arts

Aidan Dunne

Arborescence, Elizabeth Magill, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, until July 10 (01-6709093)

In a Certain Light, Diana Copperwhite, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin, until July 7 (01-8740064)

Eoin McHugh and David Roche, The Studio, 36 Leeson Close, ended

Si Schroeder, Isabel Nolan, Jo McGonigal, AB Arts Space, Galway, until July 15 (091-516630)

126 Number 5, Niamh McCann, Iain Hetherington, 126 Laurel Park, Galway, until June 30 (086-8035466/

It is as if the paintings in Diana Copperwhite's show, *In a Certain Light*,

at Kevin Kavanagh, have been momentarily caught in their particular configurations as, indeed, the title implies. A subtext running through this body of work is the shifting, uncertain nature of memory and, perhaps, of vision itself. Copperwhite is a fast, instinctive painter. Now, this does not mean that she completes her paintings quickly or that she doesn't think about them. But specific qualities of her work derive from her ability to juggle with incipient, complex internal relationships in the heat of the moment. That is, as with a gifted jazz instrumentalist, experience, skill and a state of heightened awareness help to generate a dynamic equilibrium in what she is doing. And it has to happen in the process.

From the beginning she has used a distinctive palette and tonal range. She juxtaposes and overlaps pinks, yellows, greens, pale blues and reds, together with pale greyish or ochre derivations of all those colours. Not that she shies completely away from darker hues and tones, but she predominantly likes colour pitched at a level of buoyancy, towards the brighter end of the scale. This gives her pictures a lightness, something that, in a way, makes things more difficult for her. We tend to associate dark tones with seriousness. Bright colour equals light content. But her paintings demonstrate that she is quite right; there is no lack of gravitas to them.

Each painting involves negotiating the possibility of a space, much more than the achievement of an image. Images are usually there, a given, but not an end. Far more important for Copperwhite, one feels, is a resolution in openness. So that



she will rapidly indicate, in a few decisive strokes or lines, the contours of a face or a figure, without fundamentally harnessing the painting to the image.

Seeing and remembering, and what we do with seeing and remembering, are definitely central concerns for her, but surely she is particularly taken with the sense of potential wrapped up in these processes: the area of contemplation and consideration, of turning things over in your mind, when they are ripe with possible meaning. So that while sometimes the issues - memory, loss - may seem freighted with melancholy, the pictures themselves are not melancholy. They

are domains of excitement, open to transformation, and they are optically rich.

Distinctive palette:
Diana Copperwhite's
Globe, oil on canvas,
90 x 90 cm, 2006
Image courtesy
Kevin Kavanagh
Gallery