

## ***Ardán – Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh***

Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin

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There is a purity of purpose to the way Sinéad Ní Mhaonaigh has adhered to a classical mode of oil painting. Discarding various distractions, including peripheral aspects of style and flourish, she has gradually devised a spare but somehow sensually rich iconography.

The richness might have something to do with the medium. The most alluring and alarming thing about oil paint is its seductive versatility. It can do anything or become anything, visually mimicking appearance, texture, touch, a passing breath of air. Ní Mhaonaigh acknowledges that versatility while containing its infinite subtlety and harnessing its potential to her own ends.

She has long explored relations between performer and audience or observer and observed, and continues that process here. Her platform – *ardán* – is a stage, from which we see the performer's view of the audience: a block of barely differentiated individuals, on occasion no more than a disorienting blur.

But what of the audience's view of the performer? Several paintings offer an amalgam of central forms, nothing too defined or identifiable. Rather than being seen from the stage or platform, they occupy it. They are quite powerful in their vagueness: pictures of celebrities, or candidates, on to which we project our own desires and dreams of identity.

- Aidan Dunne, *The Irish Times*, 16/2/16

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