

ARTFORUM

Dublin

Margaret Corcoran

KEVIN KAVANAGH GALLERY

Chancery Lane

February 16–March 17



Margaret Corcoran, *Burst of the Waterfall*, 2002, charcoal on paper, 31 1/2 x 39 3/8".

Revising our perspective on images of art history that have participated in shaping received cultural iconographies, this exhibition presents something of a miniretrospective, featuring [Margaret Corcoran](#)'s concerns as a painter over the past three decades, as she dips in and out of mythologies, religious belief, and the changing representations of women in art. Corcoran came to prominence with "An Enquiry," 2002, a series depicting a young girl progressing through the National Gallery of Ireland's collection of romantic and sublime paintings. The sublime in this exhibition is addressed in the charcoal on paper drawings *Barret's Crossing* and *Burst of the Waterfall* (both 2002), as the monumental nature of the genre is undercut by the ephemerality of her materials.

Interesting confluences emerge. For example, the hardness of diamonds is set against the soft yet inexorably persistent nature of water in *Diamond Pair I* and *Diamond Pair II*, both 2012. The juxtaposition of the deceptively insubstantial (water) with the durable (diamond) is adumbrated in *Tortoise Shell I* and *II*, both 1997, which focus on the translucent delicacy of these tough carapaces. Everything in Corcoran's world either communicates a sense of revisionism or expresses some sort of duality. Even the exhibition's title—"How to Spend It—Love, Time, and the Universe"—refers both to the glossy lifestyle supplement that appears with the weekend edition of the *Financial Times*, and to a more philosophical question about how to live.

The show's triumphant centerpiece is *Persian Adam and Eve*, 2012, a bright oil painting depicting a prelapsarian Eden. In the Islamic thought alluded to in the work's title, blame for the Fall was attributed equally to Adam and Eve. The painting's foreground is washed in ominous red, perhaps standing for the bloodshed that has ensued in the clash between said religion's beliefs and their counterparts in Christianity.