

ful, courtesy, to name but two, of songs like 'Learning On You' ('It takes all that I've got not to PCK this up') and 'Mallehah' ('Old Brars, helped to ease them in my mind, New Brars say that they will dry in time.')

## 6 ROISIN MACHINE ROISIN MURPHY

The shapeshifting outsider from Arklow gave us an escapist disco record in a year that felt like the apocalypse was always just around the corner. Her first album since 2016's *Take Her Up To Moon*, *Roisin Machine* – a collaboration with Crooked Man (aka DJ Parrot) – is an exercise in euphoria and time-travel, taking us back to a time before pandemics. On 'Sheffish Mademoiselle', the othe-time Mokoko frontwoman spells out her philosophy: 'How dare you sentence me to a lifetime without dancing when my body's made for feeling?' On 'Something More', she sings: 'Ten lovers in my bed. But I want something more. We Got Together', 'Jealousy' and 'Murphy's Law' are a call to the dance floor.

## 7 FOLKLORE TAYLOR SWIFT

In the summer of 2017, when I interviewed Swift in London, she said that she uses her lyrics to process the emotions of a breakup – from Jake Gyllenhaal to Larry Styles – and will only run out of having break-ups to write about 'if I stop having break-ups'. (July of this year, Swift released an album, recorded in secret, that is a departure from the music we expected and from her style: diary-like song writing. It was simple, eerie, economical, revelatory and melancholic. It felt right the times we were living in.) Through the pop superstar is simply and movingly about her grandfather in World War II, about a widow, about childhood, about me in the weeds...)

## IN WAITING

### PILLOW QUEENS

In 'Child Of Prague' to 'Holy W' to 'Liffey', this is a magnificent debut from the Dublin women quartet, singer and artist Sarah Corcoran, Pameleannolly, Rachel Lyons and Lily McGuinness. Corcoran is a re-superstar.

## AMERICAN HEAD

### THE FLAMING LIPS

They tell a lot about a band by song titles. And so it proves Wayne Coyne's post-punk boyd from Tulsa, Oklahoma: 'The Movies on Quaaludes', 'I've Taken LSD', 'God and Sliceman', 'Mother Please Be Sad' and 'Will You Return? You Come Down' sound weird (but wonderful) as if they will sound. And I've even mentioned 'When We're High'. Nor the Flaming Lips were tied to write this album by Tom Petty's pre-Heart's band Mudcrutch, comedia in the 1970s.

## THE ASCENSION

### OF JIAN STEVENS

Go to me what you did to a. 'Sufjan sings on the re 'America', Starbucks be me (metaphysically ed, as someone quipped.

# Art: What lies beneath Brexit situation that turned Northern world upside down

## NIALL MacMONAGLE



### DERMOT SEYMOUR

Donnelly's Brexit Art  
fell on canvas

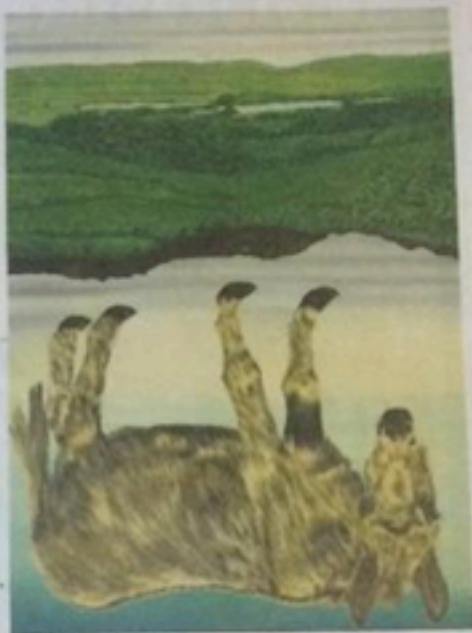
When Belfast-born Dermot Seymour was in P5 in school, he and another boy made a comic book that told of the graveyard adventures of Fiendish McFearskin, a Protestant, and his nemesis, Seamus O'Spook, a Catholic. 'The teacher, a Mrs Ferguson, when she discovered it, caned us six times on both hands, the weeds only disappeared in my 20s. To this day, my Northern Irish upbringing has had a weird and surreal influence on the way I see things.'

Always drawing and painting, 'mostly birds, animals and cartoons, doodling galore over everything, I had very little exposure to art growing up,' but his P7 teacher was very creative, 'had us all painting and making models' and 'I had a vivid visual imagination, which I put to all sorts of uses'.

### Today, Seymour frequently

paints land and animals. 'Growing up in the North you would be aware of the land thing. 'What we have we hold' or 'What they have we want back'. The animals are, of course, oblivious to all this historical baggage but they are standing right in it, on it. The bad lands are often where the Catholics live, and the good agricultural land where the Protestants live. Though as with everything up North, there would be plenty of contradiction on that one. There is no history there, only present. All the dates are celebrated with a zeal of the recent: 1641, 1641, 1690, 1798, etc. All seemed to have happened yesterday.'

'My work has lots of these historical threads.



Donnelly's Brexit Ass by Dermot Seymour

From my early years the conflict was in my imagination.'

With his 1983 painting, 'Marty Mallon L5.81', Seymour found his unique voice, his visual vocabulary, his personal iconography. 'You see a bullock, a helicopter on the horizon, a fence post with Marty Mallon L5.81 carved into it. That lad was murdered a year later. I accidentally came upon this name on the post while out fishing in south Armagh. The painting seemed to incorporate the mysterious interwoven narrative of everyday life during the Troubles.'

Seymour's work explores what has been termed the anxiety, bewilderment and absurdity of the Northern situation. 'I have developed a good sense of the daft. Nothing is ever what it seems, paradoxes prevail.'

In Donnelly's Brexit Art (pictured) the landscape is 'a generic border landscape with all the baggage that adheres around Brexit'. And the donkey? 'He is inverted to lighten unease and uncertainty, a destabilising device.'

Seymour now lives in Mayo where 'my work tilt-

ed differently – the great western skies and the sense of fragility that comes with weather and erosion. But Northern Ireland gave me the way I see things, the insular smallness, the weakness, the us and them... The whole defining and identifying with one's tribe is so tiresome and boring, frankly it does my head in. But I am of the place, and I love the burnout, so dark, so graveyard, so bleak. It never leaves you.'

'He reads every day.' Just finished a fantastic book, *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* by Larry Siedentop. Other influences include the Old Masters, graphic art, comics, Pop Art 'but an even bigger influence is just wandering around the place, always exercising the eyes. The wild landscapes of lough, sea and mountain I look at through a Northern eye.'

And that eye sees the daft, the upside down.

Two of Dermot Seymour's paintings are on show in *Worlds Without End: Stories Around Borders* at the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, and available to view on YouTube. [www.krvinkasunagh.ie](http://www.krvinkasunagh.ie)