



**Robert Armstrong: Afterimages**

Rudely finished and ostensibly naive, Robert Armstrong's paintings are surprisingly intriguing. They appear to record a series of fantasy landscapes, a world of volcanoes and valleys in which a tribe of tiny people are drawn across a dark plain towards a mammoth boulder. Titles such as *Deluge*, *Ark* and *The Red Sea* reveal a biblical genesis not immediately apparent, however. Armstrong employs a wide variety of sources, sending his viewers in one direction only to pull them back. This is rough-and-ready painting, occasionally mucky, but with moments that reveal unexpected depths, as in the red flames scraped from beneath a layer of thick green in *The Burning Bush*, and the use of contrasting colour in *The Valley of the People Who Don't Know Anything* (above). Armstrong imbues these little paintings with something monumental, creating a tension between the intimate and the majestic. It really shouldn't work, but it does.

**Cristin Leach**

Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin, Mon-Fri 10.30am-5.30pm, Sat 11am-5pm (01 874 0064)

THE SUNDAY TIMES

culture

FEBRUARY 18, 2007