

Bernard Canavan
Daniel Carmody
John Duffin
Dermot Holland
Brian Whelan

The Quiet Men
11 March-18 April 2009



Private View: Tuesday 10 March 2009 6pm-9pm

FIVE ARTISTS EXAMINE THE EXPERIENCE OF MALE IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO BRITAIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY

29 January 2009 - *The Quiet Men* is a new exhibition curated by Brian Whelan and PM Gallery, featuring the work of artists drawing upon their own lives to depict the London-Irish experience. It runs from 11 March-18 April 2009 at PM Gallery, the extension to architect Sir John Soane's home, Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing, west London.



The first major contemporary London-Irish art exhibition to explore this subject, *The Quiet Men* features paintings and etchings by Brian Whelan, Dermot Holland, John Duffin, Bernard Canavan and the late Daniel Carmody. The exhibition premieres at PM Gallery prior to an international tour, which will see *The Quiet Men* travel to Spain, Philadelphia and Chicago between 2009 and 2011.

Each featured artist is an immigrant, or child of immigrants, from Ireland. This immigrant status informs the work, which observes the margins of society and is full of stories, humour and tragedy. The church and pub appear, as do the launderette, bus and train. The theme of the journey is often present in the songs, toasts, poems and prayers of the immigrant and the artists do not stray far from the vehicles that brought them to the city and might take them away again.

Featured artist and exhibition curator, Brian Whelan, said 'Irish music, literature, poetry and dance are celebrated all over the world. However, when asked to bring to mind Irish paintings, sculpture or architecture or to name an artist, many will have difficulty as very few have been celebrated outside Ireland. One reason for this may be that a people that experienced famine, war, economic hardship and mass immigration, carried only their portable culture with them in their heads, hearts and suitcases. Poems and songs have few requirements short of a good

memory or the ability to carry a tune, whereas painting, sculpture and architecture are less portable and need peace, prosperity and time in order to flourish.'

VISITOR INFORMATION

Exhibition Dates: 11 March-18 April 2009. Admission is free to all visitors

Opening Times: Tuesday-Friday 1-5pm; Saturday 11am-5pm

For further information www.ealing.gov.uk/pmgalleryandhouse, 020 8567 1227 or email Zoë Archer at zarcher@ealing.gov.uk

Exhibition curator tour & talk: Friday 20 March 2009 at 7pm. Artist Brian Whelan leads a tour of the exhibition, followed by a presentation of dramatic images and anecdotes of Irish labourers on site and in the pubs and ballrooms of London, by Irish historian Ultan Cowley, author of 'The Men Who Built Britain'.

Please telephone 020 8567 1227 for more information.

PM Gallery & Pitzhanger Manor, Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing, London, W5 5EQ

Travel: Trains & tube to Ealing Broadway. Buses 207, 65 & 83.

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Notes to Editors: 1. Bernard Canavan paints his own experience using the skills of a great storyteller. Leaving Ireland in 1959 from County Longford, he endured many of the hardships of the immigrant Irish of the 50's and 60's. His paintings will strike deep into the heart of anyone who shared this experience. He paints the docks, the boat train, the dingy digs, the pick, the drill and the shovel with the psychological intensity and tenderness of an empathetic witness.

Daniel Carmody 'is probably the only artist who authentically manages to capture the rawness and soreness of being Irish and living in London' (*Rosalind Scanlon, Director of the Irish Centre in Hammersmith*). Carmody came to London from Galway at the age of 17 and worked in the building trade, first digging trenches and then learning bricklaying. He was prolific, and largely untrained, using all the materials he found around him. His subject was the life he knew as an immigrant labourer in Camden Town: the pubs, churches, bookies, cafes, working men's clubs and the High Street. Daniel Carmody took his own life in 2004.

John Duffin captures the enigma of the city, in ink, paper and paint, with economy and grace. He invites us to consider our lives as dreams, complete with all the disorientation an immigrant might experience in a strange and foreign land. Born in Barrow-in-Furness with Irish grandparents, he moved to London to work. His experience of the city is one of an outsider. The sense of alienation from the city is balanced with that of awe for the place. By using his inventive and surprising elevated perspectives on buildings and streets, he creates a sense of the dislocation of reality.

Dermot Holland left Dublin at 21. At the heart of his work is a discipline built on his fundamental drawing ability. His paintings come with the hard graft of an artist who has never lost his desire to engage in the adventure of drawing. He has chosen to ally his draughtsmanship skills to subject matter that most of us find hard to give more than a glance to: the addict, the busker, the bus queue. He does this by employing his knowledge and understanding of charcoal, pencil, paint and printing ink and by testing the composition and subject matter over and over again.

Brian Whelan was born in Ealing, of Irish parents. His Dublin father worked on the buses (the red bus features often in his work) until moving into the building trade and factories. Many of his highly coloured mixed media paintings engage with the city as a turbulent, convulsive beast. Old churches and modern skyscrapers lean up against each other for security, lashed together by convoluted knots of roads laden with traffic. His paintings are both fractured, with contradictory perspectives and figurative scales functioning together, and harmonious, a tribute to his skill with colour and design.

2. **PM Gallery** is the extension to Pitzhanger Manor, the 'dream house' designed by Sir John Soane. The largest exhibition space in West London, PM Gallery sits in Walpole Park, central Ealing and houses contemporary art exhibitions throughout the year. The Manor was built by Sir John Soane as a place to entertain his friends and display his collection of art and antiquities.

3. Pitzhanger Manor and PM Gallery is owned and run by Ealing Council. In 2008, the Council made an award of £2.8m to Pitzhanger, towards a major development project which aims to see further rooms restored and improved gallery, visitor and education facilities.

Issued 29 January 2009 by *The Press Office*. For further information or pictures, please contact Michael Barrett or Kirsten Canning on 020 8295 2424, 07813-558772 or email mb@thepressoffice.uk.com

