

Re-discovering your Irish roots

happenings

During the summer English artist Simon Tarrant exhibited alongside David Hockney and Norman Ackroyd for the Royal Academy of Art, now a stirring solo collection of his works depicting Irish landscapes is on show at the Linen Hall Library in Belfast. **AP Maginness** finds out more...



■ **STIRRING LANDSCAPE:** Big Sugarloaf Mountain

DESPITE being an English artist Simon Tarrant, returns to his Irish roots for an exhibition of powerful and uncompromising oil paintings at the Linen Hall Library. This latest collection of work has been inspired by Simon's most recent travels across Ireland and succeeds in expertly encapsulating the charming character of the Irish landscape. Simon travelled the length and breadth of the country sketching and painting as he went along. He travelled from Birr Castle in Co Offaly and made stops along the west coast travelling right up to the north.

It must have been an epic journey as the pictures that his travels have inspired are breathtaking. A self-taught artist, Simon has dedicated his life to creating unique works of art. He has exhibited extensively around the globe, from New York to London and for the past two years, has shown work at the Royal Academy of Art, with his *Twilight*, Birr Castle, featuring in last year's *Summer Exhibition* alongside such esteemed names as David Hockney and Norman

Ackroyd. Although born in England, Tarrant has always felt a special affinity with Ireland since three of his grandparents are Irish with his mother's parents hailing from Belfast. Speaking about his return to Ireland for his latest exhibition: "Ireland is a place of great inspiration for me, partly there is the draw of my Irish family background and the many friends I have there but mostly it is the

country's unspoilt natural beauty that wins my heart every time," Simon explained. Adopting a rather interesting approach to his work, Simon creates his fascinating pieces by applying oil as quickly as possible on to the canvas, which subsequently allows him to capture the intensity of the countryside that has inspired him. In contrast however, his sketches and drawings, which will also

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feature in this exhibition, adopt a more gentle and serene tone, highlighting the sheer range and diversity of the artist's work and his subjects.

A mixture of influences are evident in Simon's paintings, from the spontaneous fluidity of Jack B Yeats to the vivid colours and raw emotion of Howard Hodgkin, prompting Royal Academician Humphrey Ocean, to comment that the brooding passion within this young artist's work is, "evocative of playwright August Strindberg's paintings, for their sense of foreboding".

■ **Simon Tarrant's Oil Paintings will be on display in the Linen Hall Library's Northern Room from April 10 until May 3. Admission to the exhibition is free and the artist's work will be available to buy.**

School to be awash with colour

ST Josephs' primary school in east Belfast will be awash with colour this weekend. Over 190 pupils will be let loose on canvas to create their own art pieces which will feature in an exhibition. The pieces will form part of a wider *Art of Caring Exhibition* which is being held in the adjoining St Colmcille's Parish hall until April 6. The *Art of Caring Exhibition*, which will feature more than 400 pieces of art from renowned local artists, will raise funds for Marie Curie and the local parish.

A wide range of modern and contemporary art will be on display and for sale, including art from the Prince of Wales, Brian Ballard, Neil Shawcross, Leslie Stannage, and Brian and Denise Ferran, among many other local talents.

The *Art of Caring* biannual exhibition and sale is very popular within the parish and further a field and is attended by many art lovers, however, this year, the exhibition will also feature the art of children which will be exhibited in the neighbouring St Joseph's primary school.

Film screenings

Aurora is an annual festival in Norwich, England, which focuses on the manipulated moving image. A uniquely multidisciplinary, progressive event, it fuses artist retrospectives and thematic film programmes with discussion events, live performance and installations, alongside the very best new work from across the world for space and screen. Queen Street Digital Art Studios, in conjunction with Chewie Films, Old Museum Arts Centre and University of Ulster present the two touring programmes showcasing work from last year's festival. The first screening, *Unfamiliar Countries, Impossible Structures*, takes place in Black Box Cafe on Sunday April 13 at 8pm and will be followed by a special performance by Korridor, an experimental audio/visual act currently based in Cork.

The second screening, *Erasure*, at Old Museum Arts Centre on Tuesday April 15 at 7.30pm is a programme of 12 new experimental film and video works from across the world. Many of the featured work refer to erasure in terms of memory and mortality. More details can be found at www.aurora.org.uk

Cut-ups and Cut-outs

Dublin's Irish Museum of Modern Art is delighted to announce the opening of the exhibition *Cut-Outs and Cut-Ups: Hans Christian Andersen and William Seward Burroughs*, in the New Galleries on Wednesday 9 April 2008. Hailing from different origins and different periods, Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) and William Seward Burroughs (1914-1997) nevertheless shared connections.

Inner landscapes centres for tranquility

By Jenny Lee

DUBLIN-born Paul Christopher Flynn, tipped as 'one of Ireland's most bankable new artists' will showcase his work for the first time with an exhibition of new work at Gormleys Fine Art, Belfast.

Paul is a painter who is influenced by our landscape. He describes himself as "a maker of marks", and it is the same infinite marks on our landscape, which he evokes in his paintings and this exhibition, entitled *Presences*.

In this exhibition his work explores the connection between the land and human presences, his landscape paintings hints at the depth of generations hidden beneath the earth. His paintings



mark the presence of our own history and past, reasserting our connection with the land and our ancestors. "I believe that these images are part of a continuing exploration of

memory, both actual and an evocation, rather than a description of physical presence, a memory of things that predate language," says Paul.

Born in Dublin in 1963, Paul moved to the United States for 17 years, before returning in 2003 when a chance encounter with one of the artists at the Peoples' Art Exhibition in Dublin's St Stephen's Green, convinced him to resume painting after a 20-year lapse.

By September of 2007, Paul had experienced a number of successful one-man shows and opened his first solo exhibition outside Ireland, in Beijing. Opened by the Irish Ambassador to China and attended by senior figures in China's diplomatic, political, cultural and business communities.

Initially working in a representational manner, Paul swiftly resumed the investigation of image and technique he had abandoned nearly two decades previously, producing muted, gestural landscapes that immediately resonated with viewers. In Paul's words he intended to "invoke, rather than explain the land. It is my ambition for my paintings that they become centres of calm in the spaces in which they are hung, points from which the viewer may begin a contemplation of his own inner landscape".

■ **View the full collection of paintings from 10 - 25 April in Gormleys Fine Art, 251 Lisburn Road, Belfast.**