

*double
estate*



*I am afraid to own a Body—
I am afraid to own a Soul—
Profound—precarious Property—
Possession, not optional—*

*Double Estate—entailed at pleasure
Upon an unsuspecting Heir—
Duke in a moment of Deathlessness
And God, for a Frontier.*

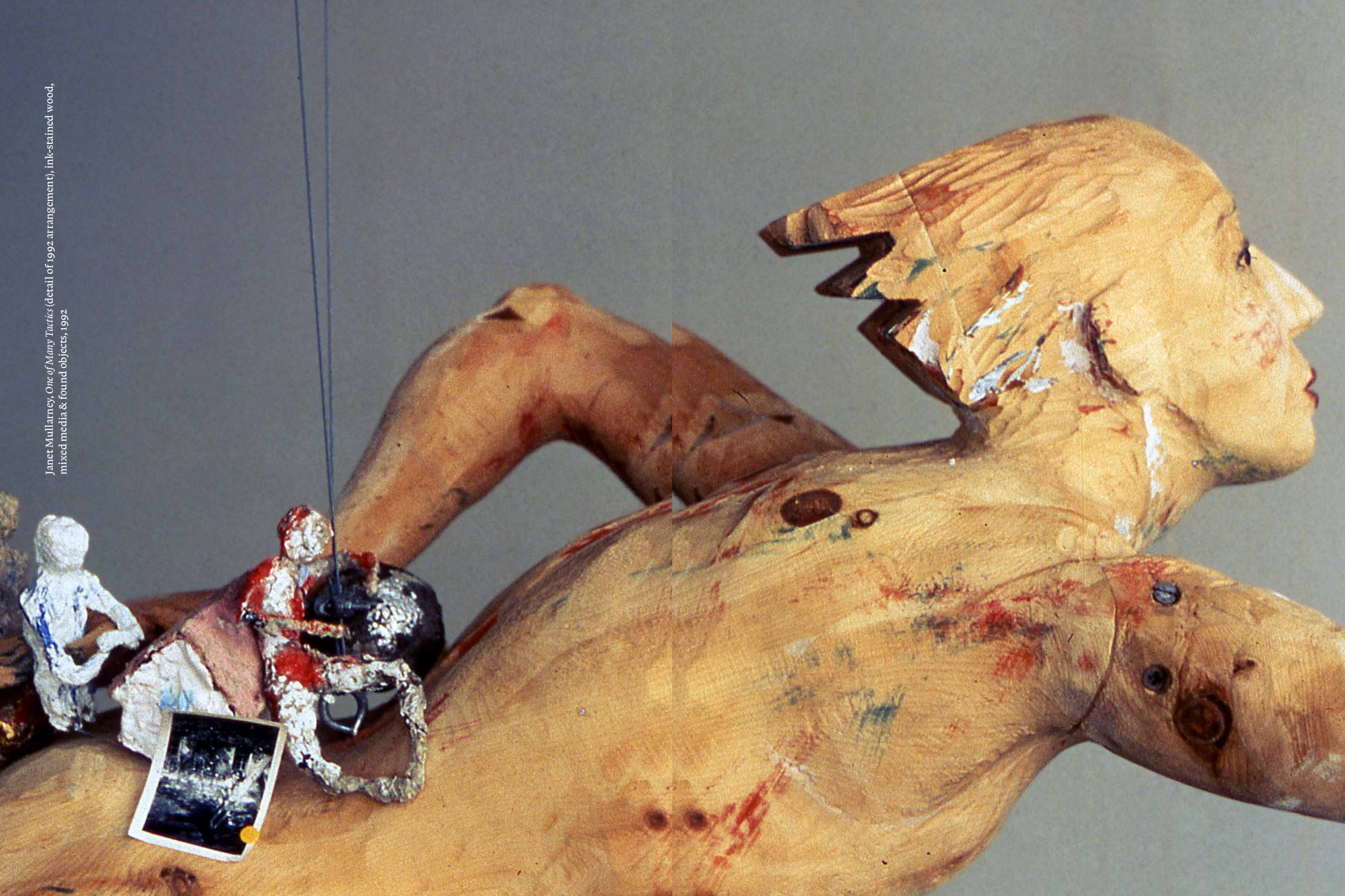
EMILY DICKINSON, 1865¹

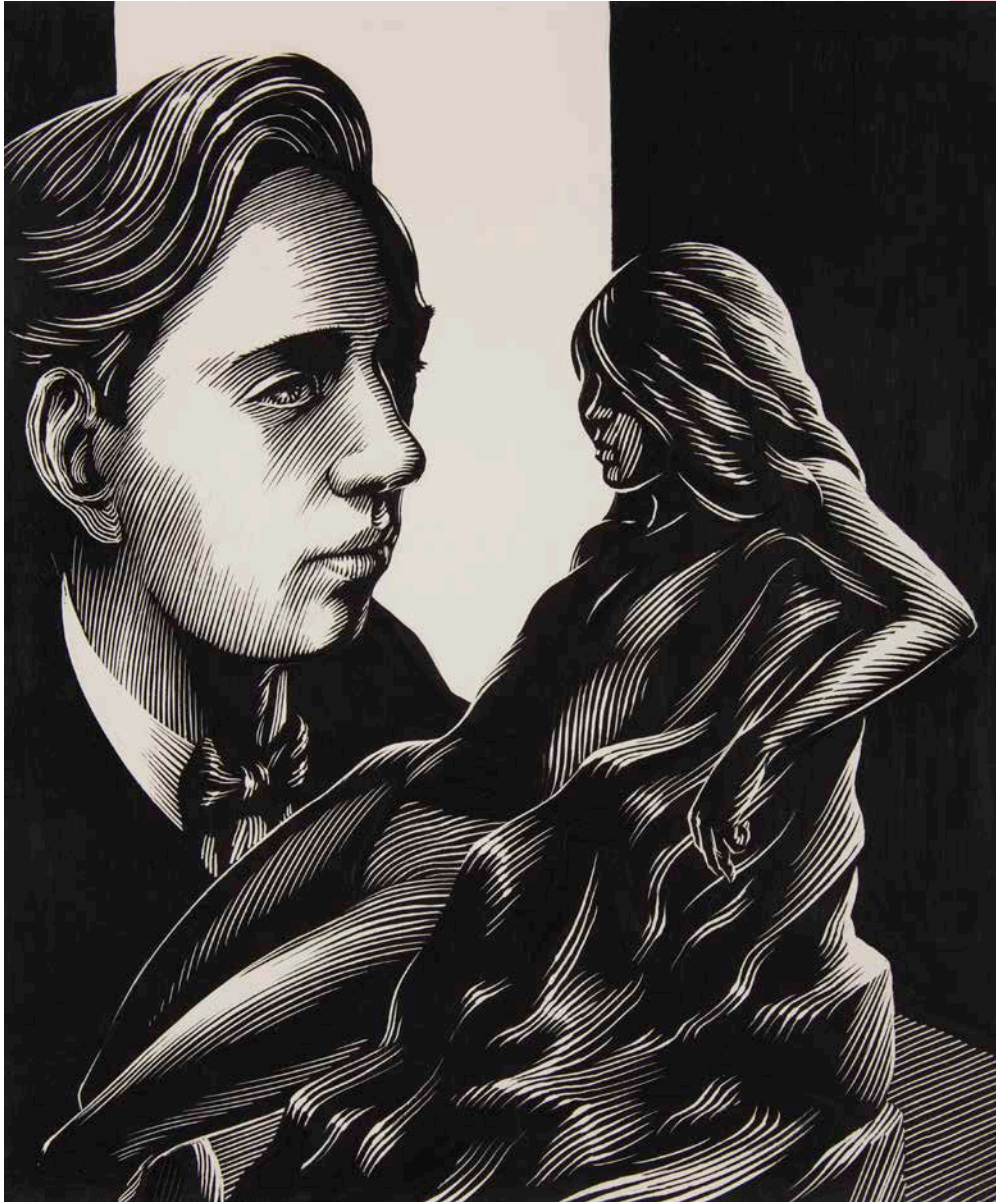
Erica Coburn, *Untitled* (from *This is the Colour of my Dreams*), giclée print, 2/10, 2017

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Janet Mullarney, *One of Many Tactics* (detail of 1992 arrangement), ink-stained wood, mixed media & found objects, 1992





David Rooney, *William Pearse*, scraperboard, 2015

DOUBLE ESTATE

Davey Moor / *Curator*

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Profound—precarious Property—
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EMILY DICKINSON, 1865¹

This poem by Dickinson is referenced with some pause, as the multifarious connotations of her verse inspires forensic dissection. Here, humbly extracted, is that there is a duality between body and soul, both foisted upon every human who never asked to be born; it is theirs, entwined momentarily, until death. I hope the viewer of these artworks might recognise these artists' dual delineations of the body's pure form with a sense of its more elusive counterpart.

The demesne of St Enda's was the scholastic estate of both Patrick and William Pearse; Brian Crowley, in his essay, looks at their legacy through the lens of William's artistic practice and Patrick's writing on his students' embodiment of heroic Celtic ideals. The latter was exemplified in both Gaelic games and historical drama, activities in which brotherhood was pre-eminent.

It must be noted that, excepting our sentinel portraits of the Pearse brothers², this is not an exhibition of portraiture, however abstracted. Sitters have been anonymised; historic and religious figures have been re-imagined; an air of intangibility pervades and the normal world seems far away. A portrait is more about its named subject than the stylings of its artist: the sitters being the answer to the 'why' of an artwork's creation, rather than the indulgence of the creator and it is this indulgence that we dwell upon in this exhibition.

The Constructivist artist Alexander Rodchenko thought that the truest portrait would be composed of multiple and varied images of its subject and we might hitch this thought to suggest that artists reveal themselves through the collected language of their output. At the other side of this equation is the viewer, looking on and taking in. They react, connect and dwell on imagery that uncovers latent inclinations which



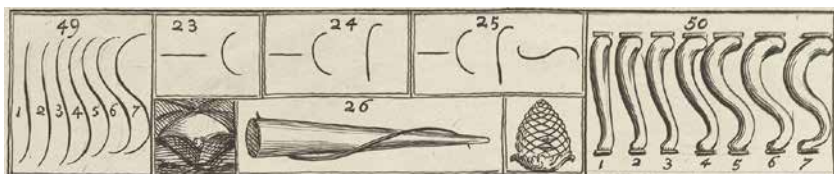
Fig.11: *Venus of Hohle Fels*, mammoth ivory, c.35,000-40,000 BCE. Image: Ramessos, collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

can be a surprise to them, the (be)holder. With figurative art, there is a step back from paths trodden with their familiars, onto grassy ones, wanting wear.

As a theme, the art of the body does not comfortably fall into a genre, type or category and it is a pleasant struggle to be in any way didactic about this selection as a whole. That a splintering of what it means to represent the body in the art of the last one hundred years has occurred, brings its depiction more into the realm of all our true, varied realities. Likeness is not a question to concern ourselves with in this sense. Instead, it is the likeness of myriad pronouns. We might relate the pictures in this exhibition to ourselves, to those we know and to those we may imagine. We might be repelled or attracted to these, but our eyes will likely linger regardless.

In *Double Estate* we find the figure and the body, the nude and – if inclined – the naked. The art critic Sally O’Reilly cleaves modern artistic depictions of the human form with a subtle, but incisive rhetorical distinction between how figure and body might be defined in art: the former as more passive, optical and depictive of a physical vision, while the latter is a manifestation of a deeper, humanistic concern. A hazy scale from illustrative to metaphorical³. In the twentieth century, the depiction of the human form in art was increasingly imbued with the sort of metaphysical narrative the body is so adept at. What we see here is as much the cargo as the livery. The use of the word nude as both

Fig.2: Plate 1 (detail), *The Analysis of Beauty*, William Hogarth, final state etching & engraving, 1753, collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art



adjective and noun began around the seventeenth century. It’s a word with notions, draping the vulgarity of common-or-garden nakedness in a transparent veil of poetic respectability.

Art, imagination and the power to create fantasy are all forms of magic. They go beyond instinct and logic to put humans in the ascendancy and it is not a stretch to imagine our ancestors holding them sacred. Rock art almost always focused on the animate – on that with a soul – rather than the landscape or object. This sacred, figurative imagery cast a long shadow; the hunters of prehistoric cave paintings – such as those in the Cave of Beasts at Gilf Kebir in Libya and the *Venus of Hohle Fels* [fig. 1], found in its eponymous cave near Schelklingen in Germany – present abstracted archetypes which belie the skill of the artists. This duality would come back strongly to the fore in twentieth century art, when artists, and even entire movements, eschewed realism wholesale⁴. The art of the everyday sacred endured, and over time, the figures were increasingly staged in the tangible world. As *Double Estate* demonstrates however, it is still common for the environments of figurative art to be little more than ancillary.

While formulating this exhibition in my mind, I unconsciously – then consciously in its realisation – narrowed what constitutes human form, at least as far as this show’s cast of characters was concerned. In *An Analysis of Beauty*⁵, William Hogarth outlines a number of principles⁶, but his central thesis was in the contemplation of a range of undulating lines – double curves, like the ogee commonly seen in moulding – the curvatures of which can span from almost flat to semi-circular [fig.2]. He refers to these broadly as serpentine lines and extols them at the expense of their angular cousins. As outmoded his excesses are, Hogarth’s core idea of the appeal of such sinuous forms is merely an observation of how nature sees beauty in its own reflection. These lines excite the eye at a core level and naturally are as abundant in figurative art as they are in what inspires it.

Endnotes

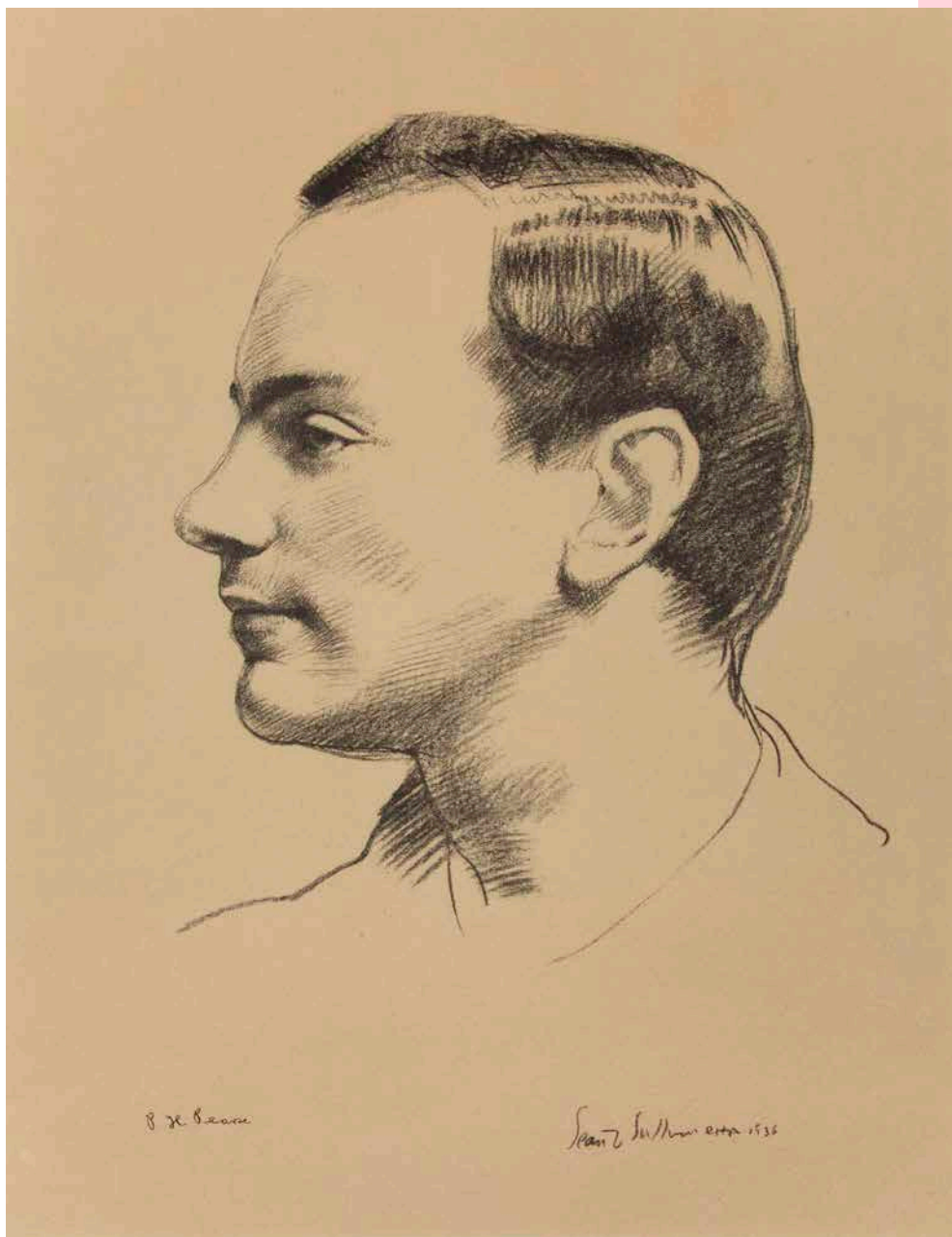
1. Emily Dickinson, *Poem 1090, I am afraid to own a Body*–
2. It should be noted that although Muriel Brandt’s *Sunhat* is worn by her daughter Ruth (Brandt 1936-1989, who followed her mother into the art world and was a noted painter and printmaker), this painting is an evocation of a languid summer, rather than a portrait.
3. Sally O’Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 8.
4. This is not to suggest that the artists of the 20th and 21st century rarefied the art of their distant ancestors, but they were influenced by them.
5. William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty* (London: self-pub., 1753).
6. Fitness (the size and proportion of an object’s elements as fitting to its accepted, practical use), variety, symmetry, distinctness, intricacy and quantity were the core principles, but the bulk of the book deals with line and composition in more tangible ways.



William Pearce, *Male Nude*, bronze, c.1900



William Pearce, *Memories*, bronze, c.1909



Seán O'Sullivan, P.H. Pearse, lithograph, O/E, 1944

ART AND THE BODY IN SCOIL ÉANNA

Brian Crowley | Collections Curator, Pearse Museum & Kilmainham Gaol

In his educational treatise 'The Murder Machine', Patrick Pearse presented a nightmarish vision of the educational system in the Ireland of his time. He described it as a kind of vast industrial process in which 'raw human material' was rendered and remoulded to make docile and unquestioning servants for the British Empire. Rather than truly educating students, he argued, it crushed their spirits and eradicated their individuality. Pearse wrote that he had 'often thought that the type of English education in Ireland was the Laocoön: that agonising father and his sons seem to me like the teacher and the pupils of an Irish school, the strong limbs of the man and the slender limbs of the boys caught together in the grip of an awful fate'. Pearse's reference was not so much to Laocoön, a mythological Trojan high-priest, as to an ancient Greco-Roman sculpture of Laocoön and his sons which was unearthed in Rome in 1506 and was subsequently put on display in the Vatican Museum. It depicts Laocoön and his sons writhing in agony as a pair of monstrous sea serpents coil around their bodies and devour them. It is a complex piece in which the physical perfection of the men's bodies stand in stark contrast with the awfulness of their fate, the very definition of a terrible beauty. Its discovery at the dawn of the Renaissance had an enormous influence on the development of European art and culture.

Pearse was clearly quite familiar with this sculpture, in fact a cast of the head of the main figure can be found in the Pearse Museum collection. Pearse had an aesthetically rich childhood and spent his early years living over his father's sculpture works at 27 Great Brunswick (now Pearse) Street. His father's desire for self-improvement meant Pearse also had access to a remarkable library of books, in particular illustrated art-books, which fed a fertile and rich imagination. Pearse developed a deep understanding of art and a sophisticated appreciation of visual forms. It also became key to how he understood the world. His reference to the Laocoön group gives his readers a striking and visceral image of the ill-effects of the English education system, while also allowing him to present his own, alternate vision for Irish education as an act of physical, intellectual, and spiritual liberation.

Pearse's writing often reveals an appreciation of ancient Greek art and culture, and he admired the idealised depiction of the human form found in Greek sculptures like the Laocoön. In her book *Pearse's Patriots, St. Enda's and the Cult of Boyhood*, Elaine Sisson writes about Pearse's attempts to ally the culture of ancient Ireland with that of ancient Greece. In his 1907 lecture *In First Century Ireland* he asserts that, like their

Greek counterparts, the warriors of ancient Ireland had no shame about their bodies and gloried in their athletic physique. Pearse's admiration of ancient Hellenic culture was very much in tune with wider currents within Western culture at the time but, as Sisson points out, despite 'the cult of the male nude in fine art painting and photography around this time, Pearse was still able to state authoritatively that the "modern ... horror of comely nakedness" was a British and imperial invention and was proof of how alienated English masculinity had become from its natural state'. Pearse's decision to ascribe the alienation Irish people felt from their bodies as an effect of British imperialism can be seen as being part of a wider strategy to define his activities in opposition to the imperial project. While the often prudish Pearse had absolutely no intention of reviving the kind of uninhibited nudity he outlined in *In First Century Ireland*, referencing it in the context of ancient Ireland freed him from some of the inhibitions about the body which dominated early twentieth century Ireland.

In 1908, the year after he gave the *In First Century Ireland* lecture, Pearse founded Scoil Éanna, a school which offered an 'education distinctly Irish in complexion'. When the first edition of the school magazine, *An Macaomh*, was published in the summer of 1909, Pearse told his pupils that they must 'recreate and perpetuate' the 'knightly tradition of Eamhain Macha', the 'noble tradition of the Fianna' and 'the Christ-like tradition of Colm Cille'. For Pearse, the combination of these heroic and early Christian traditions from ancient Ireland represented the highest ideals of spiritual and physical purity. His pupils would be scholarly and devout like Colm Cille, but they would also be brave and develop their physical prowess in imitation of Cuchulainn and the Fianna. These ideals were also reflected in the school motto, which was based on an oath sworn by the Fianna: 'strength in our hands, truth on our lips and purity in our hearts'. Physical fitness was seen as the 'natural' state for the boys, and the school prospectus promised that they would be taught to 'prize bodily vigour, grace and cleanliness, and the advantage of an active outdoor life'.

The idealised male body was also central to the visual culture of Scoil Éanna. On arrival at the school, both in its first home in Cullenswood House in Rathmines and then later in The Hermitage in Rathfarnham where it moved in 1910, the first image which met the visitor was a full-length painting of Íosagán, the Christ-child, painted by Beatrice Elvery (later Lady Glenavy); he is depicted naked to the waist, his arms outstretched in a foreshadowing of the crucifixion. Set against the landscape of the Dublin Mountains, this distinctly Irish version of the young Christ was intended to act as an exemplar for Pearse's pupils and the role model to which they should aspire.

This painting was only part of an impressive collection of art which adorned the walls of Scoil Éanna. In the school prospectus, Pearse referenced the care and thought which went into the decoration and choice of artworks in the school and said that the 'object held in view has been the encouraging in the boys of a love of comely surroundings and the formation of their taste in art. In the classrooms beautiful pictures, statuary, and plants replace the charts and other paraphernalia of the ordinary schoolroom.'

The statuary and casts also acted as teaching aids in the art lessons provided by Patrick's brother William, who was a professional sculptor and a student of Oliver Sheppard in the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. William used the traditional method of developing an understanding of the human form through the use of plaster casts of famous sculptures which the boys were encouraged to observe and draw. Evidence of his methods can still be seen in the form of flecks of classroom paint which survive on some of the casts now on display in the Pearse Museum.

Perhaps the most significant visual representation of Pearse's vision for his school however comes in the theatrical performances involving his pupils. In addition to performances on a theatre stage, Pearse also mounted outdoor pageants in the grounds of the school for an invited audience of parents, the press, and leading members of Irish cultural life. These productions were often based on the ancient Irish sagas from which the school drew its inspiration. By literally embodying mythological heroes such as Cuchulainn and Fionn MacCumhaill, Pearse's pupils were also making a tangible connection between the modern school and that idealised past. Writing about the 1909 production of *The Boy-Deeds of Cuchulainn*, W.P. Ryan wrote in *The Nation* newspaper that so effective was their performance, it was as if 'the boys for the time were part of heroic antiquity'. These productions owed much to the vogue at the time for *tableau vivant* or 'living pictures', and the stylised quality of Pearse's plays often gave them the an almost sculptural quality. The new home Pearse found for his school in Rathfarnham in 1910 presented exciting new possibilities for even more elaborate productions. The original owner of the property at the turn of the nineteenth century was an amateur antiquarian named Edward Hudson, and he created vistas within the landscape through the strategic placement of follies and sham ruins inspired by Irish antiquity. Pearse incorporated some of these monuments into the staging of the outdoor production of his play, *An Rí*, in 1912. With the Dublin Mountains in the background, the parkland provided a dramatic setting in which art and reality blurred, leading a critic from the *Irish Times* to comment that the 'youthful players in their Gaelic dress, fitted into the scene as perfectly as if they were part of it'.

Pearse never succeeding in slaying the metaphorical sea serpent that drained the vitality from Irish pupils and teachers. Although his central role in the 1916 Rising led to the establishment of an independent Ireland, it is arguable that, if anything, the grip of the 'Murder Machine' got even tighter in the early decades of the new state. There were no schools established in imitation of Scoil Éanna, his literary works were added to the curriculum in the new Ireland, but none of his more radical educational theories were seriously adopted. Although Scoil Éanna continued until 1935, in many ways it died with Pearse. And yet, for those eight years between 1908 and 1916, he managed to show that it was possible to create a school which nurtured what was unique about each child. He also demonstrated the benefits of having art and creativity at the heart of education, and how this act could be a liberation for both pupils and teachers.

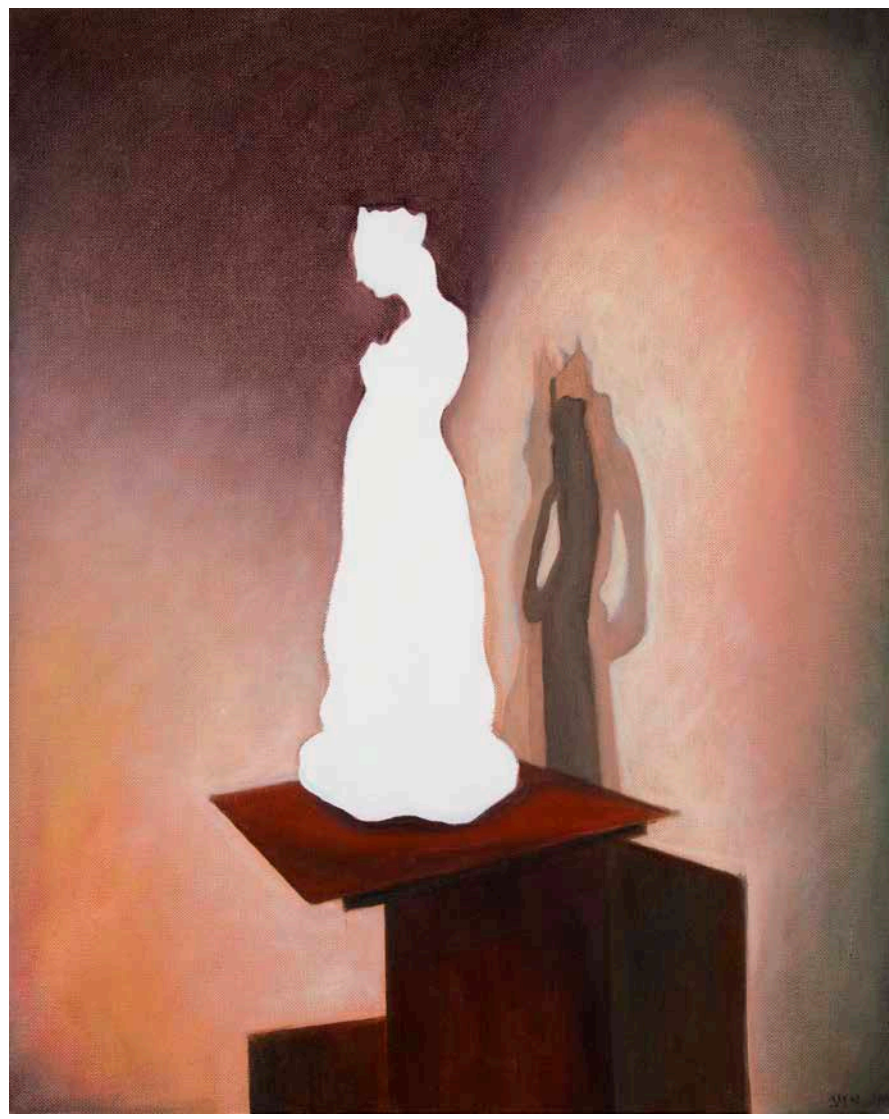


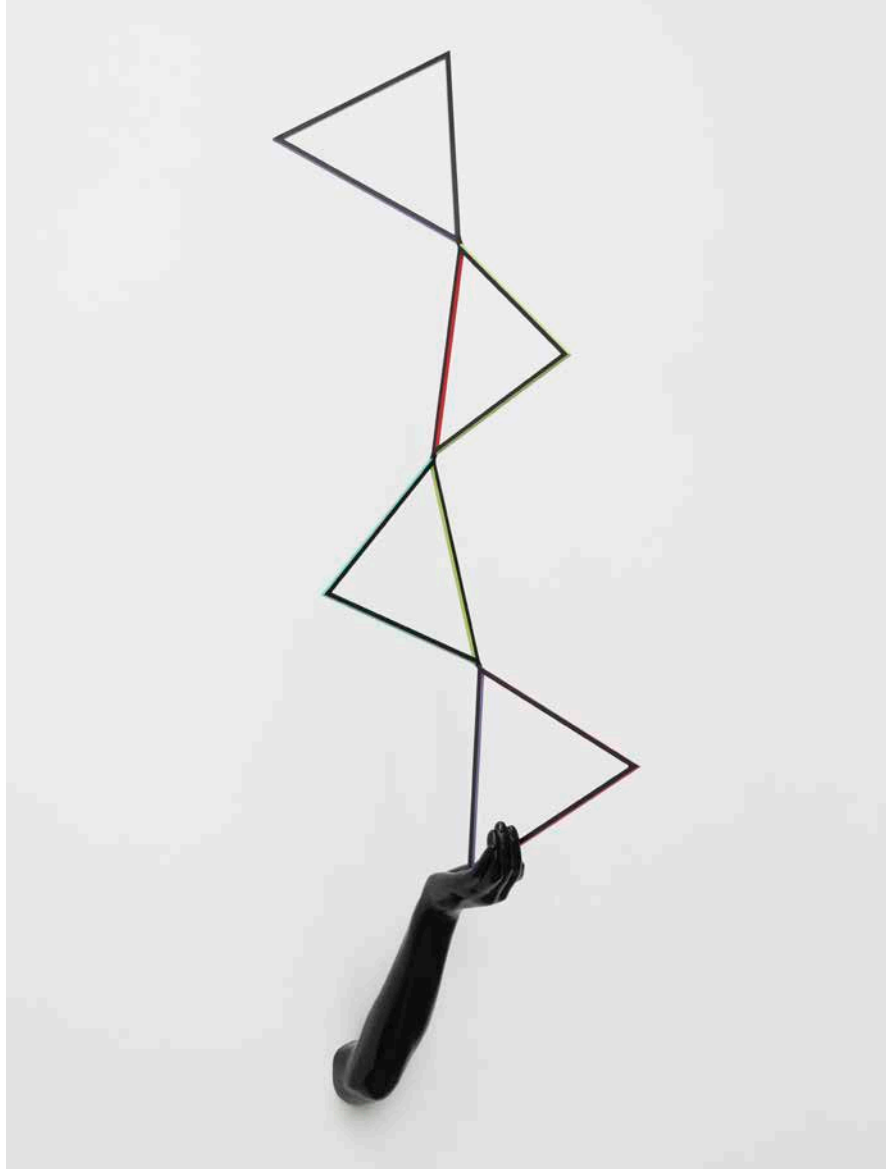
Janet Mullarney, *One of Many Tacit*, ink-stained wood, mixed media & found objects, 1992



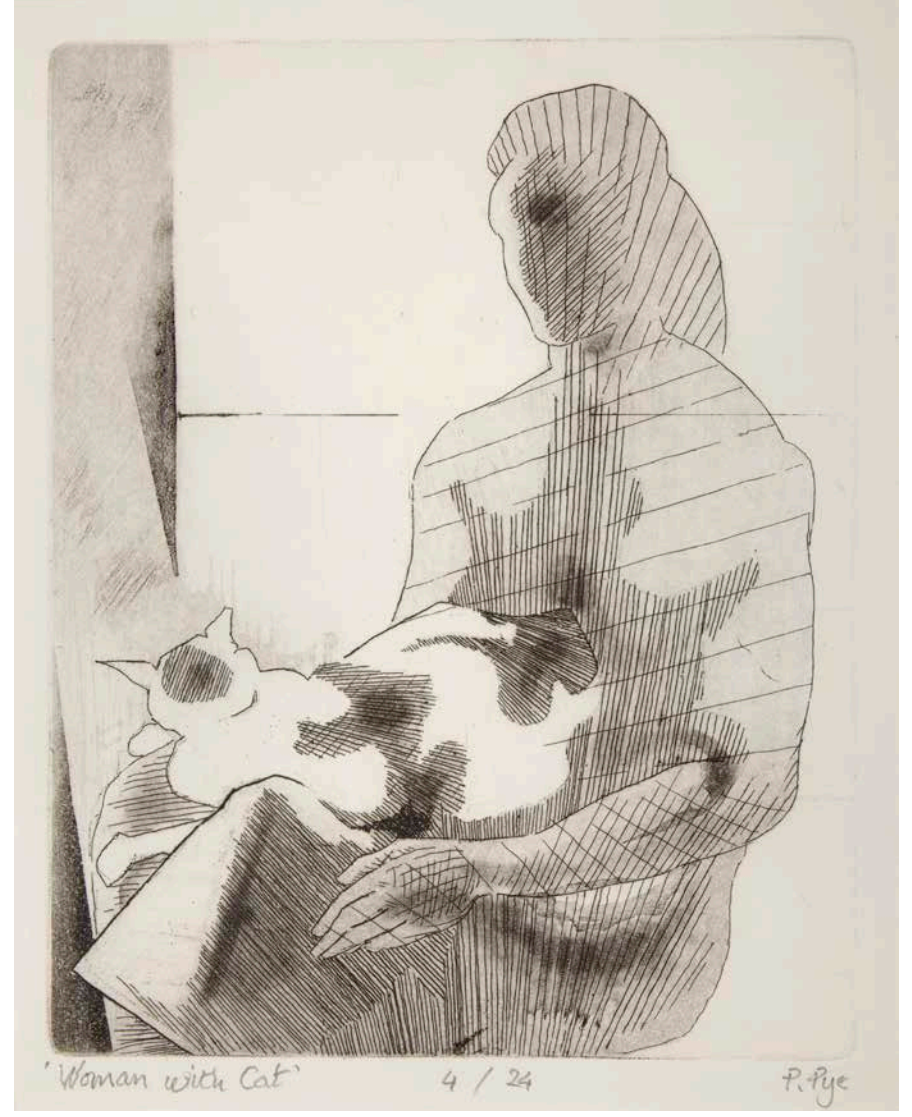
Lee Welch, *the Beheading of the Forerunner*, acrylic on polyester, 2018

Jay Murphy, *Leaving Shadows 4*, oil on canvas, 2019





Eva Rothschild, *Intro*, polyurethane resin, steel, acrylic spray paint & varnish, 11/12, 2018

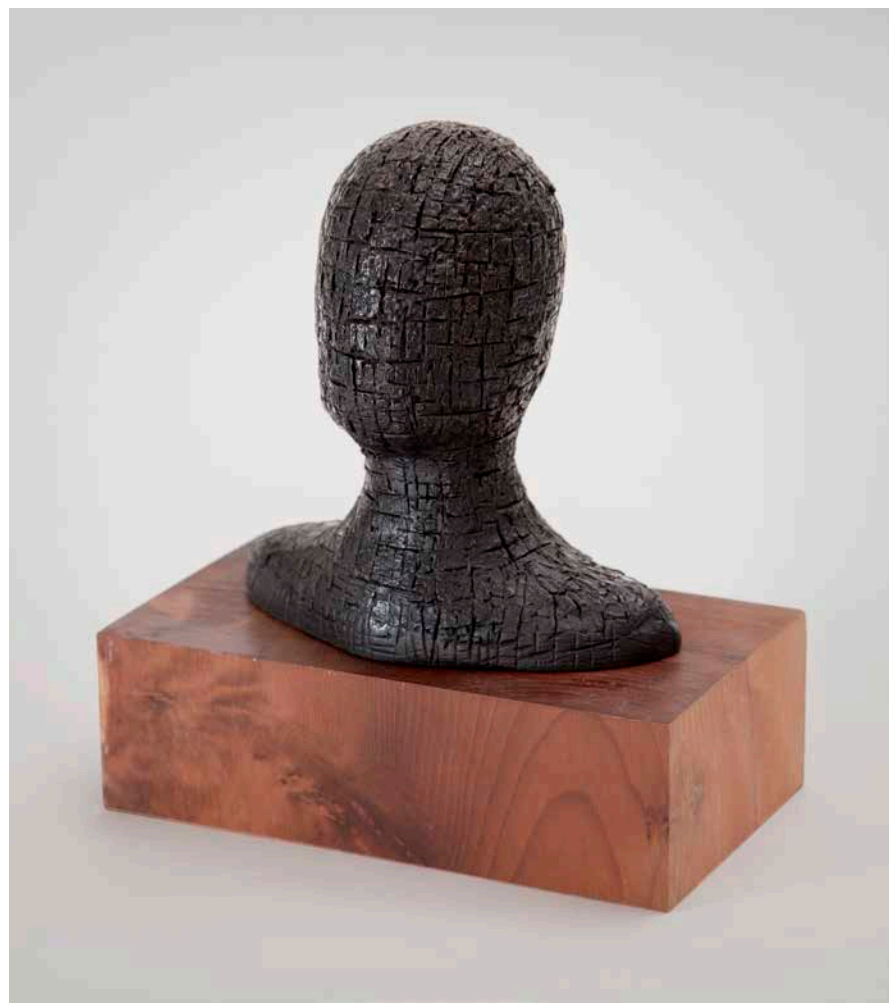


Patrick Pye, *Woman with Cat*, etching, 4/24, 1994



David Quinn, *Boy*, mixed media on board, 2019

Stephen Lawlor, *Lucrezia IV*, bronze, 1/15, 2014





Gerry Balfe Smyth, *Window, St Teresa's Garden's*, giclée print, 1/5, 2011

Irene Barry, *Twilight*, lambda e-print, 1/10, 2012





Eleanor McCaughey, *Family Hour*, oil on canvas, 2017



James McKenna, *Celt*, plaster, c.2000



Vanessa Donoso Lopez, *Humbala*, ceramic from clay dug in Girona, Sevilla, Cordoba & Soira; porcelain, earthenware, stoneware; metal & glass, 2018

Ailbhe Ní Bhriain, *Inscriptions (#5)*, giclée print, 1/10, 2017/18





Siobhán Twomey, *Blots*, photopolymer etching, 1/3, 2019



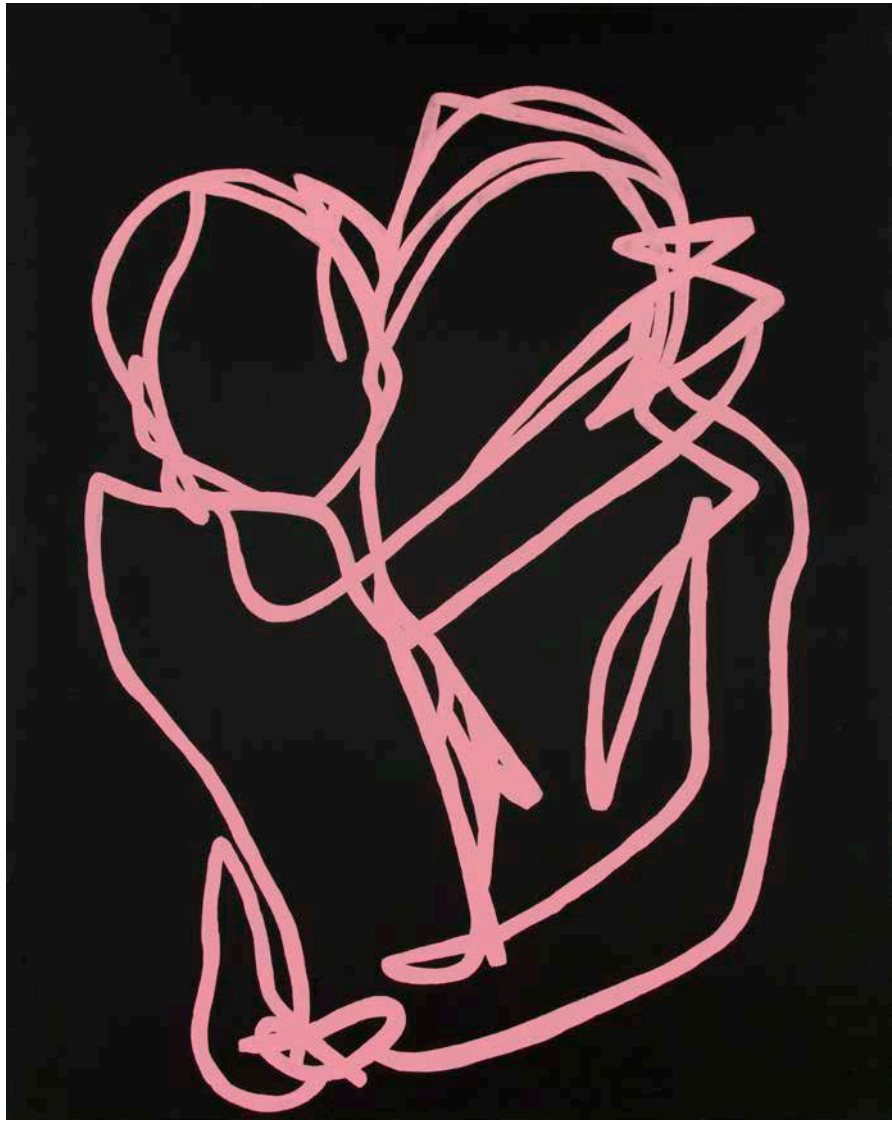
Oscar Fouz Lopez, *Mmmm*, acrylic on canvas, 2016



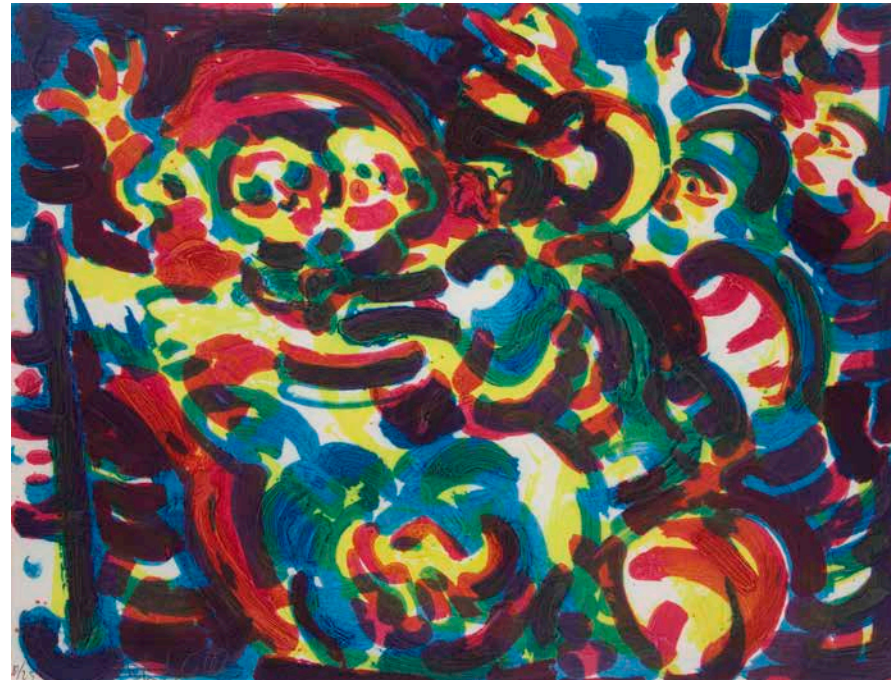
Stephen Rothschild, *Wiremen*, acrylic on canvas, 1991

Conor Roycroft, *Necropolis*, etching & aquatint, 1/1, 2019





Sinéad Cunningham, *Kiss*, emulsion and acrylic on canvas, 2005



Michael Cullen, *After Caravaggio*, carborundum, 10/25, 1998



Brian Maguire, *Plastic Blow Up Monument for the Top of Grafton Street*, etching, 18/50, 1987



Alex de Rooek, *Owner*, ink on paper, 2016



John Kindness, *Charles Coote, Earl of Bellamont*, etching, 10/25, 1998

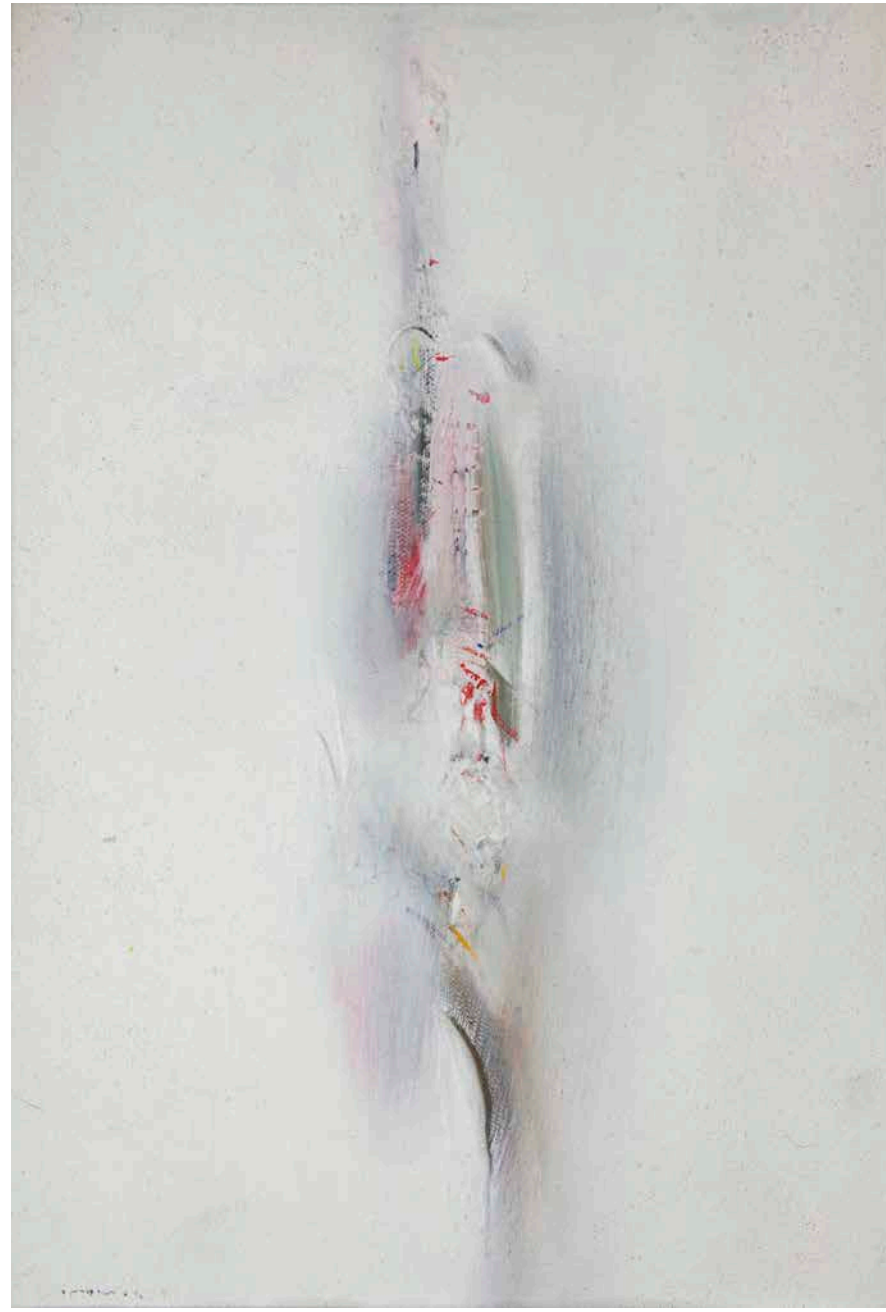
Maggie Kiely, *Untitled*, inkjet print, 1/5, 2017





Patrick Graham, *Pieta and Odalisque Series, Odalisque 3*, ink & mixed media on paper, 2001

Louis le Brocqy, *Young Woman*, oil on board, 1962



Hannah Fitz, *LIAR LIAR*, steel, card, plaster, fibreglass, resin, paint, pleather, glass bottles, T-shirt, 2019

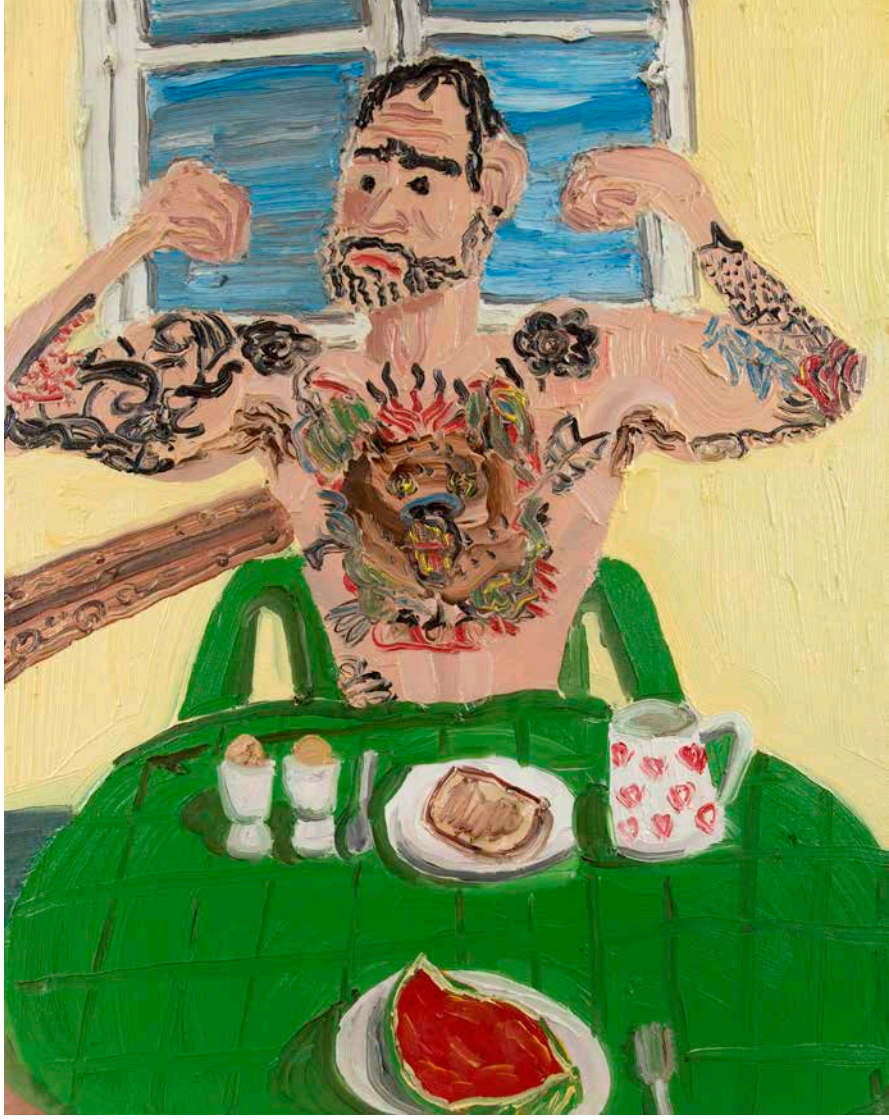




Caroline Patten, *Courtesans*, acrylic on linen, 2014

Fiona Quill, *Weed as noxious growth*, screen print, 3/5, 2014





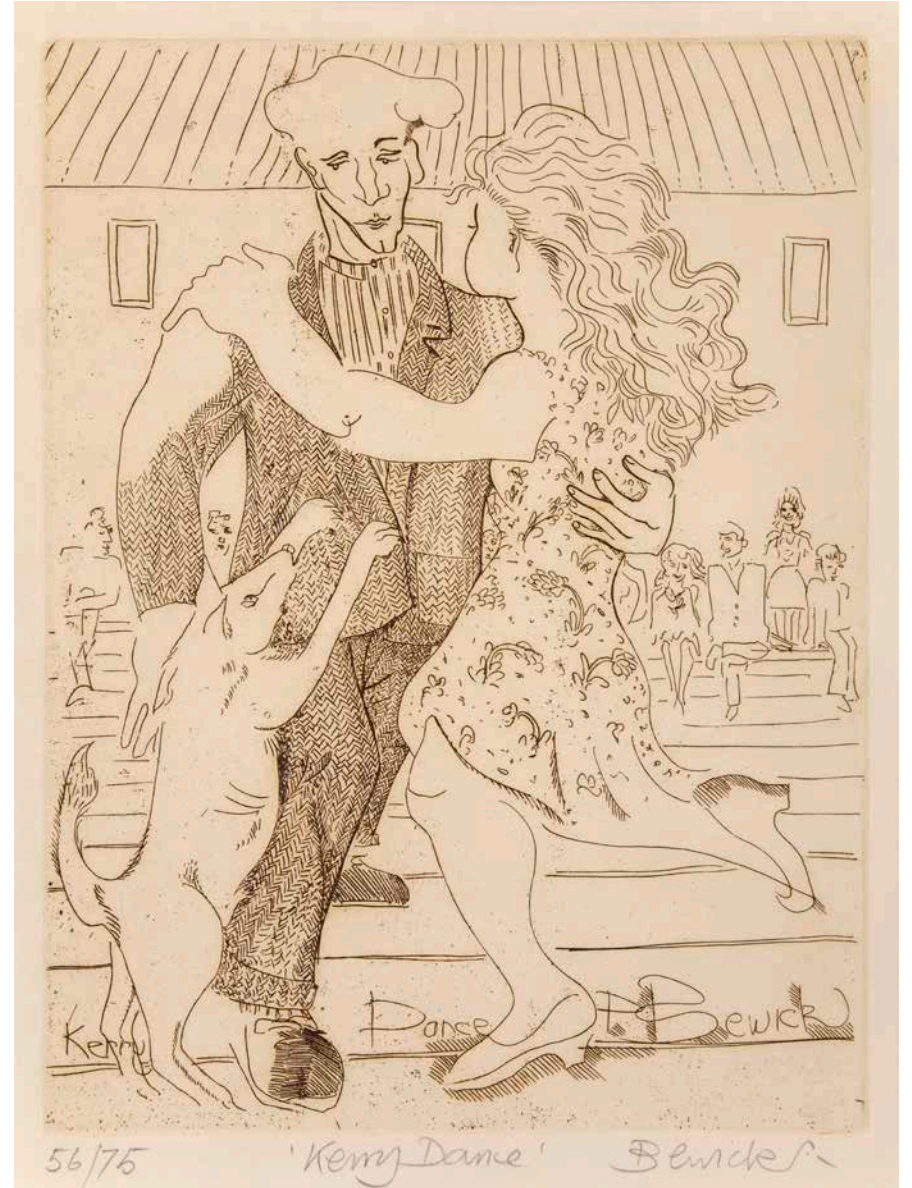
Amanda Doran, *Beast Mode*, oil on canvas, 2019



Jason Ellis, *Luxembourg Rose*, limestone, 2013



Carmel Benson, *Knowing*, lithograph, 12/16, 1986



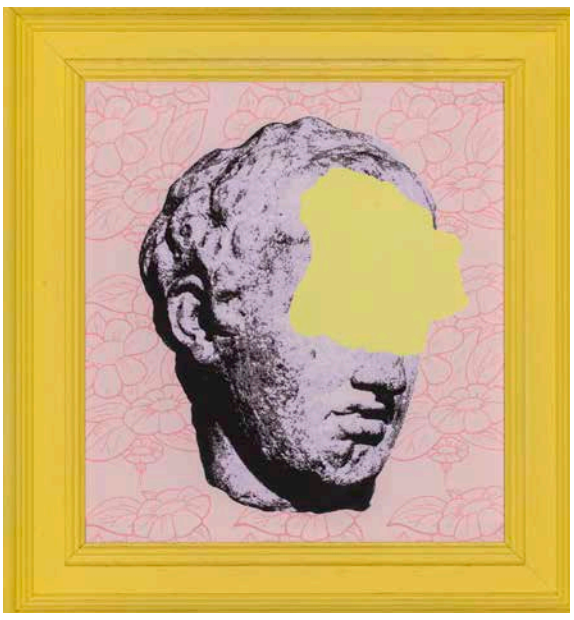
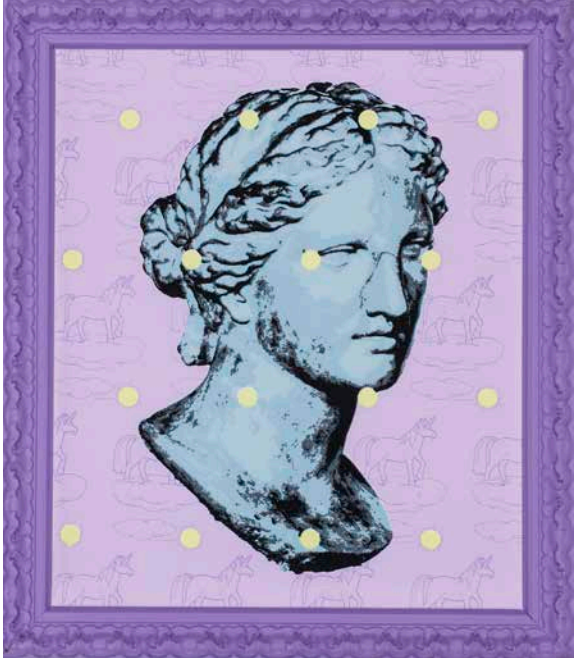
Pauline Bewick, *Kerry Dance*, etching, 56/75, 1977



Terence Gravett, *Gods and Giants at Delphi*, woodblock & screenprint, 15/15, 1992

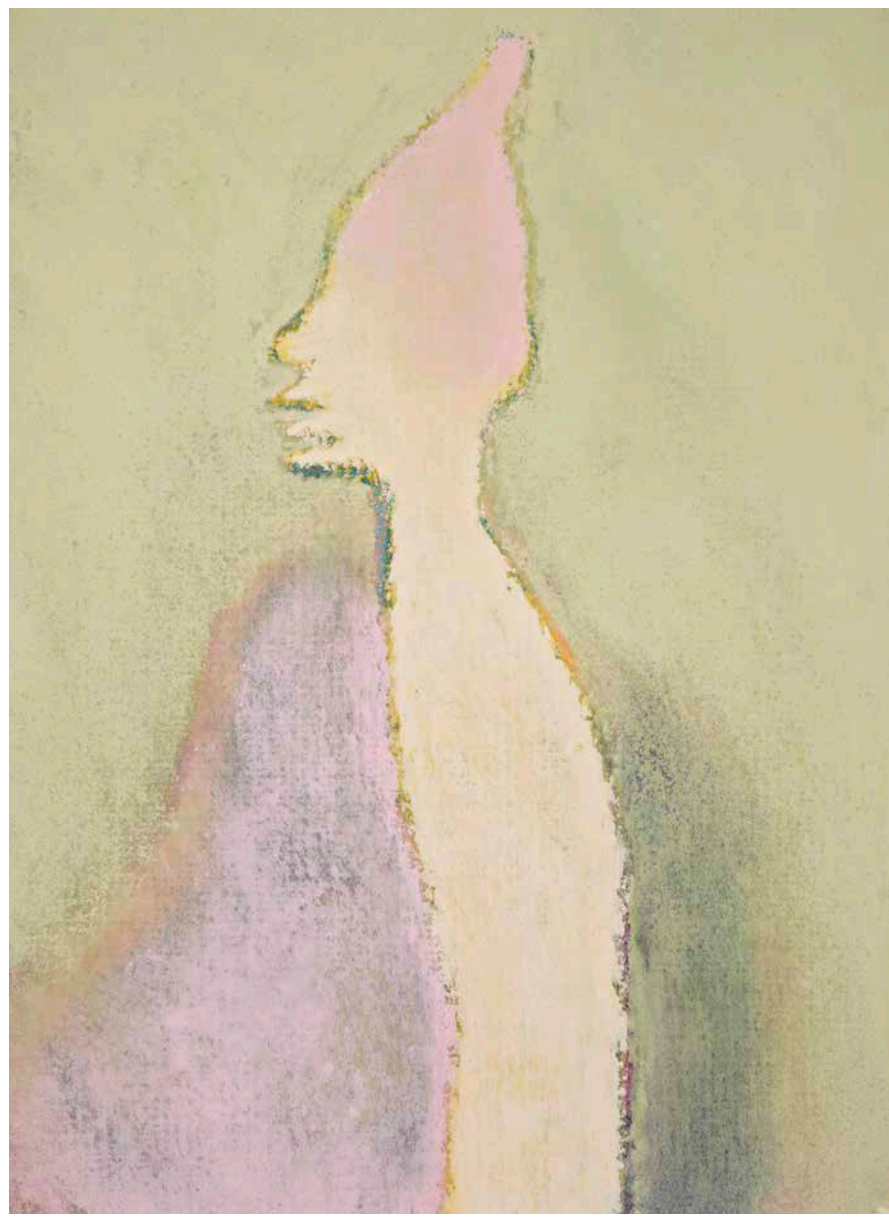
Ed Rourke, *Untitled (Head)*, wood, 2008





Jordan McQuaid, *Play-toh*, screenprint in custom frame, 2/5, 2016
Jordan McQuaid, *Unicorn Lady*, screenprint in custom frame, 2/5, 2016

Denis Farrell, *African Figurine*, pastel on paper, 1997

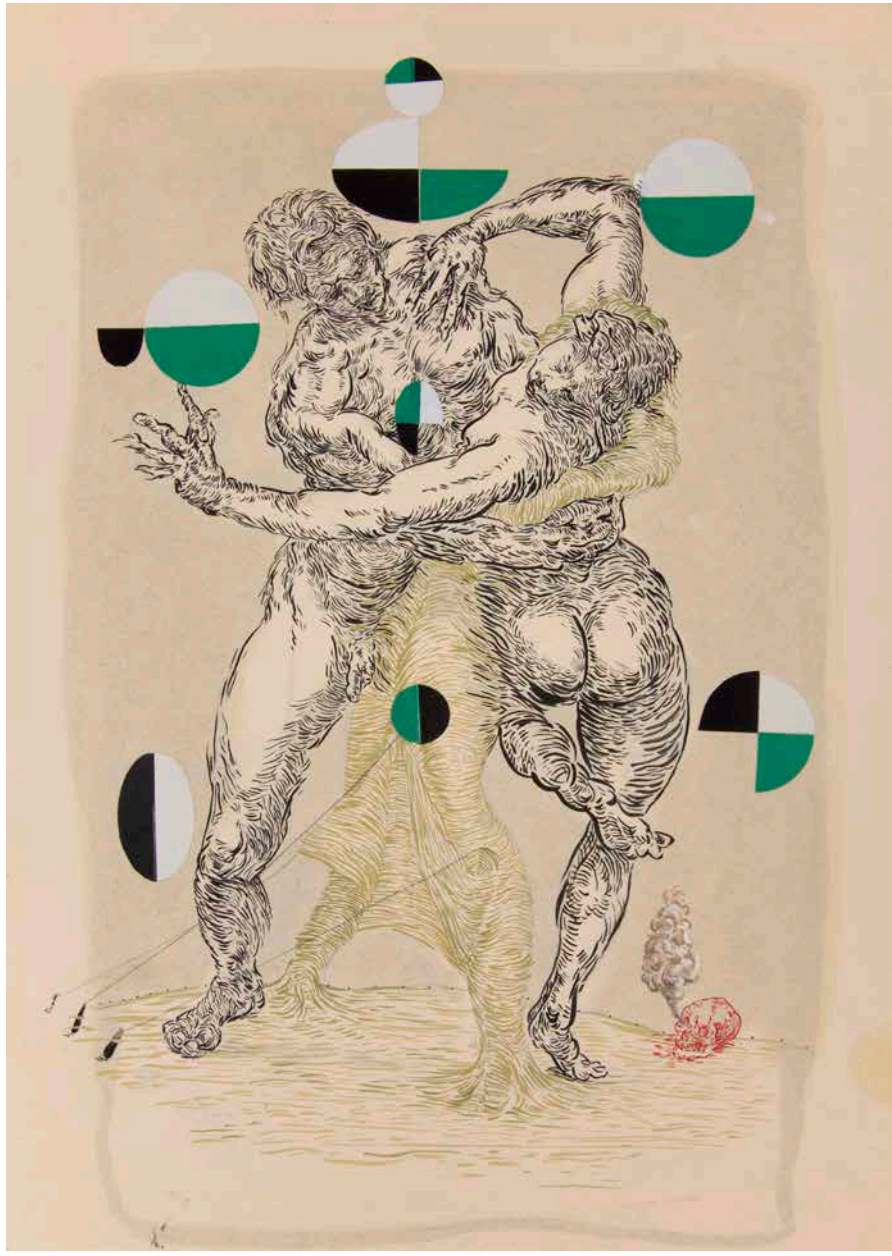




Murriel Brandt, *Sun Hat*, oil on board, c.1945

Ailbhe Large, *Untitled*, earthenware, glaze, wood & paint, 2004





Johnny Fitzsimons, *Hypostassis (detail)*, ink, gouache, pencil & tape on paper over board, 2014

Rita Duffy, *Peep Z*, gouache on tin, 2018

Cecilia Moore, *Big Head*, silver-plated copper & silver-plated nickel silver, 2014





Ella Bertilsson & Ulla Juske, *Beyond the Sandy Suburbs* (stills 1-3), giclée prints, 1/5, 2018



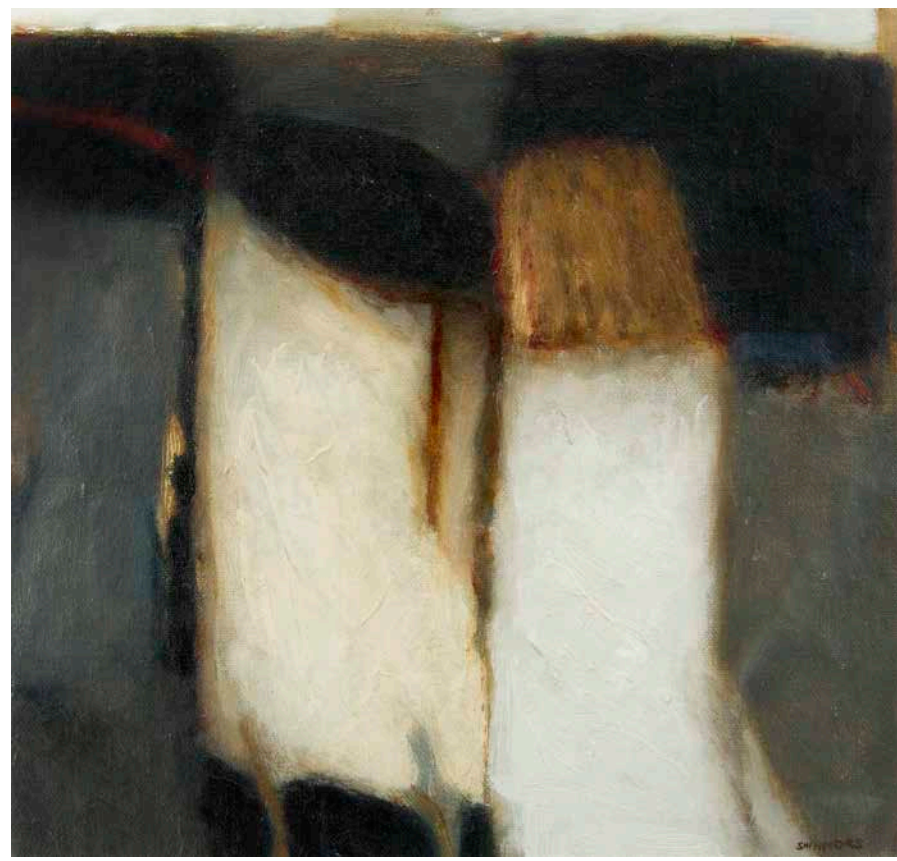
Emily Mannion, *St Lucy*, oil on panel, 2019

Claire Carpenter, *Cold Shouldered*, tempera on panel, 2009
Adam Matek, *Domoludki*, etching, 33/40, 1994





Deirdre McLoughlin, *Black Madonna*, bronze, 1/3, 2008



John Shinnors, *Starecrow, Lovers I*, oil on canvas, 1993



Alice Maher, *Lectores Mirabiles V*, charcoal on paper, 2004



Alice Maher, *Lectores Mirabiles VI*, charcoal on paper, 2004

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

Double Estate

Pearse Museum, Dublin

September – December 2020

Works from the Office of Public Works' State Art Collection and Pearse Museum Collection

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Collections Curator at Pearse Museum: Brian Crowley

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Logistics: Dr Louise Kelly

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Dedicated to Janet Mullarney (1952-2020) & Michael Cullen (1946-2020)



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