

Siobhán HAPASKA & Stephen McKENNA

30 November 2012 – 19 January 2013

Reception, Thursday 29 November, 6 – 8 pm

This exhibition with its unlikely combination of two artists, Siobhán Hapaska and Stephen McKenna, provides a timely opportunity to showcase two highly individual positions on contemporary sculpture and painting.

Since the mid-1990s, Siobhán Hapaska's oeuvre has encompassed both abstract and figurative sculptures, film and photography, often presented together as parts of more complex environments resulting in a body of work that is multi layered and technically complex. Often difficult to categorize, her conceptually intuitive practice employs a huge array of diverse materials in a dense play of imagery and ideas resulting in work that is always highly charged with cultural and socio-political themes. In recent years Hapaska's particular use of natural materials such as olives and the olive tree, leather and stone has drawn our attention to the history of belief systems and religious ideology. This new selection of work includes light emitting selenite crystals, olive tree root balls kept in a constant state of migration and a human size falconry hood normally used to help the untamed become acclimatized to humans and the human world. It is obvious that Hapaska's concern with our contemporary condition of displacement and loss is to the fore while retaining a crucial element of humour and an underlying hopefulness.

Stephen McKenna, now 73, is a painter whose work is equally difficult to categorize. Since long before his influential solo shows at Modern Art Oxford (1983) and Institute of Contemporary Art, London (1985) McKenna resolutely followed his own path and has remained impervious to changing art fashions. With a scrutinizing gaze and an accomplished, idiosyncratic style McKenna's practice has addressed all the conventional genres that dominate the history of painting and classical antiquity. McKenna draws on the hard won skills and knowledge of the history of painting to create contemporary works that not only never fail to intrigue and fascinate but not surprisingly have the wherewithal to stand the test of time. We are delighted to be presenting a very particular selection of work from 1970 to the present.

Hapaska has had solo exhibitions in recent years at Camden Arts Centre, London, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Glasgow, Pier Trust, London, Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery, Stockholm and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York. She has also participated in various group exhibitions at venues such as Kunsthau Graz, Austria, Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint Etienne, Musée d'art moderne at contemporain, Toulouse, France, Deste Foundation, Athens and Magasin 3, Stockholm. In 1997, she took part in Documenta X and in 2001 she represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale.

McKenna has had major solo exhibitions at the Modern Art Oxford, Stadtische Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Ca di Fra, Milan and the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin. Most recent exhibitions include The Paradise [36], Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ever Since I Put Your Picture In A Frame, 42 Carlton Place, Glasgow, Brillianfeuerwerk, Haus der Kunst, Munich and Tate Britain, Turner Prize Retrospective. In 1982, He participated in Documenta 7 and his work is represented in the collections of the Tate Gallery, London, the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Staedtische Sammlungen, Rheinhausen, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels and Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands.

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