

Irish Artist Rein vigorates Vanitas Genre

Ordinary objects realistically portrayed

By **MARTIN MURPHY**
Epoch Times Staff

DUBLIN, Ireland—Conor Walton continues his signature battle with the ancients and the moderns as he supports the crafts and techniques of the past and also sculpts modern images with oil paint.

Conor Walton's latest exhibition entitled "Landscape and Still Life," dedicated to the memory of Epoch Times Ireland Chief Editor Leo Harris (1930–2008), adds to this Dublin-born artist's remarkable collection of work.

Walton's forthcoming exhibition is a collection of landscape and still life. The landscapes are set in Ireland and Italy. The Vanitas theme is the thread that runs through all the still life paintings.

A type of still life art that flourished in 17th century Netherlands, Vanitas features objects such as a skull, crucifix, or a snuffed-out candle to indicate the passing of time. Thus bring another dimension to the reception of the objects in the paintings.

The artist explained his approach: "It is about keeping and withholding the objects at the same time, making the viewer do a cer-

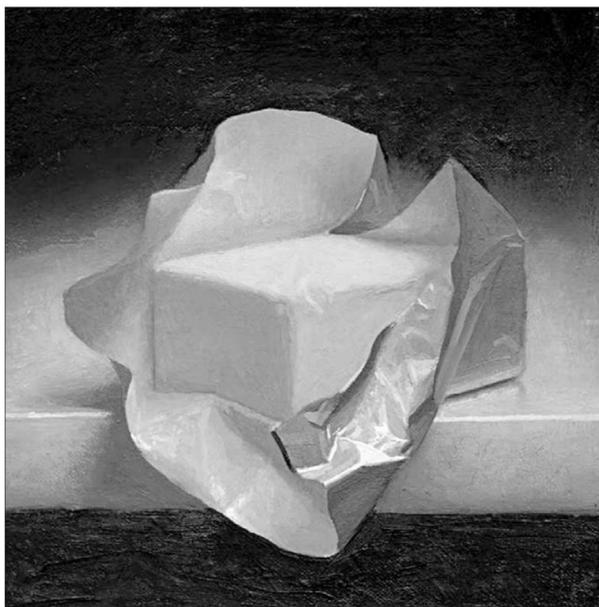
tain amount of work. ... I am really trying to give as much of the object as I can. ... It makes your imagination work; it is not about handling everything on a plate. ... I try to make my painting work on as many levels as possible."

Gemma Tipton, a writer and critic based in Dublin, described Walton's work as "a moment held eternal in art; in the face of implied temporal decay ... nothing on the printed page or in the pixels of the Internet prepare you for the reality of Walton's paintings in front of you. There is a shocking brilliance to them and a sense that through them, you are making a connection to either Plato's form or what indeed lies beneath."

"In an art historical context, his work could be said to sit between the traditions of Vanitas and the formal still life that elect to show timeless perfection," said Tipton.

The artist studied in the National College of Art and Design, graduating with a joint honors degree in the history of art and fine art (painting). He received a special commendation and prize for his thesis "Abstraction: A Discourse on Language and Painting."

The dissertation for his masters in art history and theory at the



Butter COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Lime Trees COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

University of Essex was "The Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns." Walton studied techniques of the old masters in Florence, then returned to Dublin in 1996, where he had his first solo exhibition in 1999.

Walton now lives and works near Ashford, County Wicklow.

The art world is starting to take notice. "In all of Conor Walton's work a transformation takes place. He recognizes immediately, as he

says himself, that this transformation is the common denominator of all painting," said art historian Bruce Arnold.

Conor Walton's fifth solo show, "Landscape and Still Life," will be

on exhibit from the Feb. 27 until the March 14, 2009, at Jorgensen Fine Art, 29 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. To find out more, visit Conorwalton.com and Jorgensenfineart.com.

Puppeteer: Performers 'just melted into the music'

Appreciation despite differences

By **XIN WANG**
Epoch Times Staff

OSAKA, Japan—Divine Performing Arts (DPA) International Company thrilled audiences at Osaka's renowned Umeda Arts Theater on Feb. 18. Osaka is known as the economic center of Japan.

"It [DPA] truly is extremely beau-



tiful," said Ms. Yoshida, a Japanese puppeteer. She began dancing at a young age. At the age of 12 studied she studied with Koushi Yoshida,

a renowned puppet show master. Today, she is famous in her in right, often traveling to Canada, Japan, and Korea to perform.

"I started to learn Japanese dance when I was young. Chinese classical dance really greatly differs from Japanese dance. I liked the program Flowing Sleeves. Those wide sleeves are dignified, natural, and poised. They display Chinese women's gracefulness and gentleness. It is a unique style."

Ms. Yoshida said that it is the first time she has seen story-based

dances integrated perfectly with state-of-the-art digital backdrops of vast pastorals, celestial palaces, and majestic temples. These enable audience members to easily grasp the meaning of the dances. Based upon ancient heroic legends and modern courageous tales, gorgeously costumed dancers move in stunning synchronized patterns.

"The dancers' performances are very precise. Every performer just melted into the music."

From the opening gong that heralds the start of each show, to riv-

eting drum sequences, soulful erhu solos, and hypnotic bamboo flutes, the orchestra's expressiveness imparts an unforgettable dimension to every dance.

Ms. Yoshida said she was pleased to see such a beautiful performance, which she said will be of tremendous help in her own work as a puppet master.

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of the Divine Performing Arts 2009 World Tour.

For more information please see DivinePerformingArts.org



PERFECTLY INTEGRATED: Professional puppeteer Ms. Yoshida said the Divine Performing Arts performance would be a great help in her work.



The Musician's Desk COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

An Artist's Journey From Ireland and Back

Work in animation jumpstarts painting career

By **MARTIN MURPHY**
Epoch Times Staff

DUBLIN—The Oisín Gallery is situated near Pearse Street train station in Dublin. Along with thousands of other commuters I pass its front window almost every day, flowing with the stream of passengers heading for work in the city.

Like many passersby, I turn my head to glimpse the painting on display. More often than not I strain to keep it in view as I am swept past.

Once, I hopped out of the crowd onto the gallery's step for a better view. I'm not too sure why I stopped for a closer look that morning; perhaps it was the dark winter which created a frame around the gallery window acting as a border to the painting, mounting it on the brightly lit window.

The painting was so detailed that it looked like a photograph in this setting. I wanted to know who painted it—maybe it was a famous artist of the Renaissance.

The gentleman in the shop filled me in. The artist's name was Owen Rohu. Rohu lives in Ireland—Westport, County Mayo, to be precise. Any further west and he would be in New York. He was born and educated in Dublin, and studied Visual Communications, majoring in Illustration, at the Dublin

College of Marketing and Design.

I was surprised that Rohu started his career as a background artist with Murakami Wolf, a Dublin animation production company, before moving to 20th Century Fox Animation Studios in Phoenix, Arizona.

Rohu said that as long as he could remember he had an interest in drawing and painting. "As a 12-year-old I enrolled in an adult education class in drawing and didn't feel too much out of place."

Throughout his school years, Rohu developed his "innate interest in a quiet way, finding inspiration in nature and solving problems through instructional books." At the age of 15 he won the Wilkinson Memorial Award in art and design.

After learning more about animation, the artist became interested in the atmospheric beauty of background painting and the prospects of working in the movie business. Painting for a living became appealing. "From that point I focused my attention on building a career in painting. Becoming a background artist seemed a good way to achieve that ambition."

While working in Phoenix, Arizona Rohu enrolled in evening classes at the Scottsdale Art School to further his development as a painter. While there he of-

ten spent many evenings painting with friends after work. His teacher Joshua Fallik taught him "how to paint with oils and engendered in me a love for still lifes."

Rohu said many artists influenced him. "Sometimes it's the smallest thing in another artist's work that excites. I make a mental note to improve my painting by really pushing intense color I've seen or play with color temperature as seen in the paintings of Anders Zorn."

Four years after arriving in Arizona Rohu and his wife moved to Sydney Australia to work at the Walt Disney Studios. While in Sydney, Rohu said, "My interest in oil painting was rapidly beginning to eclipse my career as a background artist and I made a decision to return to Ireland to pursue a career as a full time artist."

Returning to Ireland, Rohu staged his first one-man show at the Oisín Gallery in 2006.

His advice for budding painters: "If there is one thing I would try to get across to someone embarking on a career in art it would be to trust that your own personal style will emerge if you paint, paint and paint some more. It's as natural as handwriting."

Owen Rohu is currently exhibiting in Gallery 13, Hollywood, L.A. and the Oisín Gallery, Dublin.

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