

**2. THE ARTS AND THE SMART ECONOMY**  
Our artistic community is a nerve that flexes the creative economy muscle. The arts instinctively foster those attributes of the enterprise model articulated in the Government's framework document *Building Ireland's Smart Economy*. Lateral thinking, big ideas, resourcefulness and invention, problem-solving, vision and originality find full expression in the output of Irish artists, and their work percolates many walks of Irish life. Dr Richard Tol at the ESRI: "Innovation is

about creativity and skills, just like art is. Soon you will not be able to get a degree in electrical engineering at Princeton without having taken drama. The reasoning is that anyone can acquire skills, but the competitive edge is in creativity. Ireland beats Princeton hands down in the arts."

**3. THE ARTS AND CULTURAL TOURISM**  
There is a reason, certainly not the climate, why thousands are compelled to travel here, and cultural tourism disperses €2.3 billion

annually in local economies. This is a bona fide growth industry in Ireland, with projected upward trends of 15 per cent. As with landscape and heritage, the arts have a starring role in how we give our visitors a unique cultural experience, from our mighty international festivals of the performing arts to our vivid traditional music by a convivial hearth. Long before they arrive, it's our writers, film-makers and touring performers who whet their appetite to come.

**4. THE ARTS AND EMPLOYMENT**

**Cultural exports (clockwise from top left): Neil Jordan; Seamus Heaney presents Edna O'Brien the Bob Hughes Lifetime Achievement Award; Garry Hynes with Cillian Murphy and Anne-Marie Duff in the Druid production of *Playboy of the Western World*; John Banville; Brendan Gleeson; Bono; *Riverdance*; Altan.** Photographs: Alan Betson; Keith Pattison; Reuters; Getty Images; AP Photo; Bryan O'Brien

artist's voice is woven into reconciling the past, imagining as important now as at any of moments when our forefathers counsel. The citizenship of the active.

Gerry Godley is director of Impro and a member of the National Arts, being launched today by most significant institutions and artists. To join the campaign, see

# Contradictions in an abandoned house



AIDAN DUNNE

## VISUAL ARTS

Many of Jennifer Trouton's paintings of a dilapidated house are outstanding, Paki Smith exhibits an eclectic survey, and NCAD's gallery displays two recent graduates

JENNIFER TROUTON'S exhibition *Still*, at the Molesworth Gallery, is a pictorial exploration of an abandoned house, from external views of its faded wooden walls and broken windows to snapshots of its worn interior, littered with fragmentary and broken

possessions. That's one way of looking at it, at any rate, though there is no guarantee of exact continuity between the various images, and there are some indications that more than one location is involved. The exterior views, of a dilapidated house resembling a vernacular American clapboard farmhouse, are consistent, and evoke the kind of homesteads familiar from various literary and artistic sources, including Andrew Wyeth's paintings. They also recall films, and almost all the images in the show have a photographic character, with selectively sharp and softer focus, for example.

With the paintings that depict interiors, though, while we can assume we are seeing what's inside the house, it's not quite clear-cut. There are studies of surprisingly pristine-looking swathes of decorative cloth, as well as more obvious scenes of localised decay.

Trouton is a skilled, meticulously realist painter who has been consistently interested in the layers and contradictions inherent in the idea of a single, coherent surface. Her previous show, *Ellipses*, anatomised an urban house, discerning in its

decorative history and the traces of its departed inhabitants' stories of hopes and disappointments, dreams and realities. In the context of the domestic, the evident, integral surface, she implied, is temporary, necessarily incomplete, full of gaps and clues, and always just an episode in an unfolding drama. It reflects the fleeting human presence.

In one sequence of paintings in *Still*, we see printed patterns worn down and destroyed by time. They could be symbolic of our best-laid plans and schemes. Overall, a certain unease emanates from the images. There is something slightly forbidding about the abandoned house, and such details as broken crockery and – a particularly strong painting – a doll's head on the floor could hint at a violent event.

Hence the sense of aftermath, of quietness following calamity, which we can read literally or symbolically. The show works very well in terms of the cumulative interaction of the paintings, but not at the expense of the individual pieces: each is beautifully made and many are outstanding.

WHILE IT'S NEARING the end of its run, there is still time to see



Paki Smith's *The Red Thread* at the Douglas Hyde Gallery, and it's well worth seeing. Smith has worked a great deal in the film industry, on props and sets, but he hasn't exhibited here for a

Above: *Fallow I* by Jennifer Trouton. Right: *Colossus or Nebuchadnezzar's Dream* by Paki Smith



long time. His show is something of a survey, encompassing many paintings, drawings, books and notebooks, sculpture and two film installations, including the marvellous *God's Kitchen*. There's almost too much to deal with, an unusual complaint in relation to the Douglas Hyde, but some of the paintings lose out because they're swamped by ancillary material. One can easily imagine a much smaller show comprising a limited number of paintings. It would be worth doing.

It's true that generosity to the point of excess suits the mood of Smith's work. He embraces sweeping mythical narratives, replete with symbols and portents, magic and mysticism, inner visions and a compelling sense of personal destiny. The mix is wildly eclectic, and although there's more than a touch of the fairground and the comic book to it all, he is not

being i  
postm  
the ep  
one fe  
about  
reality  
a matt  
Min  
doesn'  
when  
impon  
for ex  
ago, a  
porrid  
in apo  
ambiti  
and de  
The  
appro  
Galler  
Indiar  
20th c  
functi  
prayer  
horosi  
art as  
levels,