

The Silo Gallery





(inspired by [Jeremy Henderson](#)'s *I ran down the Hill of History*)

*I stood mesmerized by one painting
It's a landscape of hills and valleys, water and sky
that took me way back
to the Broadhaven Bay I knew.
There was something else that drew me in;
I stepped nearer to see what it might be.*

*Closer up the image blurred,
a kaleidoscope of paint
carefully applied
but apparently random.
When I stood back and then further back
the image cleared, my focus sharpened.*

The artist wants me to stand back

*if you want to clearly understand history and events,
you must stand well back
for the clearer sharper view.*

*Patricia's passion and commitment
to her late husband's work came through
in every word, every gesture, and every
piece of information she imparted.
We imbibed all this and looked at
the exhibition with renewed appreciation.
Thank you, Patricia.*

John Monaghan

The Art of Sliabh Beagh



Hello Crow

after a Sliabh Beagh Arts sculpture

*Hello Crow, how bright the light
That shines in your gimlet eye
Set amongst furls of fine plumage
Illustrated by the glittering voids
Made in the blackened metal plate
By the artist's sharp, cultured blade.*

*The plate sits upon an armature
Of concrete and oxidised iron
From the steel rods thrust*

*Into the new quickened concrete.
Now half-freed by carnage of time
To create a perch just for you, Crow.*

John Llewellyn James

Common Ground hosts a number of artworks by [Sliabh Beagh Arts](#)







[With Love From Gilbert and George](#)

*A Review of Scapegoating by Gilbert & George Exhibition at The Mac in Belfast
26 January – 22 April 2018.*

I confess I was unsure as to what to make of the controversialist artists Gilbert & George before visiting the Exhibition. Over the years I had seen half a dozen of their works individually in different galleries and I found them interesting and challenging, but I don't think I really *got* them.

What hits you first is the sheer scale of many of the artworks. Their size is quite overwhelming and they use a stark colour palette of blacks, reds and whites, echoing the De Stijl movement of the Netherlands in the last century. The effect is confrontational, deliberately so in fact. Then the text, some scrawled as graffiti, in that virulent red, contains words, phrases and epithets which are often aggressive, challenging, rude and in some cases, offensive.

Gilbert & George are offended by religion; they are ardent secularists and committed humanists who, because of their homosexuality, were cast in the role of outsiders and excluded. Instead of simply accepting the straitjacket of narrow-minded judgmentalism they used it as they used themselves – as the basis of their art, to provoke, to challenge, to question the very nature of what opposed them. Religion tried – and today still tries – to paint them as *scapegoats* for all the ills of the society that we endure. In this exhibition they have turned that on its head and have responded by challenging religious dogma.

They have taken the things they find on their doorstep in the East End of London; from the images of women in Whitechapel clad in the traditionalist black burka to the disposed-of metal cartridges of nitrous oxide (known as *laughing gas* or *hippy crack*) scattered in the gutters or littering back gardens. These look like bullet-casings, or eerily like the German bombs that used to fall on London during the Blitz.

The figures of the burka-clad women seem anachronistic, alien and even demonic – for instance in *Vallance Road*. They are castigated by the political Right as being *foreign* and *un-British* because they hold onto their religious and cultural identity in such a visible way, that threatens this ideological group, because of the assertive demonstration of their *otherness* while on the Left they are seen as *victims* of an illiberal, misogynistic and backward-

looking patriarchal culture; yet many devout Muslim women appear to reject any emancipatory aspiration. To both groups the burka-clad women are an all-too-convenient scapegoat and are targeted as such, cast as the contemporary *bogeymen*.

Gilbert & George show they feel an empathy towards them and the often ugly situation they find themselves in.

The compositions also include their own self-images, a *leitmotif* running through all their art, standing square-on, be-suited and in sentry formation; sometimes no more than a transfer – a ghost-image, or dissected into ribbons and strips, or even disarticulated into their component parts.

Experiencing these images in such a visceral way, in huge cathedral chambers, where they bear down on the awestruck viewer from the white-washed walls, I found myself tremendously moved.

This is how Gilbert & George would wish it. They are contemptuous of what they see as the cold, sterile *art for art's sake* of the work of many of their peers, produced with a sneer at the ordinary man and woman in the street. They are fully engaged with the world on their doorstep: their love of London, Britain, and the people – comes blazing through their images.

In particular, there is a film from 1980 entitled *The World of Gilbert & George* which is shown on a loop. You can join it at any time because it is a series of images, commentaries, observations, poetry and dialogues. Highlights for me were the middle-aged drunk, ruminating on his life; a naked, semi-erect, young man, defiantly smoking a cigarette, thoughts and emotions playing across his face, as if it was a movie on a cinema screen; and the artists themselves dancing to *Bend It* by Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich.

I think what struck me in particular, was that when you entered the lift to the Galleries, there was a transfer-printed message from the artists – *With Love from Gilbert & George*; and this was what this Exhibition was for me – a secular humanist love-letter to humanity itself from the artists; and it was beautiful.

John Llewellyn James

Featured Image: Belfast Telegraph [January 22nd](#)



Painting with a Camera

Richard Pierce has always been a painter. Born into an old Enniskillen family of builders, he was encouraged in the Arts throughout his childhood. He first took up photography when he was 16, recording family and friends, buildings and landscapes. It was his father's wish that he become an architect, being a more secure profession than that of an artist, but he continued to paint throughout his long and successful practice. His paintings are naturalistic, mainly landscapes, but with a confident, at times Fauvist use of colour and unusual composition, and his photographs soon became equally adventurous. When he lived in New York during the 1960s and 1970s he visited many galleries and museums and became fascinated by Abstract Expressionism, yet never adopted it as his personal style of painting, fearing that it might be seen simply as an affectation.

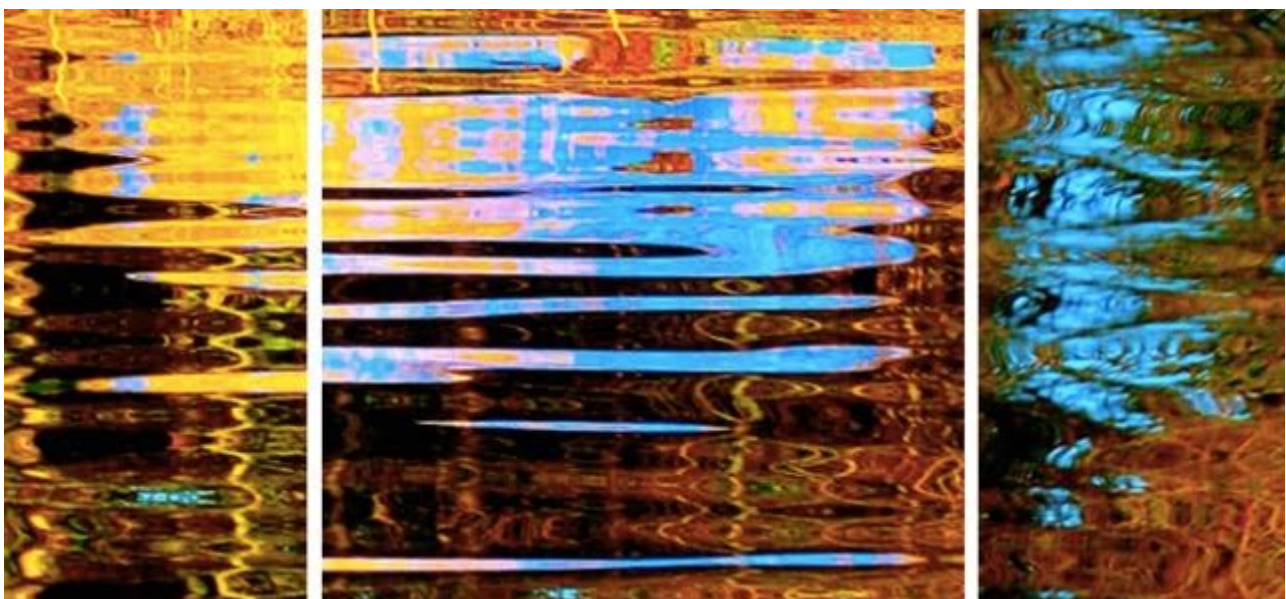
But his taste in paintings continued to influence his photography (he was never consciously influenced by the work of other photographers) and aroused the admiration of friends such as Hellen Lanigan Wood, then curator of the County Museum. Now, nearing 75, he finds himself with a second career that *seems much more natural and makes me happier than I have ever been in my life.*

His current exhibition in the [Hambly and Hambly](#) gallery at Dunbar House runs to the 21st of April features three distinct styles:

In the passageway of this Georgian basement (still featuring the bells once used to summon servants) are what he calls his *woodcuts with a camera*. These are views of a busy square in Helsinki in rain and darkness and under security lights, taken with a long exposure. The richly blurred and strongly monochrome result was enhanced by the creamy art paper and velvety ink.



One room is dedicated to surreptitious portraits of people who caught his eye, taken with a telephoto lens. They include beggars, drug dealers, and devotees of Art. He has an instinct for the bizarre and slightly grotesque. In 2016 he sent some to Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch which was celebrating the [500th](#) anniversary of Hieronymus Bosch, and was delighted to learn that they had been hung in the staff room.



see the world through a camera, he says, but with a painter's eye. This is seen most clearly in the abstract triptychs that make up the bulk of the exhibition, where colours and shapes defy ready interpretation. The effect

comes not from any darkroom trickery, but simply from knowing where to look; at the detail of a rusty tin roof in the featured image or, above, not directly at a blue boat but at its reflection in the water. The triptych form came about by accident when one client ordered a print to large to be carried into his house in one piece, but it has developed into a format of its own, where three different parts of the same original are in conversation with each other.

The results are all the work of one discerning and well-educated eye directing the camera at what is otherwise disregarded, yet they are reminiscent of a wide range of artists: from Miro, to Jack Yeats, to Hopper, to Bacon, to Richter.

You don't believe me? Go and see.

Jenny Brien

[Illustrating and Writing](#)



I grew up on the east coast of Scotland, born to Irish parents. My earliest memories all revolve around drawing, encouraged by a mother who was also an artist. For me, drawing and painting are critical forms of communication – and meditation.

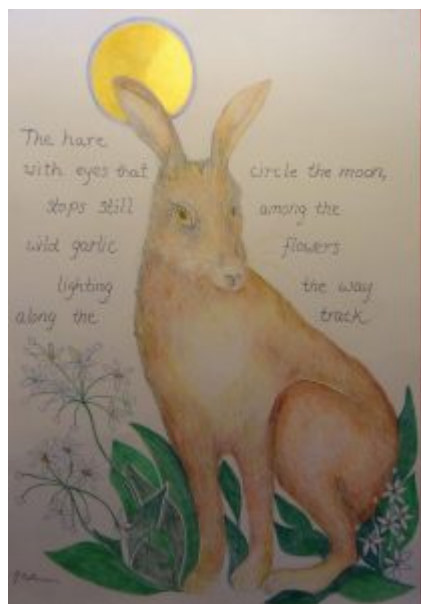
I trained in Design at Cardiff Art College in the early seventies and then went on to train as a teacher for primary age children, with art as my specialist subject. My creativity – when the pressure of work allowed – has evolved in many different ways since that time through different stimuli, professions and occupations: teaching art to children and young people of primary and secondary age, adults with severe and profound learning disabilities; teaching gardening to children; working in community and domestic gardens and working around twenty years as a Social Worker. In

addition, I worked as a library assistant for four years in the early eighties.

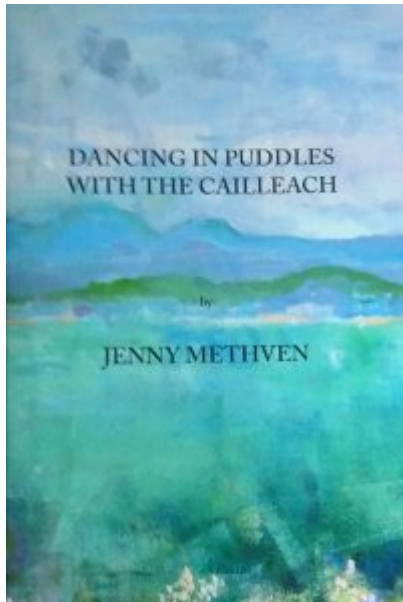
Now retired, I have returned to my first love – drawing and painting. I am now a full-time artist who also writes.

Much of my artwork and writing is based on themes relating to nature, my connection to it and to the animal world. In the past, I used words purely in note form to guide me in painting, but it was just shorthand for my eyes only. Over the years I have let the words expand into poems. Other work has begun purely as a series of visual images without words; the words come later.

It can be difficult to explain why some ideas become poems or other pieces of writing, while others are so visual they become paintings or drawings. I just know what is right for me: I see some experiences as strong visual images suited to artwork only and others demand the written word.



The *Moon Hare* poem was one of my poems accepted for Poetry NI's *Panning for Poems*, issue 4, Jan 2016. I initially created it as a poem on its own but later the image of the hare came to me and the two were combined.



My book – the collection of poems, *Dancing in Puddles with the Cailleach* – is illustrated with my own paintings and drawings.

I have created 'glyphs' (small black images – above) for chapter headings and illustrated maps for my husband's historical novel, *The Hare's Vision*. The glyphs are a means of adding interest and highlighting a general theme of the chapter; the maps provided detail of the journeys in the story.

I love books. I spent a year working in a bookshop and four years in a library. It was close to being a chocoholic in a chocolate factory. I have grown interested in the book as an art form in itself, much like the early books created by Medieval scribes.

At the moment I have several projects underway. One is creating illustrations for a children's book I am writing. I began this when I was still teaching. I am also using linocuts mixed with other media to create small books to illustrate particular poems I have written.



Jenny Methven

Fermanagh Film Club

In January 2018 Fermanagh Film Club celebrated its 10th anniversary with a programme of Fun, Film and Music in the Ardhoven Theatre, Enniskillen.

Short Films by Moving Image students from Erne Integrated, Enniskillen Royal Grammar and the South West College were screened in competition during the afternoon, followed by Irish Award Winning Shorts. The 'Big Film' was the Oscar-nominated *The Florida Project* which would go on to great acclaim. You saw it first in Fermanagh Film Club!

It was a long way from that first meeting in 2008. A small announcement in the local press invited anyone interested in forming a Film Club to a meeting in the Railway Hotel. Five people attended. Who could have imagined then the thriving club it would become?

The club is affiliated with Access Cinema and is supported by BFI, Film Hub NI and the Arts Council. The declared aim of Fermanagh Film Club is to bring a varied programme of art house films to as wide an audience as possible. With that in mind, this year's films included the Palestinian/Israeli film *In Between*, which looked at the challenges faced by young Arab-Israeli women living an independent life in Tel-Aviv who must negotiate being 'in between' cultures and traditions; and an Irish film *The Drummer & the Keeper* which explored the unlikely friendship between a chaotic young rock drummer and a young man with Asperger's Syndrome.

All films are shown in their original language with English subtitles. This year's languages included: Arabic, Danish, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Swedish and Russian. The Club has participated in the FLive festival and local community celebrations by showing films of special interest in addition to their seasonal programme. Vintage Hammer Horror films in the old Regal Cinema last Halloween, with the audience encouraged to come along in fancy dress, proved a big hit!

The club runs two seasons; from September to December and from January to April, with six films per season, but with funding from BFI on the theme of Diversity, we screened an additional film on Tuesday 10th April, the Oscar-nominated *Call Me by My Name*.

Fermanagh Film Club is open to everyone, and while new members are always welcome, you don't have to be a member to come to a film. You can buy a ticket at the door on the night.

Venue: Fermanagh House.

Time 8:00pm

Membership £24 (Student Membership £10).

Non-members £5 on the night. (Students £3 on the night).

The programme for 2018/19 will be on the website:
www.fermanaghfilmclub.com

Christina Campbell



[Paddy O'Killus](#)

I would not be surprised if you did not believe there is a connection with fireplaces in Enniskillen's Castle Coole, and the largest naked statue in London. Yet, in truth, I have informed knowledge of the aforementioned artefacts. Forgive this shameless plug: I wrote a tour of Castle Coole in verse, some copies of which may still be bought in *Collage Collective* in the Buttermarket or in *The Stables* at Castle Coole. As a House Guide in the years 1997-2000 I often described the tiny detailed artistic features exquisitely carved by Richard Westmacott in the four marble fireplaces positioned in each of the House's ground floor rooms. I would conclude: *Ladies & Gentleman, make sure if you are visiting London to view his remarkable statue at the Wellington Memorial in Park Lane. Westmacott was truly a master of the monumental as well as the miniature.*

This was London's first public nude sculpture since antiquity, based on an original on the Quirinal Hill in Rome thought to have been by the Greek sculptor Phidias. The Monument is dedicated to Duke of Wellington and is sited near Hyde Park Corner. It depicts the Greek hero Achilles in blackened bronze. The statue itself is 18 feet tall and stands on a granite plinth of equal height. The inscription reads:

To Arthur Duke of Wellington
and his brave companions in arms
this statue of Achilles
cast from cannon taken in the victories
of Salamanca, Vittoria, Toulouse, and Waterloo
is inscribed
by their country-women

The 'country-women,' many of whom had lost brothers, sons and lovers in the Napoleonic Wars, had subscribed a total of £10,000, a massive sum in those days. The subscribers had been asked to decide whether the colossal figure 'should preserve its antique nudity or be garnished with a fig-leaf' (a

trophy until, eventually, a large scallop shell was welded in place and preserves Achilles' modesty to this day.

Tony Brady



Hunters in the Snow – A Perspective

Three hunters trudge wearily homewards through the snow: it is by far the most popular non-religious Christmas card image scene, and with good reason. Pieter Breugel the Elder painted it in 1565, yet we feel it is a world we can understand. Not long ago, men very like these hunted on Boxing Day, and wood was gathered for the fire, and the winter was cold enough to safely play on frozen ponds. You could easily imagine a local artist fifty or so years ago, painting such a scene from life or memory.

Despite the bitter cold and the hunters' evident lack of success, it seems a place well cared for and worth living in. No wonder the painting features as a symbol of Earth in the Science Fiction movie [Solaris](#)

But appearances can be deceiving. Breugel was no provincial; he was a famous and well-travelled artist. This is not some rural backwater, but the outskirts of Antwerp, then the richest city in Europe. The painting was one of six depicting the changing year, painted for Nicolaes Jongelinck, a wealthy merchant banker of that city. It is a traditional theme, once common in illuminated manuscripts, but done painted for a new market, to be displayed in a suburban villa. In many ways, this picture marks the start of an era that we are now leaving. Phillip II of Spain was the new ruler of Antwerp, more profitable to him than all his possessions in the Americas. In England, his wife Mary Tudor was burning Cramer at the stake and preparing the first Plantation of Ireland.

The strong diagonal lines of trees and houses draw your eye over the busy village below to the fantastical mountains in the distance. There are no such mountains near Antwerp; they are a memory of the Swiss Alps through which Breugel passed on his way to Rome twelve years before. There Michaelangelo and Raphael were painting, but his work is very different from theirs. Some parts seem still medieval in their uniformity of scale for houses and trees, but he has succeeded better than them in conjuring up the overall shape of the landscape and its space. The winter of 1556 was the harshest in living

memory, near the start of what is now called the Little Ice Age. You can almost feel the cold.

Look again. In perspective, the horizon is always at the observer's eye level, so we are looking down on the hunters as if from the upstairs window of a house across the way from the inn they have just passed. The family outside has lit a fire to take the bristles of a pig they have just killed or are about to kill. The man who is carrying out the table on which it will be scraped is the only person in the whole painting whose face we can clearly see. He looks across at the hunters, but plainly no greeting has passed between them. Your eye is drawn to the mountains, and then back to the left. Behind the black trees, on a frozen yellow river, lies Antwerp.

The hunters are not going there, or to the mountains; otherwise, they would have taken the road on the other side of the inn. They can only be going one place; zigzagging down the steep slope in front of them, perhaps to the house across the bridge from the mill, where no fire is lit. Is the old woman carrying a bundle of sticks across the bridge going to prepare a fire for them? Perhaps. The pollarded trees show the importance of firewood, and on the road a full cart of wood is headed away, probably to light the fires of Antwerp. Yet the family up at the inn are burning straw, and what is the little man at the bottom right of the picture doing?

Look closer. All is not well in this seeming idyll. Axe marks on the tree next to the lead hunter and a bird trap set at the last house in the ridge show how well Breugel knows that every bit of this land is exploited. The nearest hunter bends to examine a track in the snow, but it is only that of a hopping crow. The pig-killers have built their fire very close to the inn. If you did not know what was happening, you would almost think they were looting it. The broken sign shows that it is dedicated to Saint Hubert – the patron saint of hunters. Strangest of all – look at the house in the middle distance, between the church and the bridge. Its chimney is clearly on fire. Someone has climbed on the roof and thrown a bucket of water to try to douse it.

What does it all mean? We can only guess how much of that detail was painted expressly for Jongelinck. As to what it meant to Breugel – that is another matter.

There is only one thing more to say: the year after Breugel finished this painting, religious riots broke out in Antwerp, the prelude to a general revolt which led to Dutch independence and the sacking of the city by the Spanish, in 1576. Not so very different from the first Christmas after all.

Jenny Brien

For a more detailed image of the painting, see [Google Arts and Culture](#).

Collage Collective

If you wish to see a veritable cornucopia of creative art in all its variety locally, just take a dander to the *Collage Collective* at The Buttermarket in Enniskillen. Actually, don't wish – just will yourself to go and look. On sale there most days of the week is the work of a range of local artists and artisans.

The project began in May 2015 and was situated initially in Nugent's Entry, just off Church Street, in the town centre. The steering group that led to its foundation included Genevieve Murphy, her husband Jon, Jill Stronge, Tailie Maur, Wayne Hardman, his wife Louise, Jill Mullen and others... They worked together under the auspices of *The Hub* based in The Clinton Centre, from where they obtained the seeding money to hire exhibition, office and meeting venue premises.

Within six months an opportunity presented itself for more suitable premises in the Buttermarket, and Collage Collective has grafted smoothly onto a traditional range of studios, ateliers and an adjoining coffee house. Merchandise on sale embraces textiles, photography, jewellery, pottery, papier-mâché figures, designer clothes and decorative pieces where taste originality and refinement is the appeal to customers.

From the outset of Collage Collective I have participated as an active supporter, participant and purchaser of items suitable for wedding presents and gifts for specific occasions. From time to time I have staffed the payment point and dealt directly with customer's enquiries. Nowadays few people ask directions from a policeman, but many passers-by call in to ask guidance to local touristic points of interest. There is no 'hard sell' business approach; the continuous emphasis is on attractive display and projecting a welcoming, comfortable retail environment.



For a monthly stipend of £50.00 to the Collective I maintain a niche for the display of books by local writers. I call it *Tobias-books*. By calling myself a promoter, rather than a seller, I avoid the

attentions of the Inland Revenue. Once a month, I am informed of what titles have been sold and the income is passed to the author. There is no charge to the exhibitor. Shall I reveal a personal secret? I fancy myself as a kind of modest Guggenheim/Saatchi. Scratch me and you will find inscribed skin deep: 'Aspiring Art Patron'.

I appeal to all who read this contribution to Corncrake, please do seriously consider offering some – once a month – dedicated time in Collage Collective as a sales assistant, meet and greeter.

Go On... You can do it...

I do: despite all the pressures that daily crowd in on me. If you (or a young person you know of) are looking to gain retail experience you will find highly satisfactory – though unpaid – employment.

Tony Brady

Fox Power!



The she-fox

*Walking in the nearly full moonlight
This evening
A shooting star falls
Into my mouth*

*A vixen screams
across the navy blue of the
night*

Venus slow dances with Orion

*And in an instant
the world is put to right*

Recently when Theresa May informed us that she would look again at the Fox Hunting Ban in England with a view to lifting it, I found this indicative of the entire Tory project: the cruelty involved in tearing apart a beautiful innocent defenceless wild animal, a beautiful wild creature which speaks of wildness and wilderness – is symbolic of the cold-heartedness and callousness at the core of Toryism, and Theresa Mayism. This painting I hope conveys some of that wildness and wilderness and fighting spirit too which is so essential for us to maintain our wholeness and sanity in this increasingly mad Alt-Right world. This fox will not give in easily. He and or She will be a force to be reckoned with!

The accompanying poem says it all for me.

Kathy May