

# Glasnost Comes To Limerick Visual Art

LIMERICK is planning to give its own twist to glasnost when it brings its annual Exhibition of Visual Art (EVA) to Moscow in 1991. "We hope also to get permission to do an EVA there and bring it back to Limerick," says administrator Paul O'Reilly.

By giving EVA an international dimension almost from its start in 1977, Limerick has seen it develop into one of Ireland's leading visual arts events. "Rather than select work by committee we evolved this pattern of using different top level outside adjudicators each year," says O'Reilly. "We then leave them absolutely alone. We don't hassle them or try to tell them what to do; the whole thing is theirs, they have carte blanche. It's a recipe that's succeeded in bringing all these diverse opinions into Irish art."

So much so that other countries want to copy the idea. "Belgium has shown great interest. We're hoping to market the EVA idea abroad and bring EVAs from a variety of countries to Limerick."

Meanwhile this year's EVA, which features new work by winners from the previous five years, has just ended, but goes on tour to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in Dublin and the Crawford Gallery in Cork early next

By Ciaran Carty

year. With next year's EVA brought forward from Autumn to Spring, this means that the two exhibitions will actually overlap.

EVA's success in attracting attendances of 5,000 to 7,000 each year led in 1985 to the transformation of its venue at the old City Library into a full scale public gallery run by O'Reilly. "It's still really a library, except that the shelves and books have gone," he says. "But we manage to put on 30-35 contemporary art exhibitions every year. By establishing a pattern of exhibitions we're showing people what's available."

O'Reilly works by himself. He has no staff, apart from a security man 40 hours a week and a cleaning woman for 14 hours. "If I had the staff I'd open the place up for concerts and so on, so that it doesn't become an elite visual arts place. It also needs new heating, floors and walls, which will take £300,000-£500,000, so that we can provide a proper home for the permanent collection."

O'Reilly, a painter somewhat in the vein of Edward Hopper (some of his drawings are currently on view at Belltable) comes from New York "but I was raised in Yonkers but always with the idea of living eventually in Ireland." He married a Tipperary

woman in 1966 and went with her for a three weeks holiday in Mexico that lasted ten years. "It was an exhilarating culture shock. I was confronted with a whole different set of attitudes to what I'd grown up on. You realise there's not just one culture but many cultures, that there's no one true faith. It turned out to be just the kind of curiosity and tolerance you need running a gallery like this. Because each of these artists is in a sense like a separate culture."

O'Reilly works closely with Belltable and Riverrun Gallery in planning his exhibitions. "Much of the success in developing the arts in Limerick in the 1980s has come from people working together rather than against each other. The arts audience is too fragile for that kind of in-fighting. We operate on a united front."

## EXHIBITIONS

Painting the Roses Red an exhibition of new paintings by Patricia Hurl is showing in the Belltable Arts Centre, 69 O'Connell Street, Limerick. (to the 30th)

New Works exhibition by Gerard Cox and Bernadette Kiely is showing in the Riverrun Gallery, Honan's Quay, Limerick. (to the 30th)

Architectural Association of Ireland Exhibition Awards 1989 are showing in the City Gallery of Art, Pery Square, Limerick (from 14th to 30th)

Tom Shortt exhibition of new works in the National Co-Op Gallery, 5 Broad Street.

Prints from China an exhibition from the staff and students of The Xian College of Fine Arts is showing in the City Gallery, Limerick.

Oil Paintings exhibition in the Angela Woulfe Gallery, 16 Pery Square, Limerick.

New City Schemes exhibition of Plans for New City Developments in the Town Hall, Rutland Street. (not open on Sunday)

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Don Baker: Shannon Arms on the 17th

## NOTICEBOARD

Limerick Museum an exhibition of Archaeology, local history and historical crafts is now showing in the museum at St. John's Square. (Tuesday to Saturday)

In Loving Memory exhibition of photographs by Amelia Stein in the City Gallery, Limerick.

FILM  
Distant Voices, Still Lives is presented by the Belltable Film Club at the Belltable Arts Centre, on the 12th.

The Big Easy is presented by the University of Limerick Film Club in the Jonathan Swift Theatre, on the 14th at 7pm.

La Estrada is presented by the University of Limerick Film Club in the Jonathan Swift Theatre, on the 16th at 7pm.

THEATRE  
Saint Oscar by Terry Eagleton, is presented by Field Day Theatre Co., in the Belltable Arts Centre, 69 O'Connell Street. (14th to 18th at 8pm)

(on the 13th at 8pm).  
Jazz Night in Costelloes Tavern every Monday night.

Wow are in the Shannon Arms lounge on the 16th.

Don Baker and his band play in the Shannon Arms on the 17th. Cover charge. Admission at 9 o'clock.

Shanty Town play in the Shannon Arms on the 18th.

Traditional Music in Nancy Blakes of Denmark Street, every Tuesday and Sunday night at 9.30pm

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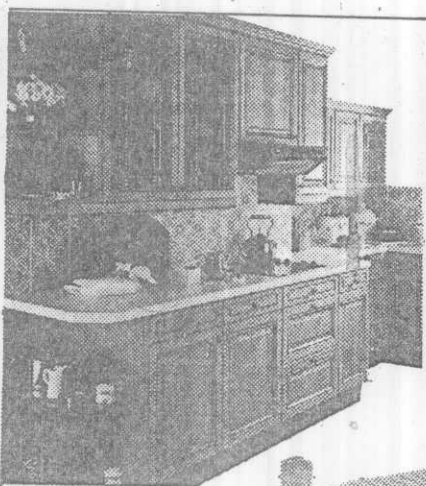
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