

# Plenty of variation at city's newest gallery

By **CLAIRE DOYLE**

I IMMEDIATELY thought of Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* when I first cast my eyes on Michele Souter's *Winter Buffalo*. Her small, mystical oil of two buffalo, in soft hues of fawn, are instantly reminiscent of the herds galloping across the plains as represented with such skill and understanding in the multi-ward winning movie.

Of course, the less romantic among us will think of the stuffed buffalo peering out of the window of the *Texas Steak Out*.

Either way, this and her two other paintings in the first exhibition of the new Muse gallery on O'Connell Street are very attractive and pleasing to the eye. Her cheerful *Touchstone Series Pod II* which looks very much like a rosey tulip set against a warm backdrop of pink blossoms, and her two *Wicklow Landscapes* are

executed in a similar style; soft, understated and positive.

Looking around the Muse gallery is best done in numerical order. That way, one encounters different works by the same artist almost like surprises.

The third in the exhibition, *Morning Interior* by Donald Teskey struck me as being one of strongest paintings I have seen in years. Something in the artist's free, sweeping brush strokes, or in his confident, joyous use of colour, immediately struck me as being exceptional and memorable.

Two paintings down I was delighted to spot a second by he who is now firmly established as one among my favourite artists. *Tumbling Figures* boasts the same spirit as *Morning Interior*, and later on, as you shuffle from one painting to another, finally doing a full circuit of the small, but bright and airy gallery, two more oils by this terrific new artist are encountered.

Vivienne Bogan has four works included in the exhibition, Akhmatova, *Towards the Great Peace*, Qudous: *The Black Standard* and *Ekais Gate II*, each of which are executed

in mixed media, including, unusually, colouring pencil, thus creating the impression of a very advanced collage.

Martin Foran's photograph of *Dáil Éireann with Politics* painted in over it, each letter painted inside the other, ever decreasing circles style, and finally disappearing inside the front door, has sparked a surprising amount of interest.

After all, it's only a photo, some could argue, but public approval has proved quite widespread.

This exhibition will continue until April 12 and a visit, if only to see our newest gallery, is well advised. Jackie Cullen will be there to hand you out a programme and give you information on the artists, while the owner, Gerry Ryan, pops in every now and then as well.

And keep an eye open for the old-fashioned, carved iron radiators which are art in themselves.

Other artists whose work features in the exhibition are Michael Mulcahy, Julie Kelleher, Gerry O'Mahony, Lorraine Wall and Jill Dennis.

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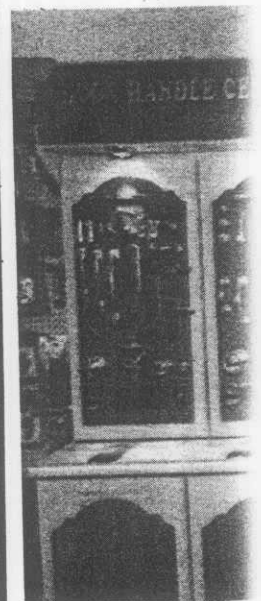
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