

Profile

PAUL O'REILLY

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

Born in New York, lives in Thurles and works in Limerick

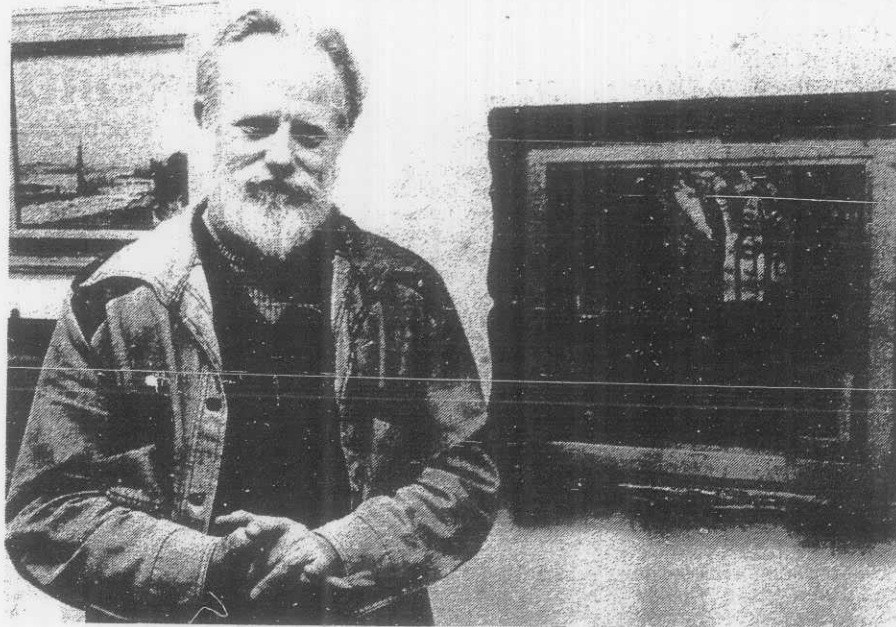
LIMERICK'S ambitious new art gallery had £45,000 taken away from its 1986 budget when Councillors recently refused to accept the city manager's estimates. But that, says energetic curator Paul O'Reilly, "is no reason why we can't get on with our plans. It will just take more time and a lot more support".

Paul O'Reilly is not a Limerickman. But in the year since he was appointed the city gallery's first curator he has grasped everything that is essential about the city.

He was born in the Bronx, New York, brought up in Yonkers, took a fine arts degree from Syracuse University and a masters degree in art history while on his honeymoon in Mexico.

"That happened", he says matter of factly, "because we went to Mexico for three weeks after getting married in my wife's home town of Thurles. We didn't leave until ten years and four daughters later".

He lives now in Thurles from where he commutes daily by train.



Paul O'Reilly, curator, Limerick Municipal Art Gallery.

"No, it's not a waste of time", he says. "It actually extends my workday. I can get a lot of work done on the train".

He has ambitious plans for the gallery which at present is in the process of being extended. Seemingly oblivious to the din of nails being hammered around him, he says that some day "Limerick will have a gallery of which it can be proud".

His policy is to give the people of Limerick "a chance to see all kinds of art, even things that fifty years ago mightn't have been considered art at all".

"We don't want this gallery to have any elite character", he says.

The small gallery attached to the city library since 1948 is the nucleus on which he is now building. It has a permanent collection and attracted some interesting visiting exhibitions, included EVA, over the years.

But last year for the first time in the extended new gallery, 7,000 people viewed the EVA exhibition.

Exhibitions planned for this year include EVA again in the autumn, the "Independence" and "Oireachtas" Exhibi-

tions, which will be coming to the city gallery for the first time, a fine arts exhibition by diploma students of the School of Art and Design, and the Barrie Cooke one-man exhibition.

"The idea", he says, "is to get visitors to those exhibitions to see our permanent collection as well", which includes a valuable 18th century landscape by Richard Carver, and works by Yeats, Orpen, Sean Keating and many other Irish artists.

He has another plan which he calls "Juxtaposition"—a collection of third level, second level and primary school work with amateur paintings and pictures from the gallery's permanent exhibition "so that tourists and visitors can get a complete picture of Limerick art".

He has taught art himself at the Limerick School of Art and Design, and says that the gallery offers great potential for future students.

Has he money enough to see his visions realised? "Well, the standard answer might be no. There is not enough available, but we can function".

"Lack of finance is no excuse not to", he adds.

INDUSTRY SEMINAR AT NIHE

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believe that there is a strong case to be made for introducing marketing to a company in a way that can be seen to be delivering positive results, by concentrating on upgrading selling techniques to earn more profitable business."

Gerald Kirkwood, a leading

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