

Limerick Profile

By Jennifer O'Connor

John Shinnors

Limerick Artist



Picture: Keith Wiseman

"Very few local people visit the Hunt Museum, a treasure of Limerick. I was in the pub one night and asked a couple of people if they had ever visited the Hunt. One had. Isn't it ironic when people go to Spain, etc, and say how they have been to all these museums and such?"

ALONG with the benefits that the Celtic Tiger has brought to the country, there has also been a massive increase in people's interest in art. However, one Limerick artist believes that there is a long way to go before the Irish can say that they are true art lovers.

John Shinnors, one of Limerick's most prolific painters, also believes that people don't need to move far to develop an interest in art.

"Ninety-five per cent of people don't care about art. The only thing that they hear on the news is about a painting that sold for a lot of money. Just a minority of people are art lovers. I always was. I think though that you have to like your own work before you can truly admire other people's work," John explains.

"Take the Hunt Museum, that treasure at

the end of the road, for example. Very few local people visit it. I was in the pub one night and asked a couple of people if they had ever visited the Hunt. One had. Isn't it ironic when people go to Spain etc and say how they have been to all these museums and such?"

A graduate of Limerick School of Art and Design, John first went to the art college in the 1960s when "it was not particularly appropriate to be anything" career-wise, and following a few years of rambling, he went back, older and wiser, to continue his studies.

"It was a meagre living. It was the same in the 80s. The mid-80s were cruel. Subsequently we got this economic climate someone decided to call the 'Celtic Tiger'. It's easier now for artists. But you still have to pay your dues. My age, 57, in art terms is

considered young to middle age."

Well-known for his contrasting style, there are a number of themes that appear time and time again in his work with variations of lighthouses and scarecrows being two of his favourites.

"I think that everything starts with black and white. It gives immediate impact. I've a healthy obsession with lighthouses. I did the one in Loop Head in Clare. I have to make a pilgrimage to it maybe three or four times a year.

"It's all about the image of this lonely structure at the end of the sea in contrast with the landscape around it. The lighthouses nowadays don't have to have bands of black and white as the light is always on, but some of the old ones are still black and white. To see this black and white mass in the landscape is a marvel-

lously visual thing."

Represented by Taylor Galleries in Dublin, John has had numerous solo and joint exhibitions both at home in Limerick, across the country and further afield. A regular contributor to EV+A, John has exhibited with artists like Gavin Hogg, Jack Donovan and John Behan.

John said that for a piece of art, whether a painting or a sculpture, it is the process of bringing it from a simple idea to a finished product that brings real joy.

"It's like baking a cake from scratch, buying all the ingredients and making it yourself as opposed to buying a cake. This is the world we live in, but it won't last. There's no merit in it at the end of the day. There are two things that you can't hurry. One is love and the other is art," John concluded.

O'Sullivan urges DPP to appeal rape judgement

Jennifer O'Connor

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LABOUR deputy Jan O'Sullivan has branded as "a travesty of justice" the three-year suspended sentence handed to 20-year-old Adam Keane of Barnageehan, Daragh, County Clare, for the rape of a 33-year-old woman.

She is calling for the Director of Public Prosecutions to urgently review the judgement by Justice Paul Carney.

"The DPP needs to be given the time he needs to look over the judgment, but he should appeal it, especially when one of the reasons why he got a suspended sentence was because it was out of character," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

As Ms Shannon was only a State witness she cannot appeal herself.

The deputy added that if the public cannot have trust in the courts then the only alternative is for the Oireachtas to lay down minimum sentences.



Deputy Jan O'Sullivan: "very concerned".

While accepting that judges need to be allowed use their discretion she said their judgements have to be seen to be fair as it is "doubly hard" for victims of serious crime to come forward if they do not have faith in getting justice.

"I am very concerned that this decision will deter victims from coming forward in the future... There must be public confidence in the courts response to all crimes of rape," she concluded.

Minister O'Dea's backing helps to kick-start childcare project



Minister Willie O'Dea with the board of Conradh na Gaeilge at their Thomas Street premises. Picture: Press 22

A NEW Limerick childcare service, which is one of the first in the country, aimed at combining kindergarten and after-school care for kids, has been backed by Minister for Defence, Willie O'Dea.

The Fianna Fáil Deputy was at the launch of the new initiative set up by Conradh na Gaeilge, which will see Irish being spoken as a daily language at the facility.

Based in Thomas Street, Conradh na Gaeilge's new initiative has already seen an appointed action group having been set up.

Although the group secured an NDP grant of €350,000, they were left facing a shortfall of €112,000 due to the application having been initiated five years ago.

"Minister O'Dea was instrumental in securing €112,000 to meet this

shortfall and we are extremely grateful to him," said a spokesman for Conradh na Gaeilge.

Work is expected to proceed on Phase One with removal of asbestos from the roof and frieze in the hall, re-clad the roof, new WCs and offices and new disabled access so that the Naionra can move from the first floor to the hall.

Phase Two will see restoration the front building, improvements to the reception area, and rewiring and implementation of a new heating system. The project will then have to go through a strict test of necessary changes to comply with Fire Safety requirements.

The project group are due to embark soon on a fundraising campaign to complete Phase Two.

Mamuska Nights with Daghdha

LIMERICK-BASED professional dance group the Daghdha Dance Company is celebrating a wave of success with its Mamuska Nights movement.

Developed by the company in 2004 the Mamuska Nights' loose, unstylised structured is to hit Leeds and Tokyo as part of this year's international Mamuska Nights Network.

The Mamuska Nights Network began in Britain at the Yorkshire Dance Centre, Leeds in last December.

Following this success, the Mamuska platform premiered Mamuska Tokyo in collaboration with Dance and Media Japan, followed by yet another event in high-profile event in Leeds.

Events in Limerick include Soundings, at the Daghdha Space in St John's Church on March 29, Mamuska Limerick in the Daghdha Space on April 13, Framemakers and Field Studies in the Daghdha Space on May 10, and Soundings in the Daghdha Space on May 18.

Mamuska Limerick is produced by Daghdha Dance Company and supported by the Arts Council, RTE Lyric FM, Shannon Development and Fáilte Ireland.

For further information on Mamuska Limerick and The Mamuska Network visit the new Mamuska blog www.mamuskanights.blogspot.com or the Daghdha website www.daghdha.ie or contact Daghdha on 061-467872.

Name: John Shinnors
Occupation: Artist
Location: O'Connell Street

Favourite thing about Limerick: I don't think about that. I can't compare it to other cities. I'm comfortable here.

Worst thing about Limerick: I don't find anything bad about the place.