

News

ART

Brian's real hallucinations

by **Bernie English**
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AN exhibition encompassing 40 years of artistic endeavour by one of Ireland's outstanding figurative painters has been unveiled in an inspirational Limerick space.

'Real Hallucinations' is a long overdue celebration of 110 extraordinary paintings, from 1974 to 2014, by richly talented Limerick artist Brian MacMahon.

The exhibition is another illustration of art being used imaginatively to breathe life into disused spaces in Limerick, with its stunning home, the historic 'Sailors Home' at O'Curry Street, having been unoccupied for more than two decades.

The Victorian building was extensively renovated two years ago by the Shannon Foynes Port Company, answering the call of the exhibition organisers with a further investment to make the space useable for MacMahon's showcase.

The exhibition appropriately includes a number of MacMahon's paintings that capture in stunning portrait the nearby Limerick Docks which can be seen from the great windows of the listed building.

The popular and quietly spoken artist from Ennis Road, Limerick admitted his delight at the exhibition.

"It's very strange and a great buzz to see all your work over 40 years assembled under one roof, especially in a space that's as atmospheric as the

Sailors' Home," he said.

The exhibition, produced by Katie Verling and Tom Prendergast, is the culmination of 10 months' work and many years of planning to bring the collection together.

Verling, whose father is acclaimed artist Walter Verling said that 'Real Hallucinations' is an opportunity for art enthusiasts to enjoy this one-off collection of MacMahon's work. She said that the likelihood of MacMahon's work coming together again in such a collection was slim.

"This is the most important exhibition of his work ever. It's a chance to see the true genius of him in one space. It has never been attempted before and was hugely ambitious as, for one reason or another, he did not go down the gallery route and sold many of his paintings personally.

"Brian had to start remembering paintings he did and we are talking about 40 years of continuous work. We then had to start locating where the paintings were and people have been so generous in loaning them for the exhibition. We could not have done it either without Shannon Foynes Port Company. They not alone made this space available but carried out so much work to make the building usable," she said.

The exhibition, which runs until Friday June 20, is free to the public and will be open daily (weekends included) from 11.30 am to 5.30pm.

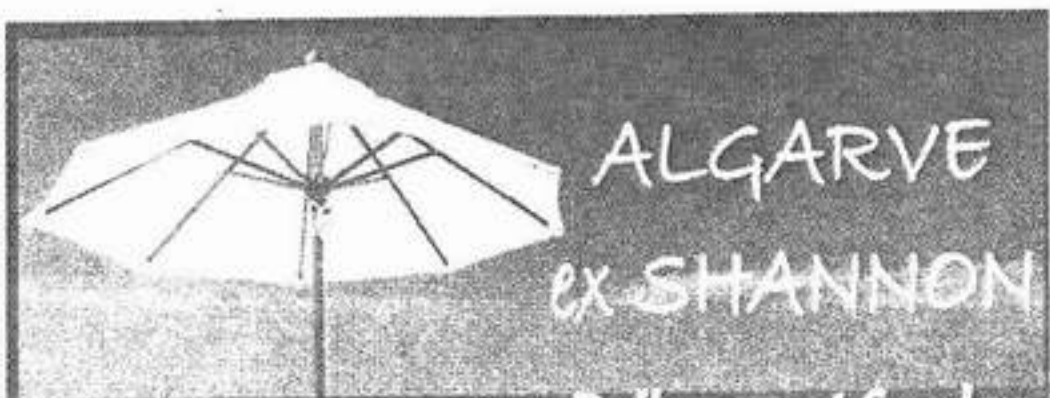


Tom Prendergast, Katie Verling, Brian MacMahon and John Carlton (Foynes Port) pictured at the exhibition of Brian's 'Real Hallucinations' Photo: Brian Arthur/Press 22.

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