

Harris clan expected for tribute to actor

By DEIRDRE McGRATH

THE son of the late Richard Harris is touched that a Limerick artist has devoted so much of his creative energy to series of paintings dedicated to his father.

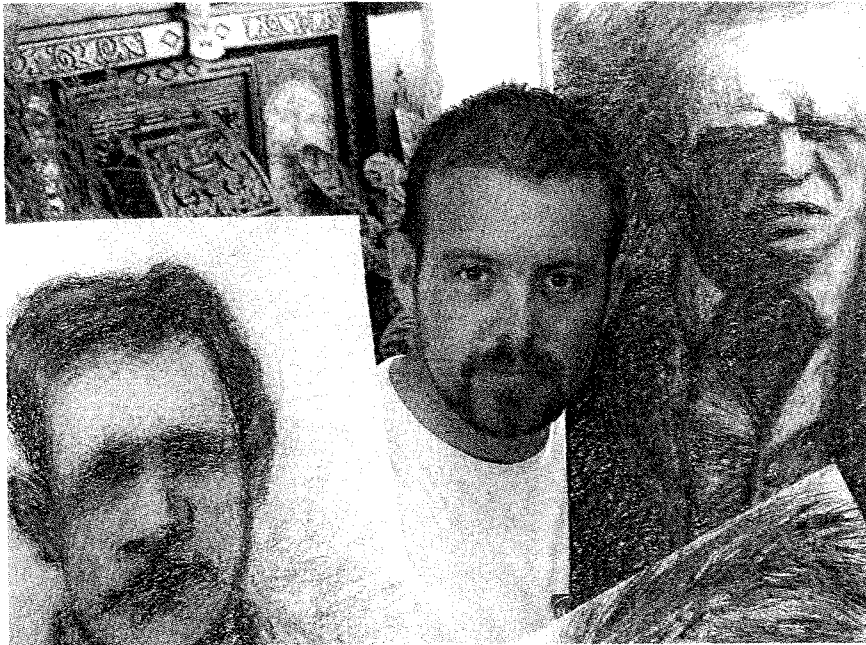
Artist Thomas Delohery from Ennis Road in the city will open the first in a series of exhibitions dedicated to the actor in Kilmallock's Friars' Gate Theatre on Monday, October 1.

The actor's brothers Bill, Ivan and Noel, and many members of the Harris clan, are expected to attend the opening.

The day before the exhibition opens, members of the Harris family are expected to travel from Dubai, France and England to attend the unveiling of a statue in memory of Mr Harris in Kilkree organised by Manuel di Lucia.

Mr Harris's son, Jared, said the Kilmallock exhibition was an attempt to capture the spirit of his father, and, for that, the family were deeply grateful.

"Over the last few years, it has been consistently true that, no matter where in the world I've found myself, I always end up talking about dad with strangers who tell me some mad story of how they met and



Portraits of the actor: Thomas Delohery with three of his paintings depicting the many facets of actor Richard Harris (CI)

how influential he has been to them," he said.

"Dad was possessed with a tremendous raging mercurial life force—one that is not dissimilar to how I have heard the weather described on the west coast of Ireland. All four seasons in an afternoon," said Mr Harris.

"These pictures are an attempt to capture that spirit. What that spirit meant to Tom. And for that, as always with anyone who honours dad, we are deeply grateful," said Mr Harris.

The Kilmallock show opens on the date of Mr Harris's birth, and it will close on October 25, the date of his death. It is the first of five tribute exhibitions that will be staged in honour of Richard Harris.

Other venues for the shows include Crescent College, where Mr Harris went to school, Limerick Racecourse, St John's Theatre and Arts Centre in Listowel, where the theme of The Field will be explored, and the final exhibition will be in Kilkree Bay Hotel next

March.

Each show will consist of different work themes and will track different stages in the star's life.

Mr Delohery said he felt there should have been more made of Mr Harris's passing at the age of 72 in 2002.

"For me there was a deadly silence and a lot of

unanswered questions. How could somebody as large in life and stature as Richard Harris simply fade out of existence," said Mr Delohery.

"I think Richard Harris was a good ambassador, not only for Limerick and Ireland, but also for how one should approach life. He seemed to go at it headlong, with few, if any, apologies. He took all it had to offer," said Mr Delohery.

He said that Mr Harris was the first serious Irish actor to make it in Hollywood and paved the way for other Irish actors to be taken seriously.

"Richard came across as a tormented spirit but with a unique and charging life force all his own. By his struggle, he made things a little easier for Irish screen legends such as Gabriel Byrne and Liam Neeson," he said.

Mr Delohery hopes the tribute shows will give Irish people the opportunity to come and pay their respects to the colourful Limerickman, who deserves to be honoured in a fitting way.

For further information contact Friars' Gate Theatre on 063-98727.

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Appeal for volunteers

JACINTA O'Connor, fundraising co-ordinator with the Donkey Sanctuary in Liscarroll, is seeking volunteers to run in the Limerick Women's Mini-Marathon on October 8 at 2pm to help raise funds for the charity.

The course will start and finish at the University of Limerick and the route will proceed along Dublin

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