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Deirdre Frost

CULTURE & BOOKS 1 MONTH AGO

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by PENNY MCCORMICK 6 MIN READ SAVE \square

AS THE WINNER OF THE LAVIT GALLERY'S ANNUAL STUDENT COMPETITION, ARTIST DEIRDRE FROST'S NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES HOW WE EXPERIENCE OUR SURROUNDINGS ...

The title of this show "Biophilia" was coined by psychologist and philosopher, Erich Fromm, in the 1970s and the biophilia hypothesis was popularised by biologist and writer EO Wilson in 1984. It refers to love of life and all that is alive. This body of work is a sustained investigation into the physicality of being in an urban environment, and how nature and the natural world is perceived

through this lens. Having grown up in a rural environment, I have always been very much aware of

Tell us about the inspiration for your new exhibition?

the changing seasons and of the seasonal cycle of growth of various plants throughout each year. Moving in to Cork city about ten years ago, despite the many advantages to urban living, I keenly felt the loss of greenery, the open sky, and the dramatic changes to the landscape that happen in more rural areas, with the changing weather and seasons. Looking for nature within the urban environment, it is most apparent in plant pots, contained walled gardens, or in the form of the river, which is contained by its walls. Weeds and wild plants however grow where they can. It is this, the

nature and biodiversity to our physical and mental well-being that I want to explore, using my own lived experience in Cork city as a case study for these works. By creating these paintings, I hope to set up a space for philosophical engagement, examining the interplay between man and environment and of our understanding of our role within this.

human tendency to contain and control nature, alongside the importance of



become an integral part of the work. Plywood is both a man-made industrially manufactured material, and an organic natural substance, therefore containing the two elements that I am investigating – nature and the man-made.

I turn the buildings in Cork back into maquette-like structures within the

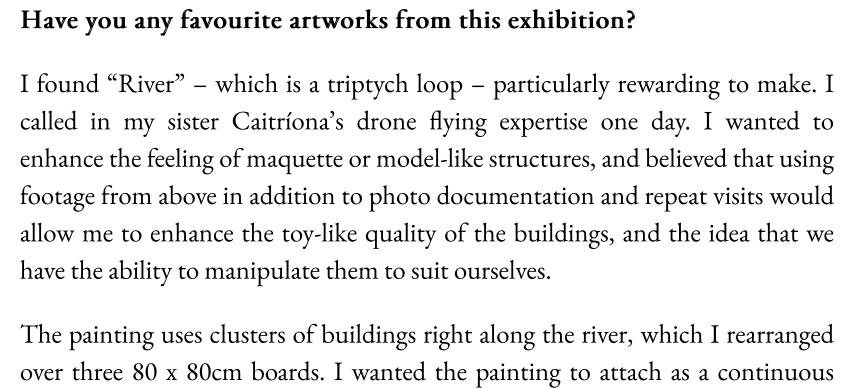
paintings, as I want to emphasise the fact that they are man-made conceptions. It

allows me to open up walls in the buildings, which helps give a sense of depth

I allow the grain and figuration on the wood to inform the composition and

points, and thus the experience being different each time.

and perspective. This is in the manner of Piero Della Francesca's "Flagellation of Christ", or of a Hopper painting. I hope that this will give the viewer an embodied feeling that they are in a dimensional environment.



loop, mirroring the continuous flow of the river itself. The buildings are

rearranged with each iteration of the format, reflecting the gradual change of the

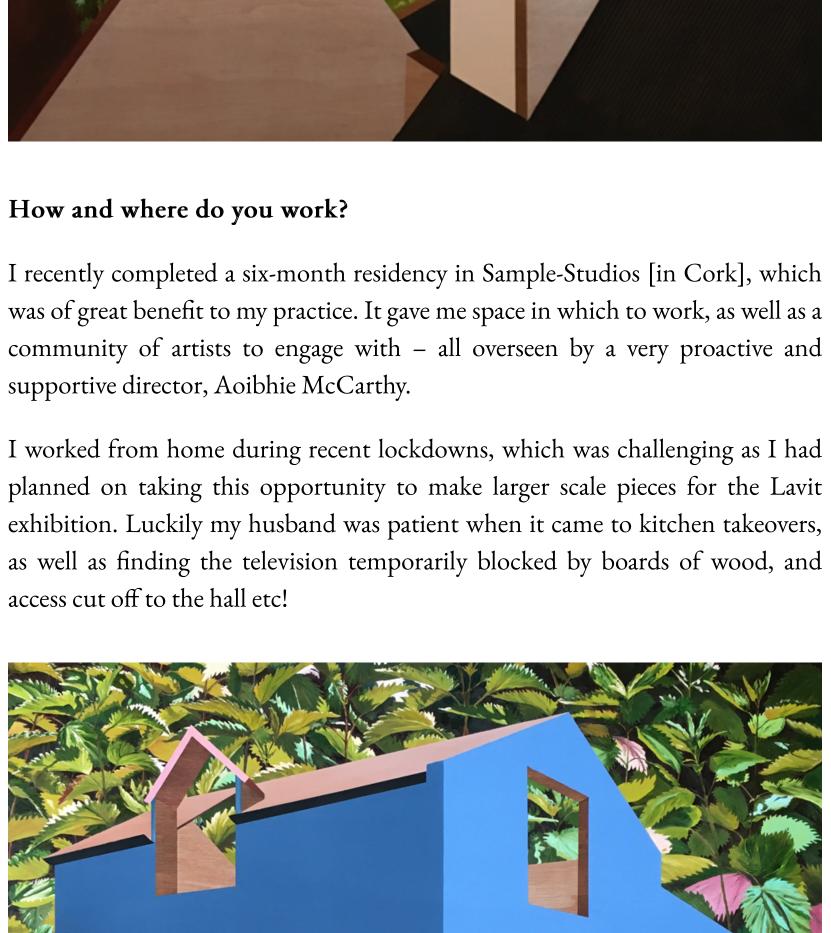
built landscape over time, while the river remains constant. It was a challenge to

get the three boards to stitch up compositionally as I painted them, and involved

constant rearranging and checking to see that it worked each of three ways. It was only when I got to install them at the gallery that I was sure it all worked. I

owe a huge thank you to James in the Lavit gallery for installing it with such care and attention!



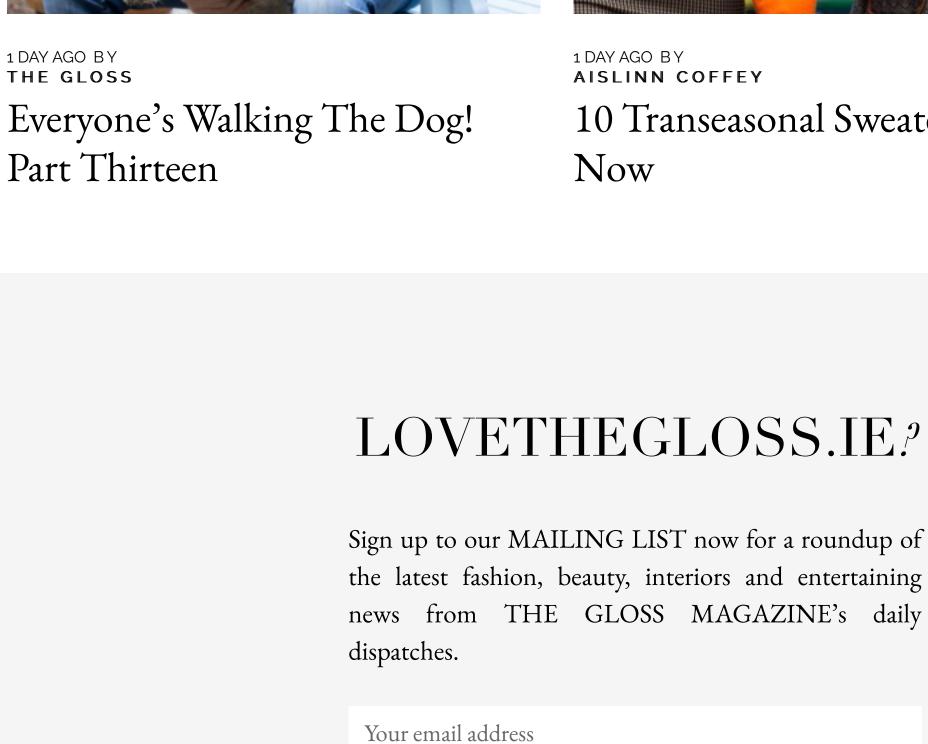


How has your work evolved do you think?

Yes, my work has changed dramatically since beginning my degree at the Crawford College of Art and Design in 2017. I found it exciting to try out different ideas and processes, from making drawings on primed footballs, to using netting, mirrors and slide projectors to installation pieces during workshops. I took the opportunity to go on a three month Erasmus to Cluj, Romania to attend the renowned University of Art and Design there. They have a very active Erasmus programme, which gave me exposure to different ideas around what was happening in art in Italy, Germany, France, Poland, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Romania. The art history programme in the Crawford is fascinating as well, which helped me to get a much better understanding of contemporary art and ideas. It wasn't until fourth year that I really began to distil this wealth of information and experience and get a much more focused idea of my own area of interest, and to develop work in an area of investigation that felt meaningful and personal to me. The current body of work in the Lavit Gallery is a development and maturing of this work. In my upcoming residency in the Backwater studios, I hope to expand on ideas and to push my work on in a new direction.



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