

THE STUDIO  
36 LEESON CLOSE,  
DUBLIN 2

DANIEL LIPSTEIN and

DAVID O'KANE

Recipients of the  
CAP FOUNDATION AWARD 2006

June 2nd – June 17th  
Weekdays 10am to 5pm  
Weekends 2pm to 5pm



This years' exhibition at the Studio presents works by Daniel Lipstein and David O'Kane, both recipients of the 2006 CAP Foundation Award.

The award assists two recent graduates from the NCAD make the transition from student to artist. It provides them with a wonderful space to work for 12 months, a stipend to help with associated costs and a year-end exhibition.

The Studio offers a unique design by functioning as both an artist studio and an exhibition space. Designed by Neil Burke-Kennedy it utilises all available space brilliantly.

Thank you to Anita Whelan who administers the programme and I also thank the members of the selection committee for their time and expertise – Neil Burke-Kennedy, Luke Clancy and Duncan McLaren.

CAP would like to dedicate this years' show at The Studio in memory of Noel Sheridan as one of the major inspirations for the entire programme.

**Linda C. Pilaro**

## David O'Kane

Born 06/07/1985 Tel: 0877595622 Email: david.okane@gmail.com  
Address: Cavanacor House, Ballindrait, Lifford, Co. Donegal, Ireland

### Education

2002–2006 Bachelor of Art Joint Honours Degree in History of Art and Fine Art Painting,  
(First Class Honours) The National College of Art and Design, Dublin

### Awards, Scholarships and Residencies

2007 DAAD Scholarship, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, Berlin, Germany  
Short term Residency Cill Rialaig, Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry

2006 Travel and Mobility Award, Arts Council of Ireland, Dublin  
R.C. Lewis-Crosby Award for Painting at the Royal Dublin Society  
CAP Foundation Award, Dublin  
Short-listed for Hennessy Craig Scholarship, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin  
O'Sullivan Award for Graphic Art, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin

2005 Emerging Artist Award, Portrait Ireland, Wexford  
Erasmus Exchange to Academie Minerva, Groningen

2004 Semi Finalist in Channel Five Big Art Challenge, England  
Henry Higgins Travel Award, Royal Dublin Society  
Thomas Dammann Travel Scholarship, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin  
Markevicz Gold Medal Competition, Highly Commended

2003 Red Bull 'Art of Can'- First Prize

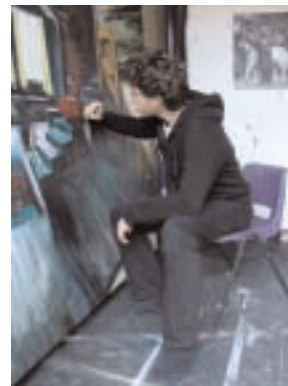
### Selected Exhibitions

2007 Summer Group Exhibition, Cavanacor Gallery, Donegal, Ireland  
CAP Foundation Exhibition, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin  
'Paper illusions' screened at Växhuset in Västerås, Sweden

2006 Talbot Gallery, Christmas group exhibition, Dublin  
'Impressions' Print Exhibition, Galway Arts Centre  
'Projected Weekends', The Digital Hub, Dublin  
Royal Hibernian Academy Annual Gala Banquet exhibition and Auction  
Short films screened at 'Wildbeam', Groningen, The Netherlands  
Short films screened at 'Artisit?' Festival, Galway, Ireland  
Student Art Awards traveling exhibition: Royal Dublin Society, Dublin  
Two-Person Graduate Exhibition, Cavanacor Gallery, Donegal, Ireland  
'Illustrating Illusion' screened at Worldwide ShortFilm Festival, Canadian Film Centre, Toronto, Canada  
Degree Show Exhibition, National College of Art and Design, Dublin  
Royal Hibernian Academy 176th Annual Exhibition, Dublin  
'Camera Lucida' Exhibition, Gallery Sign, Groningen, The Netherlands

2005 'New Irish Painting', Group Exhibition Context Galleries, Derry, Northern Ireland  
'Iontas' Small Works, Group Exhibition, Sligo Art Galley, Ireland  
Student Art Awards Exhibition, Royal Dublin Society, Dublin  
Portrait Ireland Group Exhibition, Newtonbarry House, Wexford  
Group Exhibition, Academie Minerva, Groningen, Holland

2004 'Reference' group exhibition, Cavanacor Gallery  
Student Art Awards Exhibition, Royal Dublin Society, Dublin  
Group exhibition, 137 Rathmines, Dublin (Curated by David O'Kane)  
'Canto I – VII' short film screened at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead  
Markevicz Medal Group Exhibition, Dublin  
Royal Hibernian Academy 174th Annual Exhibition, Dublin  
Ballyfermot Civic Centre Anti-war Exhibition



- 2003 Red Bull 'Art of Can' National Exhibition, RHA, Dublin  
 Three-Person Exhibition - Galerie Schuster, Frankfurt, Germany  
 Two-Person Exhibition, Cavanacor Gallery, Donegal, Ireland  
 Markevicz Medal Group Exhibition, Dublin.
- 2002 'Vanitas' short film screened on West of England Television in Brief Encounters Film Festival.

### Selected bibliography

- 2006 John Kindness Retrospective 1986 – 2006, Switch Room Galleries, (Internet Catalogue designed by David O'Kane)  
[www.johnkindness.com](http://www.johnkindness.com)  
 Royal Dublin Society Student Art Awards Catalogue  
 Students pile the metaphors high, The Irish Times. 9 June 2006, Aidan Dunne  
 Academic or just old-fashioned, Sunday Tribune, 4 June 2006, Eimear McKeith  
 Portraits of the artists..., The Irish Times. 1 June 2006, Aidan Dunne  
 RHA Prize giving ceremony Donegal Democrat, 1 June 2006  
 Royal Hibernian Academy 176th Annual Exhibition Catalogue, Dublin  
 Dagblad van het Noorden, 27 February, Groningen, The Netherlands, Eric Nederkoorn
- 2005 New Irish Painting, Exhibition Catalogue, Derry, Northern Ireland (Exhibition Catalogue designed by David O'Kane)  
 Royal Dublin Society Student Art Awards Catalogue
- 2004 'Depict! 2004', Brief Encounters Promotional Dvd  
 Royal Dublin Society Student Art Awards, Catalogue  
 Royal Hibernian Academy 174th Annual Exhibition Catalogue, Dublin
- 2003 Frankfurt Allegemeine  
 Can Artists Hot-press. Vol. 27, No. 22, 19 November 2003, Maurice O'Brien

### Selected Collections

- Bank of Ireland Collection, Dublin  
 Academie Minerva, Groningen, The Netherlands  
 AXA Insurance, Dublin  
 Gerry Robinson, Former Chairman of the Arts Council of England

## A Scriptorium of Thought

These paintings present an amalgamation of signs representing an autonomous reality. Illusions and lost objects are cryogenically maintained in an illusory realm of paint. They are simulacra, as described by Jean Baudrillard – never concealing the truth, merely revealing that there is none.

An inherent part of this work is its reluctance to conform to reality, its inability to adhere to logic and its distortion of any degree of certainty. This foundation generates an ambiguous and unsettling space that is nothing but thought. The irrational is the point of departure revealing an interior world exaggerated to the point of hallucination and an exterior world transformed into a colossal, life-sized model, precariously supported by skeletal scaffolding.

The short animated video piece displayed with these paintings questions and elaborates on the painted world. Animation is a distillation of real time hinting at the medium's own fundamental deception. The animated sequences are fractured thoughts that generate a spontaneous stream of consciousness, which charts the trajectory of these multiple illusory fragments. It is a process of authentication, appropriation and destruction.

The images take inspiration from diverse sources, ranging from literary stimulation to hypnagogic flashes. These elements are then mixed together and filtered through the physical process of creation. For instance, these paper illusions stem from Jorge Luis Borges *On the Exactitude of Science* (which is itself an elaboration on a conceit in Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*) and *The Library of Babel*. The atmosphere of this work is similar to the vein of thought produced by writers such as Franz Kafka and Paul Auster.

The work is constantly forced into a dialogue with itself, other artworks and its location in time and space with the objective of revealing its own process of creation.

David O'Kane's paintings and animations regularly mix a playful humour with an interest in the uncanny that might, in another time, have seen him tagged as a surrealist. While some artists to whom he makes explicit reference – such as the Czech filmmaker, Jan Švankmajer – might, indeed, be comfortable with the term, O'Kane's use of dramatic juxtapositions and precipitous reversals of logic are not nearly so easy to classify.

This is not a project that involves adopting a position, or a pictorial program burdened with uncomfortable trappings. O'Kane is simply using the pictorial means at hand, allowing, encouraging even, familiar reference points to bob into view, but refusing to be forced by them into a particular program of action. So while a welter of psychoanalytical approaches to the works might suggest themselves, O'Kane's forms are always likely to resonate more erratically and productively, exploring a universe of jostling surfaces, or the business of appropriation, the mechanics of maps or the fabrics of reality.

**The first thing that strikes me is they are, obviously, quite different in scale from the computer screen, the way I had seen the pictures up to this point ...**

In reality the scale isn't that important, it's just my disposition towards the canvas, it's the way I like working. I like to be more physical with it, especially when I begin a picture. I like it to start off loose, but tighten up towards the end ... The smaller ones tend to end up being more monumental than the big ones, which is funny.

**What interests you about landscape painting?**

Working in landscape is about reality and mapping reality for myself. It is an understanding of it. If you look closely, there is not much detail there. If you look very carefully they dissolve ... When I set out to paint a landscape, it is just like when I am painting an interior: they start out with a very simple image, but then extra elements get introduced and the process can be very slow. I paint to let something happen.

**The image that suggests that we might be looking at a film set, or a model train set, seems like a key work. It seems like a revelation in terms of the other pictures in which the objects have funny scales in relation to the mountain.**

I was reading Baudrillard in connection with these and I came across a text where he was talking about Borges' story of an empire that drew up a map that was so detailed that the map matched the scale of the countryside exactly. And that's how I came to start playing with scale. First I did that painting with paper going across the landscape. I found it interesting how playing with scale effected the impression of what's real and what's not. In the house of cards, for instance, it is a house, but it is also a metaphor for a house and it also looks like a mountain. So the pictures are not literal, or at least they can be read metaphorically at the same time. But in the end, of course, they are what they are: they end up being images in themselves.

**When I see a picture in which it is cut away to reveal that the landscape is just a thin layer, a surface, I would equate that with Baudrillard ...**

Exactly, like an a simulacra ...

**... but that also makes you read the other works in a particular way.**

Well, it does, yes. These paintings do connect to each other. Though they are not necessarily meant to be read side by side, and they weren't necessarily made like that ... But, yes, they will be read differently because of that. It's about reality and perception. In one way the paper in 'Glaciated Landscape' is mapping the land, and in another way it's blocking it out. It's a perspective thing: you can only take in so much. It's about recognizing the pitfalls of your knowledge.

**You've also created animations that seem to relate to the paintings, what is it that interests you about animation here?**

I think animation and painting have a lot in common. They are compounds or distillations of moments in time. Each brush stroke is a moment in time, and with animation, each image is a moment in time. They also link together in terms of frustration: they are quite frustrated ways of making images...and I've used the frustration as a tool. The scrunched up balls of paper are really an image of frustration ... and there is a lot of paranoia in it too. In the end, they are thoughts and the paranoia and the frustration are inherent in them.

**So is your idea that when you are painting, the frustration comes because you can't achieve the image in one movement, and the paranoia is that each movement is wrong in some way?**

They are fractured. Nothing is whole. When I come up with an idea it is just a fragment. And then joining them all up together is the

art. A lot of the images are hypnagogic images: images that come to me just before I fall asleep. And that acts as a starting point, but it is not necessarily what the finished work is going to be ... I get an image when I'm going to sleep and I forget about them until they come back to me during the day and I'll think "That's a good idea. I'll paint that tomorrow."

**When you see the playing cards, in particular, in one of your paintings, you might immediately think of surrealism. Cards in strange contexts seem almost like a surrealist trope ...**

I'd see it more as play. I have lots of visual hints about play. And the way the paint is used is quite playful too. Although it is quite dark in some cases, because I'm using play and painting as a method of investigating thought, art and learning. That's what I'm interested in, in the nature of illusion, the nature of perception. ... I don't mind the surrealist connection, but I just wouldn't call myself a surrealist. I like the element of the uncanny: when something seems to be almost like a joke, but at the same time is quite serious. I like that dichotomy, but it's not surrealism. Surrealism is more of a philosophy, a way of life, than what I'm doing ... I'd find that too claustrophobic if I was trapped within a movement. I'm an artist, that's label enough.

**So tell me what you mean by play? Does your idea of it have a particular critical origin, or philosophical origin?**

I wrote my thesis on Jan Švankmajer, who is a surrealist and an animator. I would have some things in common with him and some things that I don't share with him. But when I was researching Švankmajer I came across DW Winnicott, and his theories about children and play, and children understanding reality. Play in those terms is about the fascination you get when you see an object for the first time. That idea of play is important for me, that idea of fascination.

The images don't just all come together from one concept. I would take a beginning and play with that, frustrate it again. There are different metaphors in an image, but it doesn't have to be read metaphorically. The hobbyhorse, for instance, is a reference to Gombrich and the little children are taken from Lewis Carroll's photographs. I like the idea that he was working when photography was in its infancy and that he was taking photographs of infants. I find it interesting that when William Fox Talbot was coming up with the idea of photography he decided he needed another way of recording the world because he couldn't draw. So it was frustration again ...

**How would you describe your relationship to photography, your attitude to photography?**

I suppose it's one of awe and bewilderment. The idea that a photographic image is totally objective ... That's what I find interesting about painting, the way that it ends up being completely subjective, everything is planned.

**But your painting is very meshed into photography, it couldn't really exist without it...**

Well, it could and it couldn't. Sometimes, certainly, I am taking an image from the Internet, found images. But I mess them up and play with them. Then sometimes the image comes entirely out of my head. So yes, I am drawing out of photography, but it is always for pictorial needs that I have ... it gives you a starting point; it gives you somewhere to leap off.

If I take a photograph by Lewis Carroll of a young girl, and it's in black and white, and she is sitting in a certain way, it is giving me something to object to, something to follow on from and manipulate. And it is good to have both methods in there, so you have areas where it is just painting, or areas where it is just out of my head. Photography is just another way of seeing. We think we find truth in photography ...

**But that is an idea that is dissolving now, I suppose. We assume that if a photograph is pixels, then it is infinitely malleable, even more so than paint ...**

It is getting to the point where photography is getting taken off its pedestal ... maybe we'll start hearing about the death of photography soon ...

**Or of a merging of the two, so that painting and photography just aren't that distinct ... ?**

Well I think that has happened with a lot of artists, not just myself ... I like to push the boundaries in terms of media and see which way things work. At the moment I have restricted myself to animation and painting, but that is still a pretty large spectrum. I sometimes take photographs, but they usually end up back in painting, because of the tactility you have in painting, and in animation. There is the malleability that you have in these media. You can have it in film and photography, but it's much harder. I find it easier to paint.

Luke Clancy



Scriptorium, 2007, oil on canvas, 214 x 214 cm



Investigations, 2007, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm



Meditations, 2007, oil on canvas, 214 x 214 cm



Automaton, 2007, oil on canvas, 163 x 163 cm



(Left) Supported Landscape 1, 2007, oil on canvas, 41 x 51 cm  
(Right) Supported Landscape 2, 2007, oil on canvas, 41 x 51 cm



Glaciated Landscape, 2007, oil on canvas, 147 x 214 cm

## The CAP Foundation Selection Committee

Neil Burke-Kennedy  
Architect  
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Ireland

Luke Clancy  
Critic and Broadcaster  
Dublin  
Ireland

Duncan McLaren  
Art Consultant  
London  
England

Linda Pilaro  
Director, CAP Foundation  
Dublin  
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