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# **New Expressionist painting in Irish Art**

- **Brian Maguire and Patrick Graham**

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## **2. Forming the eighties: The factor of art-infrastructure, governmental and private patronage and the art market in Ireland of the 70s**

In the late 70ties and 80ties the economic success and the climate for Artists in Ireland improved. Before talking of the New Expressionists the situation of art in Ireland of the 80s might be worth a look. With beginning of the 70s both public or governmental and private collections were established, the way art was taught and that it was taught changed after the breakdown of the academic restriction of RHA. In the midst of 70s the first generation of artists left the National College of Art who were able to take full advantage of the improvement in several vital institutions or parts of the Irish society. More than that artist worked for their success in projects such as the Project Arts Centre (1967) or (whenever they worked as curators) were connecting Ireland to the international art scene. The responsible persons of the Arts Council – no longer holding a monopoly to Irish culture and art – decided to restructure in order to be ready for competition with other institutions in 1972.

The ROSC exhibitions were the most important ‘injection’ so to say. Basically privately run the ROSC experience led government to be more engaged in the contemporary art. What effect the ROSC exhibition had on motivating also governmental institutions to buy art can tell this quotation from a catalogue of the *Office of Public Works* (OPW):

*“The 1970s and early 1980s was an interesting time for the acquisition of Irish art. With the controversy and excitement generated by the early ROSC exhibitions, the artistic atmosphere was charged with an energy which had not previously existed in Ireland. International art was brought to the wider public forum for the first time.”<sup>1</sup>*

The percent-for-art-scheme was also introduced by the official institutions and that meant that art has a guaranteed status within public building projects. With some reason you can say that the ROSC exhibitions were standing at the beginning of a development which ends in the opening of the first Museum of modern art in 1992 – one of the most important museums in Ireland today. This all was a positive factor which was providing a good commercial basis and an open public for those artist who worked at the end of that decade of change after 1969.

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<sup>1</sup> *Art in state buildings 1970-1985*; published by the Office of Public Works 1986; p.14

### 3. New Expressionism

In order to get in touch with Neo-Expressionism or New Expressionism I begin with quotations from two catalogues – one at the beginning of the 80s and one from 1991, which was dedicated as a retrospective to the “Irish Art of the eighties”. The first catalogue *A New Spirit in Painting* (London 1981) was dedicated to an exhibition of painters with the same title in the Tate Gallery. First a quote from this 1981 catalogue: “*We are in a period when it seems to many people that painting has lost its relevance as one of the highest and most eloquent forms of artistic expression. It is argued that it has become academic and repetitive and it has the capacity neither for technical mastery nor for originality. [...].*”

In this quotation from the preface of the catalogue the authors spoke of the lack of true avant-gardism, the self-defeating conceptual painting of the 70s – only to speak a few moments later in this way:

*“The artists studios are full of paint pots again and an abandoned easel in an art school has become a rare sight. Wherever you look in Europe or America you find artists who have rediscovered the sheer joy of painting.”*

However, the three organizers of this 1981 exhibition wrote several pages on that art of the 70s was dead. They wrote painting but I guess they meant art itself. The three curators were obviously very keen on dig a grave for the art of 70s, and looking forward to a new age – a new spirit. The new spirit is concerned with the individual self-esteem of the artists, their will to present their individual expression toward a public in a very vivid way and nearly solely in the genre of painting. You should notice that in the critic of the 70s art as “repetitive” or the enthusiastic title *A New Spirit* you can trace the critics demand for an avant-gardism in art. Avant-gardism<sup>1</sup> was one of the most common vocabulary when speaking about modern art anyway. Behind it you can see the concept that good art has to be inventive and has to break habits and rules in ongoing self-destructive progression. This concept is already broken when the next catalogue was published – not by random the curators choose a similar title: *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*. Already in the title you can see a juxtaposition of NEW and TRADITION a mixture of those antagonistic ideas which would not be possible if the concept of avantgardism as a proof stone of good art would not be dead.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of “*Avant-garde*” is older than the Russian Avantgardism. In fact it is somehow replacing the concept of “*Tradition*” which was dominating art academies, the salon and art schools until the modern art began to act outside those institutions.

Indeed the catalogue is starting very much the same like the first one – thus stressing the explicitly new quality:

*“The advent of New Expressionism, which swept through Europe and America at the close of the seventies, had specific implications for Ireland. It gave added impetus to a pre-existing tendency to treat painting not as an outmoded cultural form but as a relevant, highly promising medium of expression, and it came as a virtual confirmation that those who had kept the faith had been right all along. While, then, the New Expressionism generated an enormous amount of bad painting in art schools and studios throughout the country, its most significant effect was not to stimulate this largely incoherent and ephemeral mass of material, but to in some curious way legitimate what was already going on in Irish painting.”<sup>1</sup>*

What was already going on in Ireland? We will see later but first we have to see that this curiosity is not a specifically Irish one. Example for the (from today surprising) neglect of figurative painting before was the German Georg Baselitz which is now known as an VIP of 80s art but in fact was already working around 1969 in a figurative way. Baselitz was interested in painting as a painting and painted the motifs upside-down to destroy the representational character for an artistic freedom. Many critics saw this only as a gimmick to get the attention of the art scene.

Another example for the neglect and late rewarding of figural painters is this most influential exhibition *A New Spirit in Painting* where the jury chose 32 new and six older painters: Francis Bacon, Balthus, Philip Guston, Jean Hélion, Willem de Kooning and Matta<sup>2</sup>. In Ireland that position of “surviving outsiders” could take Michael Kane. Neo-Expressionism as a label was internationally used to stick it on artists who either survived the somehow figurative dry 70s or emerged in the early 80s. So we have two groups of Neo-Expressionists.

The label itself and its variations is a problematic. Not only some of those artists characterized as Neo-Expressionists rejected this name. Because of the variety in numbers, individual forms and the geographically widespread of Neo-Expressionism it is hardly possible to give unambiguous signs of Neo-Expressionism.

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<sup>1</sup> *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*, Douglas Hyde Gallery 1991, p. 25

<sup>2</sup> That they took in older artist is ironically stressing a traditional concept, somehow this is a contradiction to their title „*A New Spirit*“. But the ratio of a new figurative painting to that of the older ‘masters’ ( 32 to 6) is showing their emphasize towards the new.

Facing this danger- what can be said about *Neo-Expressionism*, *new fauves* or *Neue Wilde* (as they were called in Germany): It was dominated first of all by painting, some printing, no installation, some sculpture, no photography, no film. That painting and also the printing techniques were formally similar to that of the Expressionist. In a very vivid style the painting was neither representative nor elaborated in a skilful way fitting into anatomic or perspective rules. Also the political oppositional and bohemian lifestyle of the first Expressionist was copied by some of the Neo-Expressionist within art and their public life. Of course that pose turned out to be incompatible or not really upright when the first 'rebels' were engaged in universities or governmental institutions (we come to that later). Unlike the first Expressionists in Germany there was no group or such structure – the label was just popped somehow on various figurative painters.

#### **4. The Irish artists coming too late again...just in time for being good neo-expressionists?**

In the 70s art was dominated by both pop art and minimalism or conceptual art. Speaking about the 1980s and their term “New-Expressionists” in Ireland we have to look what was going on before. In 70s the Irish 'heroes' of Modernism (for example Keating/le Brocquy) were still working, the ROSC exhibition 'flooded' Ireland temporarily with international art (most of which was US-art). And that was dominated by pop-art, photorealism and minimalism. An example in Ireland for a fashionable art style can be Cecil King or Robert Ballagh. Whereas Ballagh followed these popular mainstreams and turned from Pop-Art to the next fashion: photo-realism the later protagonists of Neo-Expressionism Maguire, Graham, Mulcahy were largely unknown or worse: neglected. What we know as the “Independents” of Irish Art – for example Michael Kane – were the only known artists who later fit to the label Neo-Expressionism but the label was not yet invented. For the art critic Joan Fowler (in *A New Tradition- Irish art of the 80s*) the way Irish Neo-Expressionists made their way into the heart of Irish art scene only because they began in the 70s to ignore the fashionable international art (somehow traditionally Irish?) , working in their positions of outsiders only to find them just luckily fit in the latest fashion around 1980. The headline of a 1982 article by Aidan Dunne characterized the way these Irish artists developed: “*A Quiet Revolution in Irish Art*”<sup>1</sup>. For Joan Fowler the new movement

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<sup>1</sup> *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*, Douglas Hyde Gallery 1991, p. 53

came into Irish art scene and from 1984 on “[...]Neo-Expressionism was widely perceived as the most exciting phenomenon in Irish art for many years.”<sup>1</sup> In a later chapter we will see that many of the protagonists are today (2002) the establishment of Irish art institutions.

## 5. Brian Maguire- a social New Expressionism changing

Brian Maguire was born in 1951 in Dublin where he grew up. After attending the *Dun Laoghaire Technical School* for one year he began to study art at the *National College of Art and Design (NCAD)* in Dublin in 1969. Five years later he finished and graduated 1975 from the *NCAD*. He took part in the group exhibition *Making Sense* in 1982-83 which was one highlight in his artistic career. Brian Maguire’s solo exhibitions in the 80s were mostly based in Dublin art galleries. He exhibited 1988 in the *Douglas Hyde Gallery*. In the middle of the 90s he started to exhibit also outside Ireland, for the first time 1996 in London and then several times in the USA. In 1998 represented Ireland at the *Sao Paolo Biennale* with a project. His latest solo exhibitions were in 2001 in the *Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery* in Dublin and in the *Contemporary Arts Museum* in Houston. Maguire gave also talks from the beginning of his career in Ireland and abroad and is recently appointed Head /professor of Fine Art at *NCAD* in Dublin.

As he started in the first years of the 80s he painted in a two-dimensional way. Maguire was not at all interested using the 3<sup>rd</sup> imaginary dimension to create illusion of space, he flattens the room, disrupts the landscape. A good example might be the oilpainting “*Child looking for 6 grains of rice in Uganda*” of 1982. On a dark ground a red human figure is laying, reaching out for some corns of rice. Neither the face of the protagonist nor other individual schemes are visible. It is in no way a realistic representation of figures. It is more a strong affirmation of painted fate. As if this is not enough he writes on the black canvas the title. Is this one example for the “[...]enormous amount of bad painting in art schools and studios throughout the country[...]”<sup>2</sup> as the retrospective catalogue entry of 1991 has already stated? Is this appropriate to the obviously inhuman tragedy of starvation? To some extent it is a very short breather painting didactically quoting from a headline or a tv-screen. Or is this a polemic refusal of art, sense and aesthetic because other things seem to be more important than art? In order to make his

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<sup>1</sup> *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*, Douglas Hyde Gallery 1991, p. 56

<sup>2</sup> *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*, Douglas Hyde Gallery 1991, p. 25

point clear (because the painting does not) the title must be written in. The problem is that this inscription is working too good – everybody understands... and can leave the painting behind. Maguire's next painting, the *Liffey suicide* of 1986, is working primarily as a piece of art. It is showing a bridge in a dark and gloomy atmosphere. Who commits suicide is not clear but the place seems to be depicted. The use of colour is based on black, sorts of grey or white. Here the picture is somehow more ambiguous and a viewer is busy with possible interpretations. Other paintings like *Roadside Assassination* (1984) or *Jail Visit* (1990) are taking an extreme situation into focus also. In general you can already see at the end of the 80s that Maguire is interested in the dark side of society be it in Ireland or elsewhere in the world. In *Roadside Assassination* you see a man dying at the roadside – Maguire stresses with the Roadside that this murderer is going on in midst of society. With beginning of the 90s a next place is drawing his attention: the prison as an institution for governmental force and institution of correction. Again Maguire crosses suicide: The oilpainting *Prison Suicide* is showing a cell with one prisoner already hanging and another one helping him by pulling him down. Whereas the prison is painted in a more or less elaborated way the two persons look like puppets their faces either a blank spot of colour or a almost childish 'smily'. The tragedy of the incident is mixed with a sort of dark comic. It might be interesting to compare this work with the early expressionist George Grosz *Suicide* (oilpainting 1916) and *Riot of the insane* (lithography 1917). Maguire as a New Expressionist shares the almost sarcastic depiction of inhuman society – a critical view. But there are also differences. Grosz as most of the early Expressionists felt that they are also part of that insane society, suffering the same. In Maguire's work it is the view on outsiders. In formal way you can easily feel the difference in use of colour. Whereas the Expressionism used nearly unmixed colour Maguire (and Graham) use a smaller palette of colours based on white, greys and black.. Grosz is also painting in a partially illusionistic clearness, his later works fit in the left winged variation of the *New Sobriety*. What is distorting and unsharp is the motif itself not the way it is painted. Maguire as many other new expressionistic artists took a different approach and a multilayered painting technique.

Brian Maguire took part in artist-in-residence programmes by start of the 90s and obviously that insider view changed his style. Instead of taking over a tv-like headline (like in *Child looking for 6 grains of Rice in Uganda*) he lets the subject itself speak. His series of portraits of prisoners, *Portraits from a Day Room* (1998) in the Gransha

Hospital or the famous series of portraits of favela-inhabitants in the project for the *Sao Paolo Biennale* from the same year are completely rid of the stressed extra-normal problematic of his early works. The form changed from big oil paintings to panels all smaller than a meter and/or charcoal sketches. Gone is the gigantomanic size of his 80s oil painting, gone is the sensationalistic attitude towards the un-normal. The portraits of all these series are ironically very calm. Nobody would be able to consider the portrayed people prisoners or being in a hospital. The combatant, the poor, the 'unnatural' disappears – the individual human being appears. In the Sao Paolo project Maguire went into the poorest district of that metropolis and gave the work to the portrayed person as a gift. Of course he walks out with something: a photo taken from the sketching situated in the favela. In a review in CIRCA Georgia Lobacheff gave this statement about the background of this project:

*“In the end, it is more practical to explore how art can stimulate a healthier development, a life with more meaning, and how it can unleash affectionate processes, rather than to analyse why children become criminals. In this way, Maguire’s work achieves its goal very well. The work he has developed with these children is very close to an educational project, or a social/therapy project. His project fits well into the art-education concept that preaches that through an artistic activity one can learn about art, stimulate a potential gift or substitute for lack of hope, emptiness and consequent violence.”*<sup>1</sup>

However, some critics considered the almost Beuys-like kind of project in a social public and the use of photography<sup>2</sup> as a surrender to a conceptual art. So noble it is to bring art towards a minority, working with them for weeks and change the white clean cube of an international exhibition with the underdogs district, one has to recognize that Maguire is bringing home photos of that event – just in case anyone doubt it.

## **6. Patrick Graham- the encrypted expression**

Patrick Graham was born in 1943 in Mullingar, County Westmeath, Ireland. His parents were catholic and he later described the political atmosphere within his family as nationalistic. About his first years before he studied at NCAD the following story is spread: With 16 years a tutor took some of his paintings and send them to a competition

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<sup>1</sup> in: CIRCA. *Irish and International Contemporary Visual Culture*. No 87 spring 1999, page 21

<sup>2</sup> Also in some of the later 90s paintings ripped-out photographs or collages appear.

without asking Graham. It was technically a full success but because Patrick Graham has not yet reached the minimum entrance age he was expelled. He studied at the NCAD until 1963. Graham was known by his professors as a good draftsman and Graham won a *National Three Year Scholarship*, the *Prize for Drawing*, *Royal Dublin Society* and several other prizes. In 1964 he left with the Diploma in Fine Art. Once out of the academy he felt unhappy with his kind of art. Only having a technical skill without an idea was not enough. Besides Graham suffered from alcoholism and mental problems. Graham's turning point came when he got into contact with the German Expressionist. Here (it is said) Graham found the example of a non-representational art rooted in a personal experience.

Graham began to paint again and changed his style – to an art formed by the power of inner and individual movements. When the new fashion of New Expressionism reached Ireland that label was popped on him and other artists (like Michael Kane). In 1981 he won the *Award for Painting of Outstanding Merit of the Independent Artists* – a prize not designed for newcomers. He took also part in the Irish exhibition “Making sense” in 1982/83. Patrick Graham has been the recipient of numerous Travel Awards and Purchase Awards from the *Arts Council of Ireland*. He lives and works in Dublin. Let's start with what his US-Gallery Ruthberg says about him on its website:

*“Graham's psychologically-charged work explores journeys into revelation and transcendence. His powerful expressionist paintings evoke the near-mystical qualities of Irish earth and water; spatial and spiritual passages. Graham's painterly images commonly contain symbolic forms and scripted phrases that resonate like fragments of traditional song and lyrical poetry which spring from a unique historical consciousness, exploring both personal and Irish history, repression, paganism, religion, and sexuality.”<sup>1</sup>*

Religion, myths and politics – themes regarded as Irish are taken by Graham. When he took over these already traditional icons in the early 80s he began a phase which was very politically charged. He took over themes from the Christian and national heritage as the *Scenes from the life of Christ* and *My Darkish Rosaleen (Ireland as a Young Whore)* both of 1984. Together with the earlier *Ireland* (1982) these are the most political pictures and representants of more like oil paintings in the 80s. Unlike Maguire Graham puts his painterly aggression directly towards the national symbols. It is a fight

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<sup>1</sup> Source Internet: <http://www.jackrutbergfinearts.com/JRutbergFile/JRutbergArtists/PGraham.html> (13.11.2002)

against the symbols which were established in the art and literature in Irish history and depicted by the early modernists. Coming from a family which believed in the national and catholic identity he changed his attitude against that. Here the long used icons were depicted again, again an Irish artist painted in the sphere of religious and national topics. In Grahams work they were mixed up and juxtaposed. You can surely trace some anticlerical elements (some might say sacrilegious, too) in the painting. The contraposition of “good/catholic/victim against the colonial/angloprotestant/perpetrator – (been seen to some extent in art of the Irish modernists and was strengthened by the troubles of the north in early 1970) cliché is broken. Graham fights – the new brushstroke painting is a fight – against history. His personal history, his artistic beginning, the way he painted in the college and the idols of that time. But although he is taking it vice versa or nonconformistic – he is dealing with these two Irish themes. No matter how heretic he takes up that tradition – Graham may not have been able to avoid the Irish icons. How is Graham mixing up these popular<sup>1</sup> Irish themes? Unlike Ballagh (both in his pop- and the photorealistic period) Graham leaves the motifs encrypted – individual, laid under several brushstrokes. The spectator is left with ambiguity not with a strong and clear impression of photorealism and iconographic truth like Ballagh. Contrast Grahams painting “*The Gift*” (1983) to Ballaghs photorealistic “*Upstairs No.3*” (1979). Ballagh is making up an illusionism of a painted theatrestage or interior scene rather than a real landscape. Ballagh leaves no doubt about what is depicted and that seems to be very popular painting. Although it can not be a real moment when every little detail is just happening that way Ballagh’s way of painting claims it to be real. Graham as well as Maguire are using a painted encryption which not at all leads to a unambiguous result. Their use of the (typical Irish?) genre of landscape painting is a very crucial point for understanding New Expressionism not only in its Irish form. They share in the early 80s a type of landscape which seems to map society and their unknown dark sides in a social landscape or a *landscape of the mind*. That both Maguire and Graham and many Irish Expressionists use landscapes as psychological maps is neither new (used by the psychically charged surrealist Exile-painting) nor uncommon in that time - the painting of the 80s. If you want to compare this constellation at all you may first take Anselm Kiefers art, for example the oilpainting *Operation Sea Lion* (1975)<sup>2</sup>, no other neo-expressionist painter dedicated himself to such a small and not very

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<sup>1</sup> Popular also in the meaning that they are Irish and it might be not by chance that Graham has many galleries in the United States and is there an acclaimed Irish painter (see quote from Rutberg gallery).

<sup>2</sup> Stunningly parallel even at the first look with Maguires *Village Grave/Republican* of 1999!

expressionistic range of brown tones and the use of writing like Kiefer. Based on both the history and mythology and sometimes influenced by works of literature Kiefer paints landscapes of the soul. With his mixture of historic facts and mythology he was opposed to the concept of historic clarification and political correctness. When Graham uses the icons of Irishness again this is also an act of opposition to two kind of tradition. On one hand he destroys the purity of the icons of those who still believed and believe in these metaphors. On the other hand he intimidates the concept of pure history and all those who believe in the scientific solution of identity because he obviously takes in mythology again. This mythology is a quality which can not be found in the work of Maguire. A mythology of individual kind comes in especially after Graham let the political icons (Mother Ireland for example) go away and lets a mythologically charged but highly subjective world get in. Graham changed his painting at the end of the 80s. After the 'explicit paintings' he changed to a not so 'offensive' painting. The series of painting around nature (*Blackbird-suite* 1998) could be a good example. Another thing has changed in Grahams art which is not less problematic than Maguire's use of photo. Grahams early works all give the viewer a tip through the title. As if the title is not critical enough he also takes in a writing; for example "*Ah sweet little Jesus this is another way to love ...and I understand*" in *Ire/land*. We asked critically why is Maguire using photography – when the things could well be painted? We can now ask: Why is a painter using text? Lack of skill as a painter? Since the 80s Graham is writing in his pictures and he still uses that<sup>1</sup>. Why is he using text? Comparing the new paintings to his early works you find that the words are now still recognizable though not always clearly sense making. Sometimes they again take over the title but the most of them look like very fast scribbles and sketches. These text can be quotations or of a highly individual sense – some you can de-code as names of the painted details, some inform about the position of the painter (as "From the dart") – thus stressing that it might be a sort of hint for the artist only. The scribbled rush make them look more as preparatory work for something which is not yet done (and will not be done). The preparatory sketches – long time only interesting with the finished painting – had received a really independent status in Grahams art. He lets us look behind the concept and making of –even if we do not understand. Surely the sketches contain a secret. There is something which must be important enough to take them in, to show them. In contrast to the often seen implementation of for example gold letter handwriting as a

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to the running exhibition „Paradise Suite“ in the Douglas Hyde Gallery, winter 2002)

beautiful filling in art-deco posters Grahams text have a meaning. And isn't this Irish? If there was an Irish tradition of a ,say, sub-text in painting (a political in most of Keating and contemporaries like in *Bachelors Walk* or the constantly reference of Irish artists to Irish writers) Graham is going on with it. But instead of letting the spectator guess or giving him only the hint with the title he is just working directly within the painting. And the words appear in a ripped off context, in their written line often destroyed or overpainted. If you are keen to link Graham also to the Irish literature you can see in this technique a postmodern fragmentation. But the text is never dominating the picture that much, that it seems an illustration only. The often as tragic described atmosphere in Grahams recent art can have a political background but don't need to. More than politics you can find a mythological sensitivity in Grahams art, typically Irish? There is the difference between Grahams Neo-Expressionism to what Maguire made. The other big difference is in their approach to art and the role of an artist. Graham is taking a less political approach. His arguments are of aesthetic nature, he favours a new romanticism and genius in painting. He judges his painting (and that of other artists) by their inherent quality not by their political effect. In a recent interview he argues against the right of a school of political or social criticism of art:

*“Feminism distrusts romanticism hugely, and with very good reason, but it is an essential part of art because it is in there that the spirit of beauty and love and those kinds of things exist.”<sup>1</sup>*

Unlike Maguire Graham is not taking over quasi-feminists position<sup>2</sup> – for example Maguire's criticism of male centred sexuality in the paintings *Red figure* of 1995 or *Male figure* of 1997. Or lets clash Maguire's 'Beuys-like' framing concept of an intervening artist<sup>3</sup>, his moving toward the so called outsiders to this recent statement of Graham:

*“Well, what happens is the critical criteria for art begin to drop to accommodate a political idea. They will say deliberately 'We are getting rid of exclusiveness in art. We are getting rid of the elitism of art.' Now*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Internet <http://www.theblackrag.com/vol2/beauty.htm> (from 15.11.02)

<sup>2</sup> Depending on what feminism-theory you take a male artist like Maguire would not be able to take over a feministic position at all (because he is not in the role of a female person).

<sup>3</sup> As Patrick T. Murphy put it: „Josef Beuys 'entreaty to use art as a social healer seems to have been taken to an extraordinary length and circumstance by Maguire.“ from: *Brian Maguire. Inside/out*. Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery. Dublin 2000; page 16

*here we see a great mistake. Art is exclusive. It is whether you like it or not. It is actually a denial to say it is not.*"<sup>1</sup>

This is clearly a denial of some of the most influential political movements of the 70s and 80s, social engaged art and feminism and it is politically not correct. It seems that Graham in total is not suffering – neither in the value of the art market nor as a person in the art scene.

## **7. Importance of the 1980ties artist generation for Irish art scene today**

Both Maguire and Graham are now sold on a relatively high level. Surely they profited from the expanded market in Ireland and the interests of galleries abroad (to a good share from the United States) but they also broke the ice for younger artist. Especially Graham, Kane and some other figurative painters were for the first time artists who are 'adaptable' for international art public without leaving their Irish identity behind or changing their style of work. That has happened by accident as we have discovered to them (but this is no solely Irish fate). When we look at the vita of Maguire we see that he represented Ireland at a Bienale, having recently good critics, is member of the Aosdana since 1985 and is head of the department of Fine Art at the NCAD. Whereas he started as a rebel against Irish society and working especially at the 'edges of society' he is now a part of it. Graham is Member of the Aosdana from 1986 on. Today there are more visual artists than writers or musicians in this institution. He is currently one of the most known artist and exporting a specific Irish sort of painting. Beside the 'senior stars' like LeBroquy these generation of painters are still continuing their work in Irish art and time will tell whether they can hold their fire (and their prices). Maybe after 20 years you can already say that their paintings do not belong to the first bins of [...] *largely incoherent and ephemeral mass of material*[...]”<sup>2</sup> thrown away.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Internet <http://www.theblackrag.com/vol2/beauty.htm> (from 15.11.02)

<sup>2</sup> *A new tradition – Irish Art of the eighties*, Douglas Hyde Gallery 1991, p. 25

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