



THE DANCE OF LIFE 3-25 AUG

THOMAS BARRON, DECLAN BYRNE AND SINÉAD FAHEY

KCAT Arts Centre, Mill Lane, Callan, Co. Kilkenny

LIVE EVENTS

3.08
3pm

The Dance of Life: A trio exhibition by Thomas Barron, Declan Byrne and Sinéad Fahey will officially be opened by curator, writer and frequent collaborator of KCAT Catherine Marshall at 3pm. Light refreshments will be provided for this celebration. All are welcome.

8.08
11 - 12.30pm

Free painting response workshop with artist Sinéad Fahey. One of the exhibition artists, Sinéad Fahey will lead a workshop in response to some of the themes of the exhibition of life and joy from 11-12.30pm followed by tea and light refreshments. To book your place email info@kcat.ie. There are 6 places available.

19.08
2pm

A tactile tour for audiences who are blind and visually impaired led by curator of The Dance of Life, Sinéad Keogh. Sinéad was the former Creative Coordinator of the National Council for the Blind from 2013-2021. All are welcome for this tour which starts at 2pm, followed light refreshments. No booking required.

25.08
2pm

We invite members of the public to join us for an artist film screening at 2pm. Three films were made about Barron, Byrne's and Fahey's respective practices and will be shown in a screening in the gallery space for an audience. The thread between each others sensibilities can be found in the film pieces which act as a form of alternative artist talk in this special screening. The Artists will be present to answer questions after the screening. This is a wonderful opportunity to get an intimate insight into the artists practice and output. Light refreshments will be provided for this closing event. No booking required.

**Additional
tours**

KCAT is offering free group guided exhibition tours. Tours are limited to 15 people per group. Booking essential email: info@kcat.ie.

**Opening
hours**

Exhibition open daily 10am - 4pm

The Dance of Life seemed to be a natural title for an exhibition of works by Thomas Barron, Declan Byrne and Sinéad Fahey. All three artists are deeply involved in observation, ideas of light (bringing an inner life to their works) and in a moving way, ritual. When we think about the work of Declan Byrne, one of his most striking series can be observed in the "encrusted" period which spans from the mid to late 2010's. In this period, Byrne had taken broken, discarded and overlooked items such as broken statues, a coffee pot and an old pair of shoes and transformed them into powerful statements of reclamation and new life. *Encrusted pair of shoes size 9* (2018) is an example of work from this period in the exhibition. Byrne had done this by painstakingly covering each readymade with tiny shards of dried paint, carefully diversifying the palettes into expanded spectrums of colour. This idea of hiding and revealing simultaneously has been a constant feature in Byrne's work from early abstracted pieces such as *Shop Window* (2005) where only essential fragments are visible to his most recent works such as *Blacksmith* (2022), a heavily abstracted image that began life as an image of a blacksmith working at a fire, an image that still lingers underneath. The concept of daily life pervade Sinéad Fahey's work in remarkable and affective ways. Nature is a constant feature in her practice and so the topics of life and death seep into the subject matter. Take for example an early piece, *Lisa helping a patient* (2012) which depicts Fahey's sister at work as a nurse in a Ardkeen Hospital. As in *Birds, Fish and Flowers* (2021), a painting of a fisherman at work, both images convey a person busy in their daily life and environment in a space in where life and death operate. A heightened sense of unity with all things and an understanding of such is examined in *Everything flowing with wind* (2018), a study of the wind taking all matters of creatures, debris, water and colourful forms along a synchronised flow of energy. When it comes to energy and the process of ritual, Thomas Barron is a profound and fascinating giant of this field. Taking his point of departure from architecture, Barron uses the concept of blocked structures with or without windows to build a primary language of his work, for example *Untitled* (2023). This can stem from memories of his family farm in cases and so the ritual of always bringing a painting to life in this way begins as unlocking the hidden, what is inside and representing the image as an abstract in sophisticated clear and distinct work with alluring palette choices are born and reborn again.

I am delighted to present in this show, a fascinating look at the work of these three powerful contemporary Irish artists and their relationship with one another.

Thank you to Declan Byrne, Dorothee Beniers, Maurice Caplice, Caroline Loughman and all of the KCAT team, the Kilkenny Arts Festival team, Cathrine Marshall and the artists themselves Thomas Barron, Declan Byrne and Sinéad Fahey.

- Sinéad Keogh, *The Dance of Life* curator.

SINÉAD FAHEY



Two birds with carrots floating in the water (2011)



Lisa Helping a Patient (2012)

Sinéad Fahey has been a member of the KCAT studio for 22 years. She has shown work internationally, including at the Beyond Festival, Leeds UK, Kaarisilta Gallery, Helsinki Finland, Art Brut Biennale Hengelo, The Netherlands, Kunsthau Kannen, Munster Germany, Gallery Prabelli Wiltz, Luxembourg, and the Freight Gallery, Fremantle Australia. She has also shown extensively in Ireland, including at the F.E. McWilliam Gallery, Banbridge, Farmleigh House Gallery, Dublin, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge, Galway Arts Centre, Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, and the Copper House Gallery, Dublin.

Sinéad's work has been featured alongside the work of her KCAT colleagues in the feature documentary *Living Colour* by Wild Fire Productions. Her work is also represented within publications such as *The Engagement Project* KCAT (2014-2020), *Works on Paper* exhibition catalogue (2008), *Art & Inclusion – The Story of KCAT* (2009), and *Peer to Peer* (2007). Along with many of her KCAT colleagues, she actively promotes inclusion within the arts and has taken part in several events, such as the Engagement Symposium KCAT (2018). Sinéad has work in the collection of the Arts Council of Ireland.

Sinéad's multi-coloured animation-like works in acrylic convey the deep connection and empathy she feels with people and the natural world. Her works often depict friends and colleagues from KCAT, creatures such as birds and fish, and large multi-coloured plants and flowers. Fahey's highly engaging works exude playfulness and freedom. She takes the time to develop her work slowly over weeks and often months. Her careful approach makes it seem as if each work is minded into existence through a well rehearsed process that has been developed and honed over many years of practice.

Sinéad has a style that is unmistakably hers. Her unique use of shape and colour can be understood as an optimistic celebration of the very idea of having beautiful people and things around us in our lives. In general terms, Fahey's imagery can be understood to concern love and she shares her work in order to decorate the world with the beauty she sees in it. As a result, as a viewer, Sinéad's work can be as easy to absorb as fresh air.

Find out more about Sinéad Fahey's work at kcat.ie.

THOMAS BARRON

Thomas Barron is a founding member of the KCAT art studio. He has exhibited work internationally for two decades, including at the Kaarisilta Gallery, Finland, Beyond Festival, Leeds UK, Art Brut Biennale, The Netherlands, Gallery Prabelli, Luxembourg, Gallery Inuti, Sweden, Kunsthau Kannen, Germany, Goetheanum, Switzerland, Project Ability, Gallery Scotland, and the Freight Gallery, Australia. He has also shown extensively in Ireland, including at the West Cork Arts Centre, Farmleigh House Gallery, Dublin, Crawford Gallery, Cork, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, Galway Arts Centre, and Axis Art Centre, Ballymun Dublin.

Thomas' work has been featured alongside the work of his KCAT colleagues in Wild Fire Productions' feature documentary *Living Colour*. His work also features in several publications, including *The Engagement Project* KCAT (2014-2020), *Perceptions: The Art of Citizenship* (2016), *Art & Inclusion: The Story of KCAT* (2009), *Visible Visions* (2004), and the *IWTK – I want to Know* series of publications documenting collaborative exchanges between Cooperations, Luxembourg, SKID, Germany, Pyramid of Arts, Leeds, UK, and KCAT Studio Ireland (2015).

Thomas has spent many years honing his ever evolving method for creating beautifully composed and colourful abstract paintings. Barron begins each work by drawing with pencil before laying down thick layers of acrylic beside and over each other in a way that brings each work through multiple colourful and dramatic variations and (re)visions. As his paintings develop, some convey a sense of large building facades with multiple windows while others invoke ariel views of multi-coloured landscapes. Each painting emerges as distinct. As with powerful abstract works generally, each offers the potential to open to what the viewer needs them to be, and the possibilities are endless. Within Thomas' work, a remarkable equilibrium between formal elements is sought and maintained. It is as though his paintings speak to potential inner states in which balance is possible and peace prevails, even momentarily.

Find out more about Thomas Barron's work at kcat.ie.



Untitled Seaside (2021)



Untitled Town Houses (2021)

DECLAN BYRNE



Untitled Blacksmith (2023)

Declan Byrne has been a member of the KCAT studio since 2004, where he has developed a unique and highly dedicated body of work in painting, drawing, and sculpture. He has shown internationally, including at UNT Art Galleries, Dallas Texas, the Beyond Festival, Leeds UK, Project Ability Gallery, Glasgow Scotland, Freight Gallery, Australia, Gallery Prabelli, Luxembourg, Museum of everything, London, Kunsthaus Kannen, Germany, and the Art Brut Biennale, the Netherlands. Byrne has also shown extensively in Ireland, including at the Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar, F.E. McWilliam Gallery, Banbridge, the Atypical Gallery Belfast, West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen, Farmleigh House Galleries, Dublin, Galway Arts Centre and Crawford Gallery Cork.

Declan's work has been featured alongside the work of his KCAT colleagues in the feature documentary *Living Colour* by Wild Fire Productions. His work also features in several publications, including *The Engagement Project* KCAT (2014-2020), *Art & Inclusion: The Story of KCAT* (2009), *Works on Paper* (2008), and the *IWTK – I want to Know* series of publications documenting collaborative exchanges between Cooperations, Luxembourg, SKID, Germany, Pyramid of Arts, Leeds, UK, and KCAT Studio Ireland (2015). Declan has work in the Irish National Collection at the Crawford Gallery Cork.



Encrusted pair of shoes size 9 (2018)

Declan works in sculpture, drawing, and painting. Each of his paintings is created over months, with dots and various blocks and shapes of colour applied side by side, eventually speeding out in all directions over the whole canvas. This results in an intricate patchwork of colours and shapes. The subjects and figures Declan often starts with, such as particular people or scenes, do continue to reveal themselves in finished works to varying degrees. However, for the most part, figuration is largely kept at a distance through abstraction, as though each painting presents a multi-coloured ariel view of an exquisitely coloured landscape. Byrne also creates sculptural works by undertaking a compelling engagement with the materiality of paint. Large quantities of small different coloured quadratic shapes of dried acrylic are piece by piece carefully and methodically glued over the entire surface of found objects in a way that creates a dynamic multi-coloured surface and coating similar to his paintings. Declan's work is exquisite and accessible on many levels, and the artist relishes every opportunity to share his voice through his work and to be with others as they experience it.

Find out more about Declan Byrne's work at kcat.ie.

LIST OF EXHIBITED WORKS IN THE DANCE OF LIFE

THOMAS BARRON

Untitled Town Houses (2021) Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Untitled Seaside (2021) Acrylic on canvas, 101 x 76 cm

Untitled (2023) Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 32 cm

Untitled (2023) Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100 cm

Big Blue Farm Untitled (2017) Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 100 cm

Gresham Hotel Dublin (2013) Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 47 cm

Ceramics pair (2023) Ceramic, 38 x 14 cm and 30 x 20 cm

DECLAN BYRNE

Untitled (2021) Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 81 cm

Untitled (2023) Ceramic, 75 x 30 x 23 cm

Encrusted pair of shoes size 9 (2018)

Readymade pair of shoes and dried acrylic, 30 x 8 x 10 cm

Encrusted coffee pot (2015)

Readymade tin coffee pot and dried acrylic, 21 x 16 cm

Untitled Blacksmith (2023) Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm

Shop Window (2005) Ink on paper, 80 x 56 cm

Mallard (2007) Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 40 cm

SINÉAD FAHEY

Birds, Fish and Flowers (2021) Posca on canvas, 80 x 80 cm

Lisa Helping a Patient (2012) Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 100 cm

Everything flowing with wind (2018) Posca on canvas, 60 x 50 cm

Self-Portrait in Ceramics (2019) Ceramic, 48 x 33 x 15 cm

Leaves falling behind the flowers (2013) Posca on canvas, 40 x 40 cm

Watering Flowers (2019) Posca on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Two birds with carrots floating in the water (2011) Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72

Front images: Top
to bottom Declan
Byrne *Untitled* (2021),
Thomas Barron *Town
houses* (2021) and
Sinéad Fahey *Birds Fish
and Flowers* (2021)

