

Brian Bourke

Sweeney, Cursed with the Flying Madness

&

Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne

Upland Folk

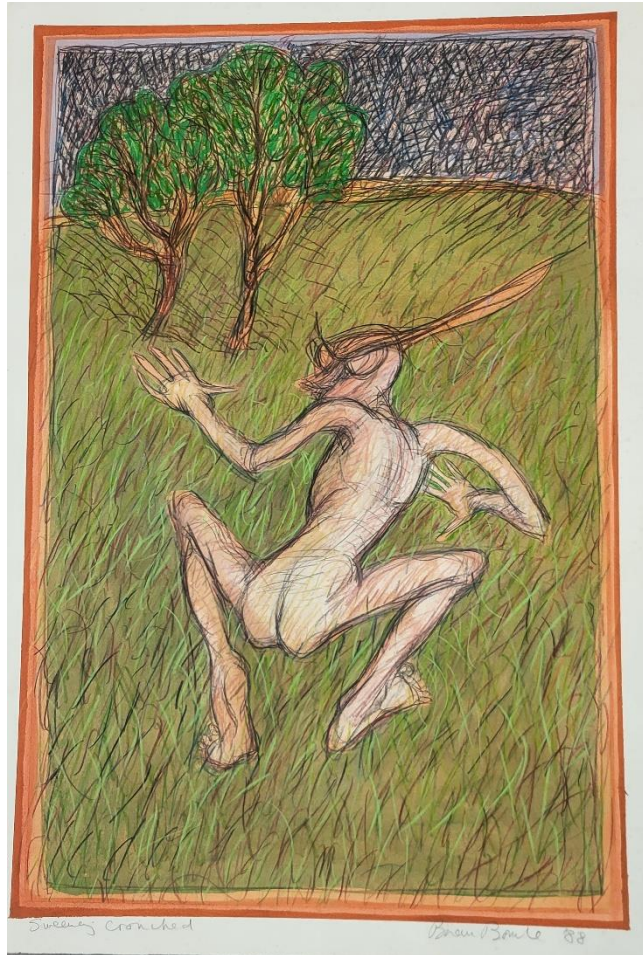
Exhibition continues from Sept 23 – Oct 7, 2023

Gallery hours: Wed – Sat, 1 – 6pm or by appointment

Mount St. Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Ireland

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Sweeney, Cursed with the Flying Madness



Sweeney, Cursed with the Flying Madness, will show seven paintings by Brian Bourke. This work from 1988 has never previously been exhibited but came to prominence last year when six works from this important series were acquired by the National Gallery of Ireland.

A trend emerged in Irish painting during the 1980s, where a number of Irish Visual Artists explored the ancient story of the Mad Sweeney, perhaps influenced by *Sweeney Astray*, Seamus Heaney's version of the medieval Irish work *Buile Suibhne*, published in 1983. Although, Bourke's Sweeney actually took inspiration from Flann O'Brien's absurdist novel, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, which features a translation of the Middle Irish romance *Buile Suibhne*.

'Buile Suibhne' or Mad Sweeney, is based on the story of a figure from early Irish literature created by many hands from the 9th century to the 16th century. Sweeney, king of Dal Arie, was cursed by the priest, Ronan Finn, which condemned him to live life as half bird, half man, with none of the advantages of bird nor man. This madness forced him to be constantly on the move throughout Ireland, Scotland and England.

Brian created these paintings at St Mullin's in Co Carlow, the place where the bird-king is reputed to have died. "St Mullin was real," he says. "He built a little church that's mentioned in *At Swim-Two-Birds*, and it's still there. That's where Sweeney is supposed to have been speared to death by a jealous farmer whose wife was feeding him."

Upland Folk by Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne



Upland Folk presents eight paintings by Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne, an emerging painter based between Mexico City and Leitrim. The exhibition was inspired by the research Peadar undertook in 2021 as part of his work on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List application for the cultural landscape of the Burren, Co. Clare, Ireland.

The Burren provides a plethora of inspirational starting points for any sort of artistic endeavour, ranging from its globally significant karst environment, to its extraordinary collection of well-preserved archaeological sites, to the unique ecological mosaic of its flora and fauna. Yet perhaps, the most outstanding characteristic within this seemingly inhospitable landscape are the people who live there.

Timeless scenes, throughout the work, borrow from Irish history, mythology and folklore to depict narratives of light versus dark, good versus evil, and life versus death. The work is inspired by the thousands of years of interaction between humans and the environment in the Burren Uplands, and how that relationship has shaped the cultural and ecological landscape we see today. Interspecies dialogues and cross-cultural references highlight past beliefs that have continued into the present and look to continue into the future in a blend of cultural practices and beliefs



Brian Bourke

Born in Dublin in 1936, Brian Bourke is one of the most prominent artists of his generation of Irish painters and an enduring influence on his contemporaries with a career that has spanned over sixty years. Brian studied briefly at the National College of Art in Dublin and St. Martin's School of Art in London. He represented Ireland at the Paris Biennale and the Lugano Exhibition of Graphics, both in 1965. He won the Arts Council portrait competition in 1965, the Munster and Leinster Bank competition in 1966 and first prize in the Irish Exhibition of Living Art competition in 1967. In 1985, he was named Sunday Independent Artist of the Year, and he received the O'Malley Award from the Irish-American Cultural Institute in 1993.



Peadar Jolliffe Byrne

Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne was born in Harare, Zimbabwe 1991. In 1996, he relocated with his family to Pretoria, South Africa where he attended Pro Arte Alphen Park secondary school. In 2008, he moved to Dublin, Ireland and later attended the Institute of Art Design and Technology (IADT) where he completed a BA in Art in 2016. Peadar was shortlisted for the Talbot Gallery Most Promising Graduate Award and was awarded the RHA Peer Residency in 2017. In 2018, Peadar completed a MSc in World Heritage Management and Conservation at University College Dublin (UCD). In 2019, Peadar co-authored the Red Rock Management Plan 2020-2030 on behalf of Fingal County Council and Dublin Bay Biosphere Reserve.

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Brian Bourke

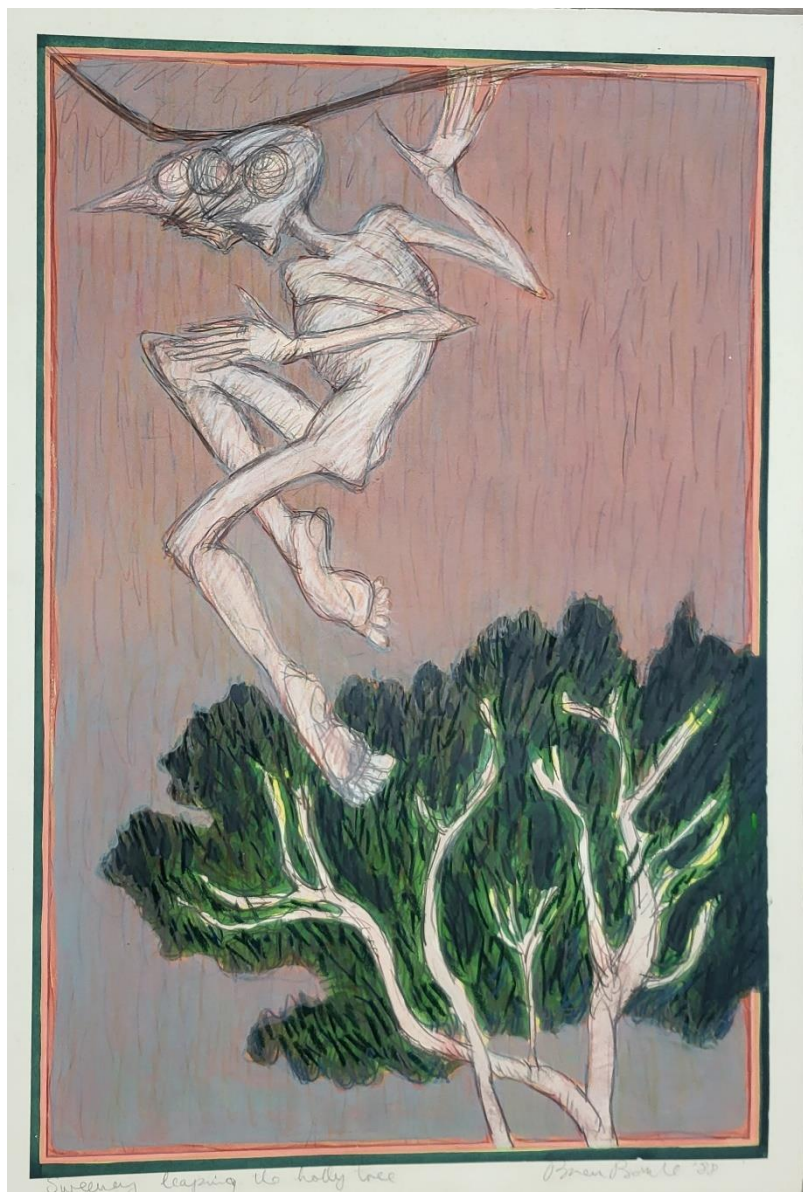
claremorris gallery
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Brian Bourke,
Sweeney Twice,
Mixed media on paper,
104cm x 69cm,
1988,
€3500



Brian Bourke,
Sweeney Crouched,
Mixed media on paper,
104cm x 69cm,
1988,
€3500



Brian Bourke,
Leaping the Holly Tree
Mixed media on paper,
104cm x 69cm,
1988,
€3500



Brian Bourke,
Sweeney Vigilant
Mixed media on paper,
104cm x 69cm,
1988,
€3500

Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne
Upland Folk



Escape from the Cave
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Escape from the Cave
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Dawn
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Goddess
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Shavasana
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Wild Hunt
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



The Defiance of King Puck
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500



Summer Day
Peadar Jolliffe-Byrne,
Oil on board in artist made frame,
71.5cm x 40.5cm, 2022,
€1500

These two exhibitions run from Sept 23rd to Oct 7th

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