

Speech at the opening of Gabrielle Wallace O'Donnell's exhibition
"Spirited Shadows"
by David Deighan, Chairman of Limerick Civic Trust

I congratulate Gabrielle on presenting this exhibition of her recent work, titled Spirited Shadows. I thank you most sincerely for asking me to launch your exhibition.

She has called the collection Spirited Shadows. I think the word shadows understates her strong and distinctive style and the sheer enthusiasm of Gabrielle that I witness. I just admire her capability to be able to open a blank sheet of paper or canvas and with a brush and paint create very identifiable and very detailed and beautiful images.

I was here for a pre-view and tour yesterday. Seeing the paintings sparked off ideas and thoughts in my mind and I hope they will for you also.

Ideas are generated for me by what I see in the images created of places, things, views, flowers. A number of words evoke the ideas for me and let's explore these ideas.:

Water: There is water in many of the pictures.

- the sea and beach at Kilkee from the East side and from the West side - two very unique views of a place known to many of us:
- the Water fountain in the Park;
so red in the green of the lawns and so white in the snow, so tiny and visible at a distance. *I believe Gabrielle was Chairperson of the Civic Trust when the water drinking fountain was restored by the Trust to its former glory and colour.*

Surfaces: in the foreground, at the centre and in the background of so many of the paintings

- in the Skellig Michael picture: so bright and wet and the cold stone and yet warmed by the dash of the colour red/orange . My image of Skellig Michael is Puffins, millions of them with their black and orange

beaks and orange feet. Are they the red/orange dash in the picture? Does it matter?

Shadows, Darkness and Light :

- there is that small picture looking through the half open door at St Munchin's Church. It is so simple and delicate.
- Here again, I must refer to the landscapes and flowers and there are several in the exhibition – subtle colours says it all.

Arrangements:

- Flowers, land (views) and buildings never photo images yet each is recognisable and distinctive

Pery Square:

- so many special views of this beautiful Limerick park;
- from looking out at the Georgian House (2 Pery sq),
- or looking in and around the Water Fountain
- being the background for the vase of flowers on the piano.

Yesterday Gabrielle and I chatted about the artist: how the artist has a vision/ knowledge or an impression of a scene, and its with their skill in painting, just using brush and colours, that they capture their very unique and personal image – its not a photo. Let me expand that a bit.

Its here at this exhibition that the artist (Gabrielle in this instance) shares her personal images with us and is now allowing us to take them away with us. This is the generosity of the Artist.

I say thanks to Gabrielle for this honour bestowed on us all and hope that the exhibition will move on to be enjoyed and treasured by those who dare to buy.

I declare the exhibition open.

9th April 2014