LAYERS

John Moores Contemporary Painting Prize Show
Participating Artists

Bridget Riley  
Tess Jaray  
David Hockney  
Richard Hamilton  
Terry Setch  
Christopher Le Brun  
Howard Hodgkin  
Gillian Ayres  
John Hoyland  
Bruce Mclean  
Lisa Milroy  
Simon Callery  
David Leapman  
Gary Hume  
Masakatsu Kondo  
Ian Davenport  
Stephen Farthing  
Paul Morrison  
Alexis Harding  
Dougal Mckenzie  
Sarah Pickstone  
Graham Crowley  
Martin Greenland  
Matthew Burrows  
Vincent Hawkins  
Geraint Evans  
Neal Jones
Dougal McKenzie was born in Edinburgh in 1968, and studied at Gray’s School of Art in Aberdeen and at the University of Ulster in Belfast. Since studying for his M.A Fine Art, McKenzie has continued to work in the city of Belfast. As a result of this he feels his practice has been located and informed by the historical context of Northern Ireland, without attaching itself to the commonly held associations of the place. Last of the French Night Marchers (Culloden III) was part of a series of work that marked the beginning of his interest in, as he calls it, “history painting”, an engagement with history as a subject. Aesthetically this series recalls abstract expressionism, though his later work has shown a greater interest in the narrative and figurative possibilities of contemporary painting.

Due to the ever-extending reach of television, the computer and commercial advertising, modern life is now image-saturated to an extent that is without precedent. McKenzie recognises the implications of new media on the working process of the contemporary painter, utilising photography, film and the internet as artist’s materials. But there is an inherent separation between the image that is illuminated on-screen and the image that is painted onto canvas, and McKenzie embraces the conflict between these means of image communication as a rich area of exploration in his work.

The diverse historical references seen in his work reflect the fragmented nature of media consumption in the age of Google. As a postmodern painter, he takes images of the Franco-Prussian War, Woody Allen films or Belfast Zoo (among others) as source material if they provide him with the right image for his painting. His paintings combine and layer different histories to open up our experience of viewing and interpreting the image. A Visit to Belleville and Sid’s Ahead (The Past Historical) appear to have undergone a double-manipulation, first digitally, and again through the painted gesture. The resulting images are ambiguous and bear little resemblance to reality in form or narrative; the ghostly figures seen in Sid’s Ahead seem to be running a night time marathon as line, pattern and light take prominence over depiction and description.

McKenzie has exhibited widely in Ireland, Britain and Europe, recent exhibitions including the third space gallery in Belfast and the RHA Ashford Gallery in Dublin.
A Visit to Bad EM's
oil on linen
156 x 178 cm
2008
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A Retrospective: John Moores
Contemporary Painting Prize Show

6 August – 14 October 2010
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