

Contriving a striking absence on canvas



Visual Arts Aidan Dunne

MAIREAD O'HEOCHA'S FINE exhibition *Home Rules* at mother's tankstation comprises a series of paintings based on the N11 and its environs as it winds through the southeast between Dublin and Wexford. Scenes along the way are depicted in a bleached-out, pared-down representational style. It is a variant on a painterly idiom that is currently popular. In O'heocha's work, it is as if Luc Tuymans meets Maureen Gallace, the former's austerity ameliorated by some of the sweetness of the latter.

O'heocha conceives the road as a metaphor of transience that extends into every aspect of the environment she explores. Everything is viewed as temporary and as a work-in-progress. A heap of earth occupies a garden-in-the-making. Houses are suburban-like structures parachuted into a rural setting, or provisional, as in caravans and mobile homes. Heaps of debris, rubbish

bins, a skip - all indicate a process of continuous transformation, of making and un-making and re-making and ant-like industry. She is a very capable painter, though one or two odd mannerisms come through: the cars she depicts, for example, just don't look right. Compare and contrast with the work of Kevin Cosgrove, to take a relevant example.