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Aidan Dunne

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Mairéad O'hEocha: *Paintings*

Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin



In Gallery 2, four paintings by Mairéad O'hEocha follow on from her well-received 2011 exhibition in the main gallery, *Via an Lár*. They demonstrate that she hasn't settled into the consolidation of a popular style. Go back four or five years and her work could seem a little too neat: smart, technically accomplished but on the verge of becoming mannerised.

Her subject matter was rich: the semiotically jumbled, hybridised landscape – urban-rural, new-old, real-fake – produced by the development of the road network in Ireland's southeast.

These recent paintings are edgier, livelier and more technically demanding, as though she has challenged herself. She handles paint with greater freedom and avoids stylistic mannerisms. She has introduced a much broader palette, which she manages with impressive elan, giving a musical vibrancy to each composition.

There's usually a naturalistic rationale underlying the colour – falling raindrops touched by neon light, for example – but she extends it inventively. She still addresses the hybrid worlds we create by a mixture of design and accident and persuasively implies that even the most familiar places are actually pretty strange. **Until February 25th, doughlasydegallery.com**