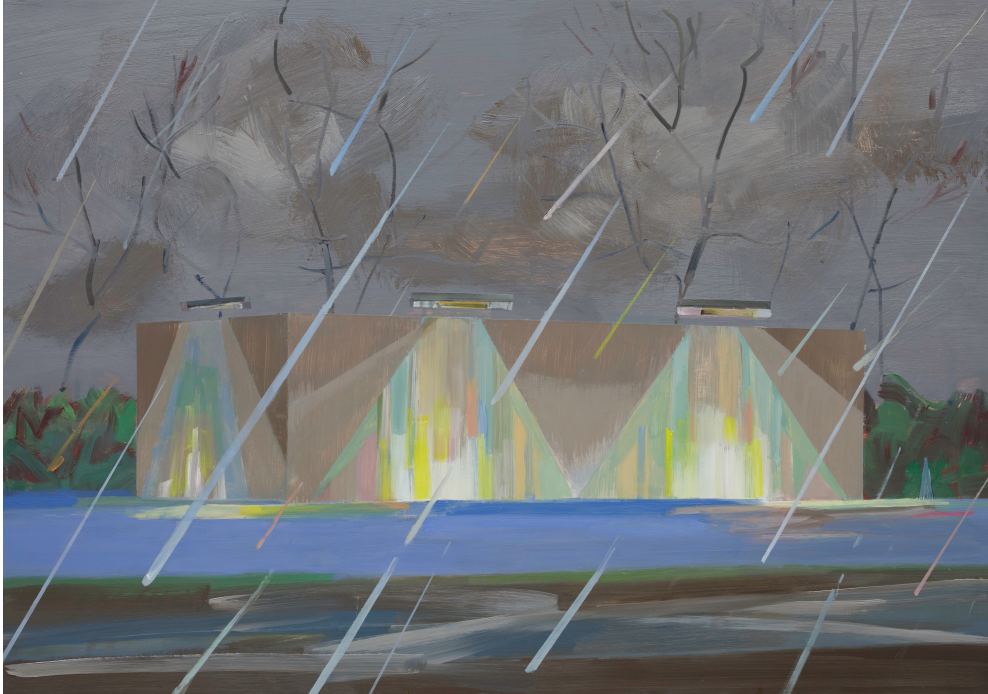


### What lies beneath - Hoarding, Lights and Rain

Niall MacMonagle

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*Hoarding, Lights and Rain, by Mairead O'hEocha*

Commuting isn't always awful. A US survey discovered that some motorists just loved their warm, child-free zone with coffee and doughnuts, music or audio book: a little daily oasis of "me-time".

Artist Mairead O'hEocha benefited in a more interesting way from schlepping it up and down the N11. Driving the Wexford/Dublin road got her thinking about our history of dispossession, place, space and light and the aggressive building projects that dotted the countryside especially during the boom.

She painted roadways, sky, houses, back gardens, a washing line, an ancient ruin, and in all of her work "light is an essential element, light is a substantial element".

And her style has changed. Her clouds, for example, are now more fresh, more theatrical, more movement-filled and often three-dimensional. In Lusk she found the perfect light experience. A polytunnel, in a garden centre, contained a "strange disorienting dizzying light" which drew her back again and again.

The shifting light, its "instability", is what fascinates her when it comes to image-making. Trained as a photographer, "but I wouldn't be winning any prizes", lens-based media still fascinates her; but using sketches and drawings rather than photographs O'hEocha also draws on her interest in neurobiology when preparing a work.

This recent work, Hoarding Lights and Rain, features a hoarding in Stephens Green. As subject matter, a hoarding with industrial lights in rain shouldn't be of much interest, but O'hEocha creates a composition that is dramatic, energetic and beautiful. The thin wintry branches, the troubled sky, the brownbox hoarding lit with a gloriously beautiful prismatic downward plunging light and the slanting driving rain are pure drama. And that swathe of blue lifts the scene so that colour, movement, form are magnificently handled here.

Though O'hEocha loves pre-Renaissance art for its "misunderstanding of perspective and space" her eye, in this instance, is sharp in its depiction of pyramids of light, man-made structures, clumps of greenery left and right and an empty foreground.

For O'hEocha painting is "the impressive delivery of information". This 2014 work, now in a private US collection, delivers, impresses, informs and inspires.

*Recent work by Mairead O'hEocha is now on show at The Douglas Hyde Gallery.*