



*Mother's Tankstation is much more than a gallery space, and more important for Dubliners, SIMON JUDGE reveals why.*

Open just under five years, the small team that run Mother's Tankstation in Dublin 8 must be applauded. Found amongst the warren of streets near Ireland's "most visited tourist landmark", the Guinness Storehouse, the gallery appears at odds with what we Irish expect from an "Art Gallery", yet somehow the Tankstation fills a void we never knew was there.

The work shown here is resolutely modern. Take, for example, current exhibition 'Doctor, Dog, Sandwich' by Israeli-born, New York-based artist, Uri Aran. A fusion of sculpture, video, print, and drawing, this exhibition is a complex and challenging window into the psychological and philosophical beliefs of the artist. Video pieces such as 'Harry' and 'The Donut Gang' are intriguing, yet perplexing, while a series of printed works on newspaper are the result of one-off interactions with image searching on the internet. His work is baffling, yet compulsively captivating. At the moment, Uri is relatively unknown, especially outside of New York, but there is confidence that it's only a matter of time before this changes.

Gallery director Finola Jones previously tried to encourage people to stay in Ireland to open galleries, but it proved a difficult task. So,

to lead by example, she co-founded Mother's Tankstation. There were up-and-coming artists and even established artists who were not being looked after, so Finola and her co-founders aimed to address this.

They looked to artists such as Gareth Phelan – someone who was doing really well on the international scene, but getting little recognition locally – and Nina Canell, who was just three months out of art college when she had her first solo exhibition at the gallery. She has gone on to have numerous shows around Europe, and next month takes part in a group show at MOMA in New York.

This is all part of a dual strategy, in which the gallery will programme six exhibitions of Irish and international artists, and will do between four and seven international art fairs in which they present the work at the same level as a gallery exhibition.

Not so much a gallery as an exhibition space for high art, Mother's Tankstation is like a window into the kind of white cube space one imagines when thinking of the most progressive art there is. What could be intimidating is far from it. Well worth a visit.

*Mother's Tankstation, Thursdays to Saturdays  
12pm to 6pm, 41-43 Watling Street, Dublin 8,  
671 7654; motherstankstation.com*