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The galleries: The smell of a painted rag

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By [T.J. McNamara](#)

Cars, clouds and corrugated iron have frequently been subjects for painters. This week, there are some aeroplanes in the mix too.

Cars and the service stations that attend them provide visual delights for the painter. The angular canopies, bright lights and vivid signage of petrol stations have tempted many of them, notably the American Edward Hopper and the later super-realists.

Anah Dunsheath, in a lively exhibition at the Ferner Gallery in Parnell until October 25, also uses the glitter of cars, pumps and signs in primary colours. She contrasts all this shiny stuff on the forecourt with a starless night beyond the station.

To this very modern precinct, she adds several layers of drama. Exactly painted oil bottles, soft drink cans and potato chip packets provide piquant notes of colour. Putting food for man and car together make it clear that both these brightly packaged products create some tension. The products for the car are useful but the food is junk.

The other drama is the real subject of the work. Kneeling, standing, sitting on their cars, are casually smart, anonymous young men. In the middle distance are attractive women in vivid clothing, packaged like the car products and the fast food. The deep perspective effects that Dunsheath commands so well link the men to the distant women. The tension between the men with their beloved cars, the women and the bright packaging of consumer goods, makes an erotic dance emphasised by the patches of unmixed primary colour that flicker through the predominating black and white.

The soundness of the artist's drawing maintains this drama. The major elements are blocked in but the important detail is sharp and piquant. Such detail is a red can reflected in the chrome of a bumper or red nail polish on a woman's fingers in a painting called *Thin Ice* that has rhymes around the whole painting.

These paintings might well be illustrations for a very modern, very urban short story. Two sculptures *Fast* and *Fuel* in highly polished stainless steel complete this glittering exhibition where thought and style are convincingly matched.

The same hard-edged style, smooth finish and bright colour are also found in the paintings of Claudia



Heaven Can Wait by Myah Flynn.

McKay called *Cockpit* at Orexart until October 26. These are paintings of aeroplanes, detailed down to the last rivet. This show is not as compositionally inventive as the artist's previous exhibitions on the same theme. Yet a sense of aggression and power is still apparent. There is a sense of the potential thrust of riding high in control seats and cockpits. More iconic images of shark mouths painted on the air intake of fighter planes move into the region of metaphor and convey even more sense of power.

One painting, the best in the show, is more complex than other works. It is the *The Plane Leaves the Airstrip* where the sense of lift from the wings of the departing plane is contrasted with a limp windsock. An intriguing work like this shows the artist continues to get good mileage from her obsession with the shapes, colours and aura of aircraft.

A new and talented artist comes riding in on the clouds with her first exhibition, *Cocktail*, at the McPherson Gallery until October 26. Myah Flynn's paintings are filled with all the curving, tumultuous exuberance of a rococo heaven. Among the massy clouds are deft touches of feathery calligraphic curves that add grace notes to the scene. Every cloud carries an emotional charge that is conveyed by its shape and its colour.

In among the clouds ride figures of a private mythology whose emotions are symbolised by the masses rolling in movement around them and strange, often winged beings that accompany them.

In *Felis Detyius*, lovers are accompanied by a blue bird of happiness. In *Heaven Can Wait*, everything rises upward to the accompaniment of a cello-playing angel with the spirits lost in a wave of purple sound. In *Kir Royale*, the movement is languid and the setting has a surreal undersea quality. *Lovers' Tassle* is inspired by the myth of Cupid and Psyche. All are done with authority and plenty of attack.

Flynn won the Glaister Ennor award recently and this exhibition confirms the promise shown then. It has that special quality that comes when artists create an individual world that becomes instantly recognisable as theirs.

The world of the paintings of Tom Folwell, which has only a day or two to run at the SOCA Gallery in Newton, is painted in meticulous detail whether it is a homestead, a boat shed or a sheep's head. Corrugated iron is his specialty. Virtuoso skill in rendering this and the play of light on surfaces and water gives real interest to what would normally be clichéd subjects such as *Omaha Wharf* and *Homestead*.

A different kind of virtuosity is the imaginative handling of materials in the work of Peter Panyoczki whose exhibition at the Bath Street Gallery runs until October 26. Paradoxically, he takes real crosscut saw blades and imprints them with lettering with up-to-date digital techniques. Then he makes wooden versions of the same blades with the age-old skill of carving and hangs them on a gallows. These blades and a great wooden circular saw blade are at once homely and menacing. They are only part of the show. The artist also does excellent abstract paintings and matches them with comparable images involving innumerable repetitions only possible with the most advanced printing techniques.

The paintings and the prints on aluminium are all on a large scale and come in series. *No. 8* from the *Water* series is a thundering maelstrom and *No. 9* from the *Lifelines* series is notable for the use of red in a show that generally avoids strong colour.

