

# Stephen Doyle

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## Education

- C.I.T Crawford College of Art and Design
  - (BA) Honours in Bachelor of Fine Arts

## Awards/Residencies/Bursaries

- Chairperson of Crawford Society – Awarded ‘Academic Society of the Year’ (2015)
- Student of The Year Award (2017)
- Residency in Backwater Studios (2017)
- Visual Artist Ireland (VAI) Professional Member (2017)
- Shortlisted for the UK Emerald Winter Pride Art Awards (2018)
- Overall Winner of Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize (2018)
- Sunny Art Prize Winner (2018)
- Shortlisted for Zurich Portrait Prize in the National Gallery of Ireland (2018)
- ‘50 People to Watch’ by the Irish Times (2019)
- Harmony Art Gallery Residency Exchange Program, Shanghai (2019)
- Twinning Grant - Cork City Council (2019)

## List of Exhibitions

2016

- *K – Fest*, Art Festival, Kilorglin, Co.Kerry .
- *Murmuration*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Group Exhibition, Village Hall, Co. Cork.

2017

- *Beyond Dialogue*, Graduate Exhibition, Crawford College of Art and Design, Co. Cork, Ireland. I was also Co-Chairperson for this show. Tutors - Jessie Jones, Colin Crotty, Catherine Heir and James Hayes. Guest Speaker – Rory O’Neill.
- *ReCollective*, Group Exhibition, St. Peters Event Centre, Co. Cork., Ireland.
- *6Marks Drawing Collective*, Group Exhibition, C.I.T Wandesford Quay Gallery, Co. Cork, Ireland.

2018

- *Alt Masc*, Solo Exhibition, Lavit Gallery, Co.Cork, Ireland. Student of the Year Award. Guest Speaker – Curator of exhibitions at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Sean Kissane.
- *Beyond the Binaries*, UK Emerald Winter Pride Art Awards, The House of St. Barnabas, SoHo, London, United Kingdom. Judges Include Simon Tarrant, Brenda Emmanus, Frances Segelman, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Ki Yoong.

- Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize Shortlist Exhibition and Solo Exhibition , London, UK. Judges Include Conrad Carvalho, Dr. David Bellingham, Aindrea Emelife, Howard Lewis, Briony Marshall, Rosa Sepple, Dr. David Anfam, Anthony Fawcett.
- Sunny Art Prize Shortlist Exhibition, London, UK. Judges include Wu Xiaohai, Zhao Jun, Lin Guanhong, Pedro Ip, Chu Weiming, Fan Yaokai, Jocelyn Burton, Yemyungji, Tim Andrews
- Zurich Portrait Prize Shortlist, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland. Judges Include Geraldine O'Neill, Sue Rainsford and Tanya Kiang.
- Vue Art Fair in the Royal Hibernian Academy in association with So Fine Art Editions, Dublin, Ireland.

2019

- Post-Binary, Solo Exhibition, SO Fine Art Editions, Dublin, Ireland
- Harmony Art Exchange Program, Group Exhibition, Harmony Art Gallery, Shanghai, China.
- Sunny Art Prize, Solo Exhibition, Sunny Art Centre, London, UK.

## Reviews

“Almost as each day passes new contradictions seem to emerge in relation to the world’s apparently simultaneous acceptance and rejection of alternative sexuality and gender norms. We have seen the British government offer official apologies to those who suffered under institutional homophobic laws. We have heard the Russian government (in cahoots with an Orthodox church that it would be charitable to call medieval in its outlook) getting more and more contemptuous and cruel towards LGBTQI citizens and shrugging at the move towards the brutal Nazi style dehumanisation, ghettoisation and violence towards gays in Chechnya. On the one hand we make enormous strides, as witness the vote in Ireland and so much else besides, on the other we leap backwards into a world of superstitious fear, hatred and rejection. Gays are becoming bellwethers, early warning beacons, alerting us to humanity's direction of travel. We are easy scapegoats now in a world of rising fear, intolerance, nativism and tribal ferocity. But our community doesn’t live in a bubble, nothing human does, and I hope our straight friends can see that what happens to us is a warning to all. Stephen Doyle’s work here is part of a tragically necessary resistance movement and I am proud to support and endorse his vision.”



Stephen Fry in response to Degree Show Exhibition Beyond Dialogue

“...Impressive...”

- Rory O’Neill (aka. Dr.Panti Bliss-Cabrera)

“Stephen’s work caught the judge’s attention with its bold exploration of queer culture and how masculinity plays a part within this. Not only demonstrating significant skill with painting we feel the ideas behind the work are incredibly relevant to wider conversations around masculinity which are being had more prevalently now.”

- Conrad Carvalho, Prize Director of Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize.

Stephen Doyle - 'Alt Masc'

Everyone in this audience is aware of the way that our society is homophobic. Small children seem to have an in-built radar that identifies difference and they are quick to exploit that difference – as a perceived weakness. We are aware of homophobic bullying in the workplace, of sports or entire industries where it is just not possible to be different – let alone gay.

In Ireland we have an idea that since the historic marriage referendum in 2015 that all of our social problems were solved. We patted ourselves on our collective backs as our little country became the first nation in the world to legalise equal marriage by popular vote. The positive feeling was so overwhelming that surely it washed away all of the problems that LGBT people face.

And it did change a lot. It transformed many people's lives for the better and gave them a new found confidence. It also healed some old wounds, being almost like a collective apology from Irish society to all of those kids who had suffered abuse or prejudice of various kinds.

In his degree show he showed LGBT men and women in Moscow who are subject to systematic state sponsored oppression. The audience viewed the large paintings reflected in mirrors onto which terms of homophobic abuse were scrawled. Abuse that these young people face in their everyday lives under an oppressive régime. Stephen's work in Russia pointed to a horrific present day situation that is well documented in the media, but he was also making connections between contemporary Russia and Ireland, that while society changes that homophobic violence can be found just under the surface of society.

But it is interesting that this is not what Stephen's work is dealing with.

This series, rather than looking at a conflict between LGBT and straight society, focuses exclusively on representing gay men.

It is a common myth that gay men think that all they have to do is come out and then all of their problems will be solved and they will be whole and happy.

It is deeply ironic that after going through the trauma of school and society that after coming out, gay men then meet the most homophobic of all societies – other gay men! No one will judge you as harshly as another queen! And it's not just that they know that your Gucci is last season (gasp) – in fact it is the opposite. The fact that your Gucci is this season shows that you care too much about clothes – and that's not very masculine. And masculinity is the most prized attribute among all men – gay or straight.

So the issues that we see in these paintings affect all men – not just gay ones. Because the way we raise young men is deeply flawed. Boys are constantly taught that they are different, that they must be athletic, competitive, winners. They must not be emotional because 'boys don't cry'. They shouldn't pay too much attention to the way they dress – because that's a bit gay. They must be the primary bread winner for their family, because to have a female partner who makes more money than you is emasculating and something to be ashamed of.

And then there is lad culture – who can drink the most? And who can pull the most birds of a weekend. The messages that young men get from society is that they should think with their dicks not their heads – because that is a sign of high testosterone and that is masculine.

So is it any wonder that with all of these incredibly confusing messages that men – whether gay or straight – use these damaged and damaging codes to judge each other by.

In this exhibition, this extreme version of a man is described in sculptural form at the centre of the show here. Called "Him" he has broad athletic shoulders, a big chest, a big square jaw, and very large .... Am ... appendage.

And little bits of him are taken and placed over each of the portraits that we see in this room. All portraits of gay men, they can't be seen for themselves because this piece of metal – this hyper masculinity – always gets in the way of that image. It will always be seen first – and it is metal – the material from which weapons are made – not canvas and oil – the thing that art and culture are made from. In this case culture may not be able to withstand its destructive force.

One of the places that this battle of masculinity is waged most forcefully is online – particularly on dating sites. There is an astonishing number of them – and they were around long before Tinder.

Gay men will typically advertise themselves as Masc for Masc. or describe themselves as Straight acting. This then moves onto those things that they exclude. No Fats no Fems – so be muscular and masculine. It then gets more extreme, no blacks no Asians. It seems that being online removes these people's sense that they are in the world with other human beings. It is that nineteenth century sign that says no dogs, no blacks, no Irish.

Any why does any of this matter? Well gay culture is often a decade ahead of straight culture – as I already mentioned gay dating sites were common in the noughties – so more than twenty years ago – while they have only become common place in the straight community in this decade. And now we are seeing the sexualisation of young women where they are expected to 'post nudes', behave like ladettes. To Keep up with the lads. That to be feminist is to be like a man – but again using our very damaged criterion of what it is that makes a man.

These are just some of the ways to think about Stephen Doyle's work. He takes the contemporary concerns of his generation – and using the traditional medium of portraiture has brought it right up to date and made it relevant to all of us. Showing that these alternative views of masculinity are part of all of us and deeply important to consider.

"I think his works is actually very clear of the theme, and has a significant expression when discussing contemporary art, which is to make the invisible visible and to make those voiceless to be heard. When we look at Stephen's works, he is actually presenting the appearance of different people, but the most important thing is the stories behind each portrait. Those stories can be traced and studied in art history, just like the stories behind the aristocracy."

- - Dr. Jiang Jun, Shanghai Public Art Cooperation Center (PACC) and the International Public Art Association (IPA),  
and one of the founders of the Art Bureau of Investigation.

*"Crawford Art Gallery is an active champion of the work of Stephen Doyle. An artist who has a strong track record of commitment to ideas and forms of representation in his practice."*

- - Mary McCarthy Director of Crawford Art Gallery