



DAVID HEDDERMAN

Fellow Prisoners

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WILTON GALLERY

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This exhibition focuses on Hedderman's work produced in his Berlin Studio. Hedderman is fascinated by the figurative form. His approach to composition is to challenge its rules and obstruction and create free-style movements. Hedderman's use of willow charcoal, graphite, chalk pastels, and oil sticks allows him to creates bold and spontaneous expressions of the artists' personality.

David Hedderman



WILTON GALLERY

Interview

Fellow Prisoners

Carmel Keane on David Hedderman

CK: Dave, the first question I'd like to ask you is how life has been for you in Berlin during the pandemic?

DH: Well, I have to admit it's been a really weird time because I've been teaching life drawing for 8 years from my studio with a maximum of 15 people in the space but once the pandemic hit, myself and Yuka (whom I collaborate with on these classes) shifted everything online. Someone advised me at the beginning of all this not to worry about artists as they're masters of being flexible, so for the corona times that have been in it, I've stuck to that motto and keep bending with how I can do it. In the beginning, I wasn't so sure it would work but it's more this community that gathered together which is lovely. I know there are limitations to drawing 2D on a screen but there's a great community of people, so it's worked well and also it's been a great means of survival.

CK: Having sat in on one of your classes I loved the vibe and especially the music. I could see it was almost like a form of therapy for your students.

DH: I suppose I don't always admit it but it's always in the back of my mind that it's a big part of why I do it. All the drawings in the

Dublin exhibition are a result of what has come out of these drawing classes. I think there are 2 sides to me, I'm normally quite open and enjoy being with people. My painter side is very monk-like but I'm ok with that because I feel I can give something back with my teaching.

CK: Do you feel you need to be a monk to be productive?

DH: I do because I teach 3 times a week. In turn, it helps me to articulate where I'm at. A lot of artists never get an opportunity to do that because they don't get the chance to interact much with people. I was asked to write a book about life drawing a few years ago and that was a great way to articulate all these things. ("Draw": A graphic guide to drawing by David Hedderman. Published by Ammonite Press)

CK: How much interaction do you have with the students in your online classes?

DH: It's pretty tight timewise because, between Yuka and myself, we both know what we're doing without even talking to each other. My job is making the playlists to create the mood. I make one a week and the more I know the model, the closer it gets to the model. It's also to do with the mood of what's going on at the time. It's a collaboration that works well and means that it gives each of us the time to focus on what we're good at. The class is quite focused during the drawing but at the end, we have half an hour where people show their work. Things come out, for example during the elections, politics inevitably creep in but it's a huge help in terms of mental health. Why I love

David Hedderman

By Carmel Keane

life drawing is that it shuts off your brain. During the pandemic, artists have been able to see the value of being able to spend time with themselves developing something.

CK: Do you think it's been easier to focus on work in the last year?

DH: Absolutely, it's been far less distracting especially as we haven't been able to travel. Normally I come back to Dublin a few times a year to visit my family and also to teach drawing. Much as I miss them, I've loved not having had to move, just cycling between home and my studio.

CK: Why did you choose Berlin in the first place?

DH: I was in a band The Immediate with Connor O'Brien (Villagers), but I realised I didn't like touring so much. I tend to like to stay in the same place and they were going on to bigger things. After the music stopped a few things happened, I was 27 and I came on holiday to Berlin and just fell in love with it, mainly because I was able to have my studio here. I'd had studios in Dublin but they were always transient so I felt I wouldn't be able to build something up. I didn't think I could do it here, but I've been in this beautiful studio since 2012. It's in a beautiful building and over the years we've had to fight to keep it but it's been worth it.

CK: Having watched you teaching, I wonder how much your students are influenced by your work?

DH: Of course, they are but I'm more interested in knowing that my work is authentic and that

it's helping people through this time. That's important to me. As an artist, I believe that you can't be threatened by any of this and that you just have to keep moving on. I. I'm happy if I influence people and I know some artists are very protective of skills and tricks, but I'm not worried about that.

CK: Would you see yourself continuing to teach if you moved to the west of Ireland?

DH: I've no immediate plans to move there, it could be in 10 years. Plans could change in the meantime. Like anywhere, Berlin is changing, and I don't see myself spending the rest of my life here but who knows? I'm in the lucky position that I can be open to everything.

CK: How different do you think your work would be if you had never moved to Berlin?

DH: It's like trying to think about what makes a good painting. I tell my students that what makes a good drawing isn't just about looking at it and analysing the composition, it's also influenced by how much sleep they've had, their diet and mood, there's so much input into it. The same applies to me even in terms of what I listen to while I work.

CK: Yuka features a lot in your work, would you describe her as your muse?

DH: I prefer not to. There have been muses in the past, for example, a guy called Barnaby, a performance dancer. He was a huge inspiration in terms of how to do my work. He featured a lot in my drawings and he now lives in California. Yuka and I had a working relationship for 3 years so it's amazing to have had that foundation for what we've built up now. We're

constantly amazed at how well our Japanese/Irish partnership works and with the online classes, people love the easy dynamic between us.

CK: Can you imagine what a different direction your work would've taken if you'd stayed in Dublin?

DH: I might be more involved in the music scene. I still music play here but when I left the band in Dublin I didn't have a studio so I started to take life drawing classes at Trinity College as I felt I needed to keep fit visually. I had a great teacher called Aodhan who asked me to stand in for him once. I loved it and it gave me a great sense of responsibility and I think that's what planted the seed in terms of teaching.

CK: I loved your portrait of Daniel O Connell and wondered if you're working on anything similar at the moment?

DH: That was for a competition and I'm glad to say it was bought by my late brother-in-law Paul Anthony Mc Dermott who sadly passed away last year. He was another great influence and mentor to me, and I think of him every day. The paintings I'm working on at the moment have been works in progress over the last 2 years. It's a very gruelling process because I layer and I layer until somebody has to tell me to stop. I try to block 2 days a week to devote to painting but at the moment my big focus is on my series Fellow Prisoners, part of which will be the work in the Wilton exhibition.

CK: Where does the title Fellow Prisoners come from?

DH: It comes from another hero of mine, John Berger. I loved the balance of his political mind with his creative, artistic mind. I've rarely come across such a finely tuned balance. I'd admit to being obsessed with his writings. His audio essay on YouTube of Fellow Prisoners is something that connected with me when I first heard it, but now with the pandemic, it makes a lot more sense. I'm very open to the process of making art that if you don't think about it too much it connects with the collective.

With these drawings, the first lightbulb moment was when I exhibited a small drawing in Dublin 3 years ago called Falling Man, which was relevant at the time with all the talk of gender equality. I just got the idea of drawing men falling apart. It came very naturally from drawing Barnaby. At the opening, two young men came up to me and asked me if the work was about anxiety and mental health which got me thinking and my next show after that was called Shaking Still which resonates with these issues. We've all experienced tough times and I was reassured to hear those young guys talking so openly. I'm interested in being authentic and genuine about issues that are relevant to what's going on today.

I did my thesis in Art College on Charlie Chaplin and Kandinsky. Kandinsky wrote about the spiritual side of art and the role of the artist which was quite romantic for its time. He said that the job of the artist was to feed his audience with what was going on at the time. I was fascinated by the fact that Charlie Chaplin was a foreigner in America mocking Hitler when America was still politically working with Germany, with the result that when he left the US for a holiday, they didn't let him back in and

the madness of the situation where Hitler had copied Chaplin's moustache because it was a popular icon at the time. I just think it's a great example of how mad and ridiculous the world can be and how important it is to remain authentic when crazy stuff happens. The title also refers to being a prisoner in your own body. Berger also talks about the acknowledgement of your fellow man.

I'm coming to the end of this drawing series now and as I do, I'm introducing more painting which my students seem to like.

CK: When you're setting out with new work, do you start with a series of sketches or do you get straight into the drawing process?

DH: With life drawing when you're using a model, you don't have time to think about composition so it's usually freestyle but I'm always trying to challenge myself with obstructions or rules or mind games. Each drawing takes 2 or 3 sessions, but I like going back to how I drew as a child with absolute freedom or you could even describe it as playfulness. Some of the work can come out as very direct. Generally, I work with very large canvases, so I need to be conscious of my movement. I've learnt a lot about that from dancers so for that reason keep myself very fit and light.

CK: Do you feel you have to explain all the forms on your canvas?

DH: Not really, I keep it simple and draw directly from life. It's figurative work and I'd rather let the work speak for itself. I also feel that good work shouldn't need an explanation, especially if it's

relevant to what's going on in the world. I trust in the work.

CK: Can you explain the process you used for this summer exhibition?

DK: The Drawings that I will exhibit this summer at the Wilton Gallery are from this current body of work I have been making since 2018. Fellow Prisoners. The drawings are made from a life drawing structure I have designed. It is a 2-hour class where I draw directly from the model. Layering poses on top of each other and working them up on the same heavy paper. The poses in these drawings can be anything from 1 min up to 30 min. The model is in charge and chooses the poses and the 2-hour structure is constant and intense with me recording each of the poses, composing the image at the moment. There is not much time for me to think about what I am doing. And that is the feeling I hunt for when I am making these drawings. Turning up to the easel to see what comes out.

CK: You mentioned using heavy paper is there a particular paper you use?

DH: 200mg Fabriano paper cut from the roll. (that the heaviest paper you can get on a roll) I am using mostly Willow charcoal, compressed charcoal, graphite, chalk pastels and oil sticks on these drawings. all the fellow prisoners are cut from the roll to measure 100x100cm.

CK: Do you see Berlin as a transitory phase?

DH: Absolutely, it's been a long transition phase of almost 13 years. I guess I have learnt I am slow to process myself and the world around me. I am very grateful to the city of Berlin, giving me space and time over the last few years.

CK: You sound like you're in a really happy place.

DH: I am and a lot of that comes from my collaboration with Yuka at the moment which works because we're able to connect with a lot of people while at the same time staying independent. It's a huge learning process for us and we're excited by it. I get huge satisfaction from seeing how much people benefit from my classes. We put their drawings on Instagram after the class and last week we had one of a young woman with her young son sitting cross-legged on the floor drawing together and that to me was everything, just seeing them engaged like that. It fills my cup big time!



Fellow prisoners 1

Willow & compressed charcoal, chalk, pastel,
graphite & oil on 200mg Fabriano paper
100 x 100 cm | 108cm x 108 cm
Euro 3,000



Fellow prisoners 2

Willow & compressed charcoal, chalk, pastel,
graphite & oil on 200mg Fabriano paper

Euro 3,000



Fellow prisoners 3

Willow & compressed charcoal, chalk, pastel,

graphite & oil on 200mg Fabriano paper

100 x 100 cm | 108cm x 108 cm

Euro 3,000



Fellow prisoners 5

Willow & compressed charcoal, chalk, pastel,
graphite & oil on 200mg Fabriano paper

100 x 100 cm | 108cm x 108 cm

Euro 3,000



Fellow prisoners 6

Willow & compressed charcoal, chalk, pastel,
graphite & oil on 200mg Fabriano paper

100 x 100 cm | 108cm x 108 cm

Euro 3,000

WILTON GALLERY

David Hedderman
Biography

David Hedderman

B. 1983

Based Berlin , Germany

Introduction

David is an Irish artist and musician working and living in Berlin, Germany. He graduated from NCAD with a BA in Fine Art in 2005. He is a figurative artist with a focus on the human form. His method of working often involves tracing the model's movement on the page and through overlaying poses, create complex, overlapping spaces and form of nonnarrative but descriptive 'score' out of the life drawing set. The results are breath taking figurative work.

EXHIBITIONS

Solo

2019 Recent Drawing, The Irish Embassy, Berlin Germany

2018 Shaking Still, Hang Tough Gallery, Dublin. Ireland

2011 Verzweifelte Fremde, WerkStadt Kulturverein Berlin. Germany

Group

2020 R.H.A 189th Annual exhibition. Dublin, Ireland (postponed due to COVID)

2019 RHA 188th Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2019 Don't Scare Others With your Desperation, (drawings from life). Atelier ¾, Kreuzberg, Berlin

2018 Craw- Irish Alternative Festival, Berlin David Hedderman in his studio

2018 RHA 188th Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2017 RHA 187th Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2016 RHA 186th Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2015 RHA 185th Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2014 RHA 184rd Annual Exhibition, Dublin, Ireland

2013 Neither here nor there II, Galway Arts Centre, Ireland



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