The National College of Art and Design

THE COMMERCIAL GALLERY SYSTEM IN DUBLIN

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INTRODUCTION

It is only fifty years since the first commercial gallery was established in Dublin. Since its emeregence, the gallery has contributed enormously to the distribution of visual art in Ireland. The origins of the gallery can be traced to Europe, where, through the continuous support of an established patronage, merchants and finally dealers, it developed into the leading outlet for artists. The emergence of the gallery was slow to develop in Ireland, greatly prolonged by a decline in the patronage of Irish art in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The absence of a training facility for artists delayed the growth of an 'Irish School' of art. With the founding of the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin, artists for the first time could display their work at a regular exhibition venue in Ireland. However, the highly conservative art establishment of the R.H.A. dominated the representatives of pictorial art and for many years dismissed most emerging alternative art styles and movements during the early twentieth century. The Living Artists eventually introduced Irish artists to modernism, rapidly changing the face of Irish art.

The first chapter of this thesis describes how the gallery came about, firstly in Europe and then in Ireland. To understand the absence of professional displaying venues and the restrictiveness of the Irish academy, I discuss how these and the other problems were overcome by artists. Finally, I outline the emergence of the modern commercial gallery in Dublin.

At present, Dublin has a considerable number of galleries and gallery systems, each operated and administered in different ways. The private gallery, controlled by agents, facilitates 'gallery artists' with a regular professional outlet in which to display art. The agent administrates and promotes his artists in an attempt to establish reputations and sales. The 'gallery artist' in return, must obey the rules and regulations as agreed by artist and agent, and outlined in a verbal contract. However, not all artists partake in the private gallery system, some, for various reasons, prefer to establish and engage in alternative systems. In chapter two, the private gallery operations, the role of the agent and the various clauses of the verbal contract is outlined and questioned. The alternative system is also analysed and debated, to see if they really are necessary and are realistic competitors of the commercial gallery. In part one of chapter three, emphasis is placed on describing the differences between the Dublin and the London gallery operations. In this way, I hope to provide a clear understanding of the complexities of the business of art, especially in foreign galleries. In order to acknowledge the artists contribution to the continuance of the gallery part two of chapter three outlines a conversation with the Irish artist Paddy Graham. We discuss his personal experiences and attitudes towards the commercial gallery.

CHAPTER ONE

The Development of the Modern Commercial Gallery

At present there exists a healthy commercial gallery environment in Dublin. Surprisingly enough, however, commercial galleries have only been introduced to the Irish art sector quite recently. Before I discuss their emergence in Dublin, I would like to begin by describing the birth of the commercial gallery on a European level.

The origins of the commercial gallery stem from a period in art history when art relied on patrons for artistic and financial support. The church, nobility and wealthy of the middle ages used art for decoration to enhance and beautify interiors of private and communal buildings. "Primarily (a work of art) was always the product of an activity that was socially or psychologically significant - pictures were painted and figures carved as symbols of religious belief or at least for a specific function in churches or palaces. Artists usually worked for a patron and the patron however active he may have been in commissioning works of art, is not to be confused with the collector, he always had a practical purpose in mind."[1] The collector of art was to follow much later. Artists during this time, were looked upon as craftsmen who had a definite role to play in society.

1. Herbert Read, "Introduction to Niels Von Holst: 'Creators Collectors and Connoisseurs'" Page 5.

In the fifteenth century the Guild of St. Luke was established in England, primarily to organise art as a trade and thereby to regulate the sale of works of art. Those guild shops were the immediate ancestors of the art dealer as we know him today. They brought together a selection of artworks and displayed them for the benefit of prospective buyers. In that way, the artist was a free tradesman, detached from being a patron's employee, relying on commissions and sales of his art, but free to choose who to be commissioned by and who to sell his art to. They were, at the outset co-operative ventures. Nevertheless, this led to the introduction of merchants who bought works of art and sold them (hopefully) at a profit, or sold the work for the artist at a commission. Those merchants were in fact acting as dealers for artists and art and by the seventeenth century a large number of merchants specalised in dealing art. The individuals who chose to deal in art like the shop-keeper and collector Hermann Becker, were purchasing the output of major artists like Rembrandt, in exchange for large sums of money or even a regular income. Of course the old system of direct patronage persisted together with the new guild shops. It was some time before the aristrocratic art lover would be willing to deal with living artists as independent tradesmen. A growth in the art market intensified, encouraged by the auctions sale.

The auction sale, and later the salesroom, proved an excellent activity for assembling, offering for sale and dispencing the miscellaneous possessions of a deceased or bankrupt owner. The sale of items or trading, has never been in existence ever since man has accumulated personal possessions whereas the auction sale developed into a major social activity, especially in France and Italy, when man became the sole owner of land, homes and other domestic items. The usual location for an auction to take place was on the property of the former owner of the goods to be auctioned. The sale proved to be an important opportunity for bringing together prospective buyers who assembled to observe the quality of the collection on sale. A new breed of speculative buyers and sellers emerged, many developing a knowledge, if not an expertise, of antiquity, including art. Because the auction sale proved to be an enormous success, it was eventually organised more coherently, into a regular auction room. In 1690, the London merchant Edward Millington, opened the first regular auction room in London. Many followed his example, and in 1766, James Christie founded what is now, the world's most famous and independent auction room in Pall Mall, London; 'Christies'. In Paris, the first great dealers were already established by the mid-eighteenth century; Gersaint, Lebrun and Lazare-Duvaux. The guild system had long since vanished with the advent of the Academy.

The Academy of Arts in London, Paris and Florence upheld the ideals and methods of art used during the Classical era. Artists and students were greatly encouraged to orientate their work and perception towards the academy's way of thinking. With the result, any art contrary to academy ideology was immediately dismissed. The determination of the academy to exclude everything except the most retrograde art of the time from their annual exhibitions and so from public recognition was bound to provoke a reaction. In Paris in 1863, the Salon des Refuses displayed the work by artists who did not conform to the accepted 'academy standards'. The groups of artists who organised the exhibition, now known as the Impressionists, obviously realised rejection by the academy would continue. An alternative venue had to be found and with the aid of Napoleon III, they set up what is regarded as the most important exhibition to have taken place in the history of modern art. It was also the exhibition which would transform the face of the art market from predominent masterpieces by deceased artists to majoritively contemporary art by living artists. The purchasing, selling and displaying of art would also be greatly modified.

A large number of talented and ambitious young artists to whom the doors of the academy were closed, needed alternative venues - somewhere to display their art, making it accessible to the art buying public.

Obviously, the best answer was a private gallery and who better to establish such a gallery than an art dealer. With his premises for showing works of art and regular clientele, the art dealer could and did change his operations to facilitate living artists and their art. By the middle of the nineteenth century the patron in the traditional sense was replaced by the collector of contemporary art. These new collectors, especially the American collectors George N. Tynan, Harris Whitlemore and Mrs P. Palmer, purchased mainly European art, not for decoration but for investment and status. Taking great risks was part of the art game and many collectors gambled their money on numerous artists and artworks in the hope that when resold, the investment had paid off. However, by far the greater risks were taken by the art dealer. It was he who put his reputation, money and business on the artist and his art. He also had to judge the potential public, the saleablity of his art, and calculate the likely profit margin from dealing with a particular artist. It was only by promoting, if not 'selling' the artist that the dealer could hope to sell his art. One of the most effective ways new dealers in contemporary art promoted artists in France in the mid-nineteenth century was with another new phenomenon; the independent art critic. The art critic, writing professionally on current art trends was an increasingly familiar figure. At a time when there was a great explosion in literate classes, newspapers, books and magazines flourished. Numerous opportunities arose for

critics eager to comment on art, ready to play their role in educating and informing the public. The reputation of some critics played an essential part in the success or failure of many artists and even dealers. The art dealer acknowledged this new situation. Critics could publicise their artists and their art, they could act as mediators between the new and eccentrically difficult artist and his potential public. The critic was by far the better person to explain, analyse and debate the different and complex to the masses and the better dealers recognised this and acted accordingly. Durand Ruels, possibly the first art dealer in the full modern sense of the term, brought the business of art-dealing to a fine art. Paul Durand Ruel, the successor, best known for his dealing and promotion of the Impressionists popularised all the art movements he dealt with. He, along with Ambroise Vollard, dealer of the Post-Impressionists, and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, dealer of the Cubists and largely responsible for the promotion of Modernism in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Peggy Guggenheim in the 1920's and 30's, continued the process virtually dominating the proliferation of art trends during this period. Herbert Read, her successor, subsequently continued the role of the promoter and critic of art. A large number of artists and art movements owe their success and popularity to individuals such as those I have just mentioned. In fact, it can be said, modernist art throughout the twentieth century, in some form or other, stems from the determination of the individuals connected to the private gallery. One

understands, of course, that the development of the private gallery was not as straightforward or linear as depicted in this summary, nor would it be in Dublin.

For a variety of reasons the history of painting in Ireland starts late in the seventeenth century. Prior to this the most popular art practised was Tapestry, which originated in Europe. Patronage of the arts in Dublin was comparatively strong, aided by the presence of the British. Several professional artists travelled to Dublin, most from the neighbouring country, attracted by the artistic tastes of the Viceroy, the Duke of Ormonde and other major landowners. Homes for the new nobility were designed and constructed. The skills of the architect, mason, sculptor and stuccodore were elaborately utilized in the decoration and ornamentation of public and private buildings. Painters and sculptors were acquired to adore the fine interiors. However, resident artists had no cohesion as a professional group and were usually represented in conjunction with artisans in various guilds. The guild of cutters, painters, steyners and stationers founded under a Charter of Charles II in 1670 never assumed an important role with artists. The absence of an art education and training facility in Dublin meant that individuals had to travel abroad to acquire the skills and techniques needed to become artists. Some preferred to study in Italy but the majority travelled to London, where there was a prestigious academy.

As a result, numerous Irish artists remained abroad neglecting to establish a strong Irish tradition. Irish patrons were too often more inclined to employ a foreign artist than a native born artist and foreign artists residing in Dublin achieved considerable success. The art produced at this time was largely from topographical views of towns and houses, to views of romantic sites like Powerscourt Waterfall to the more demanded family portrait and renowned figures of state.

Despite the flourishing conditions of art in Ireland during the period of Grattan's parliament, in the late eighteenth century, the patronage of the arts remained so limited that the best artists were forced to develop a career in London. The notion of artists exhibiting their work in an effort to establish and widen their reputation was slow to develop. The only opportunity left for the general public to observe art, was at auction sales and at the exhibition of students' work held by the Dublin Society, in Leinster House, a comparatively small society set up in the mid 1730's to encourage involvement in the arts. The effect of the Act of Union on the arts was immediate; patronage suffered dramatically. The members of the old parliament energetically supported the arts. They were the financially secure and well educated classes and their role in the continuance of visual art in Dublin was primary. When parliament moved to London, their departure was detrimental

to the output of art and came as a serious blow to artists. Patronage was then in the hands of the professional classes, the doctors and lawyers, who not only bought less but were more interested in establishing institutions, in spreading the knowledge of art and in researching into the Celtic past. The new middle class patrons preferred smaller pictures, like watercolours, because they were less expensive. The need for a governing body for the training and continuance to art was felt and in 1823, the Royal Hibernian Academy was founded. The R.H.A. bore little indifference to the ideals and principles of the Royal Academy of London, this is not surprising considering the majority of the staff in the R.H.A. received their training and technique skills from studying in the R.A. and subsequently modelled the Irish Academy on the London academy. Both academies were highly conservative in their approach, believing that art should be realistic, pleasant to look at and above all acceptable to the public. From the eighteenth century to the 20's and 30's of this century, the English Royal Academy and its annual exhibitions were the focal point of every artist in Ireland. At a period in which English consciousness was deeply reactionary and portraits of the royal family and nobility were pride of place in academy exhibitions, any opposition to the state of affairs was proportionately provincial. To imagine, then, that the selecting committee of both the R.H.A. and R.A., the academicans, the public and the art dealers of those years would have accepted work which tried

to represent an alternative or even for that matter, represent a full and complex depiction of the 'real conditions' in Ireland would be contrary to academy ideology. The realities of Dublin during these times was, to say the least, bleak and troublesome. The Easter rising, desperate slum conditions, massive unemployment and the highest death rate in Europe were the realities, ignored by Irish artists. They chose to romanticise their depictions of rural Ireland and stately figures, with no regard to what was really happening throughout the country and especially the capital. But because the R.H.A. and R.A. offered to artists in Dublin, the only consistent exhibition venue, artists were reluctant to incorporate modifications to pictorial art, knowing rejection would be inevitable. Reliance on both academy exhibitions clearly indicates the unavailablity of venues for artists during this period. It also represents the power the academy had on art representation. Coupled with this, the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin (now the National College of Art and Design), and the Royal Hibernian Academy were closely attached. Needless to say, the art of both institutions was indistinguishable. For over fifty-three years the R.H.A., through lack of a suitable location, resided in the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin. Many of the academicans who were members of the R.H.A. lectured and tutored students, hence the strong academic approach of the school.

The auction sale, in Dublin was of great benefit to artists. It was some time before Bennet's Auction Rooms was to be opened on the Quays and when it did, furniture and other antiquities were its main items. Artists who wished to sell their work but preferred not to associate themselves with the R.H.A. and R.A. annual exhibitions, or auction sales, had probably only one other alternative at their disposal; their studio. Many artists during this period utilized their own studios as a displaying area and sales room. In 1902, Sarah Purser organised the exhibition of John Butler Yeats and Nathaniel Hone in John Yeats' studio and other well known academicans in Dublin operated in this way and probably needed to. Few artists could support themselves throughout the academic year without selling works, relying only on annual exhibitions. Fewer still could rely on a guaranteed sale. So it was both logical and wise that artists should take advantage of whatever opportunity of selling they could, regardless of how and where the art was to be sold. The studio was an excellent environment for the artist to deal in. Comfortable and secure in his own studio he could confront his patron or collector in familiar surroundings. Having said this, art representation never diverted from the traditional academic style. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century artists in Dublin produced charming, decent, moral, affable and appealing pictures and sculptures for their audience. One has only look at the work of Michael George Brennan, William

Davis and Fredrick William Burton to get an indication of the attitude of artists in the late nineteenth early twentieth century. Nothing was produced that could shock the sensibilities of the public. The emergence of Impressionism in the late nineteenth century signified the birth of Modernism in Europe and established Paris as the artistic centre of the art world. At this time, poets and critics from all over Europe flocked to Paris to engage in the newest forms of art, adapting and contributing to their development. Some Irish artists namely Walter Osborne, John Lavery and Roderic O'Connor travelled to Europe to acquire the techniques and styles. Impressionism was quickly adopted and with the return to Dublin of John Lavery and Walter Osborne it signified the first alternative art style to challenge the Irish academy. Lavery and Osborne offered to Irish artists a new art form, one which was being practised throughout Europe. However, the unwillingness of both the Royal Hibernian Academy and Irish art critics like George Russell, to encourage artists to take notice of their new discoveries, meant Impressionism never achieved its full potential and clearly demonstrated the Academy's strangle-hold on Irish art. The academy would continue to be the major force in art in Ireland.

The period between the two world wars was both economically and artistically poor in Ireland. For many years artists had been closing themselves off from

European influences. The insular tendency had been gaining momentum since 1922, as the R.H.A.'s annual exhibition became the subject of much criticism about the lack of identifiable national charactistics of the art on display. The people and landscape of rural Ireland, particularly the Western country, became the inspiration for many leading artists, including R.H.A. members. The West was looked upon as a slice of Ireland which had the essence of true Irish cultural life, greatly encouraged by the Celtic literary revival. Its pure raw qualities had escaped the affects of foreign influences and it was hoped that the new 'national' academy would concern itself with all aspects of cultural life in Ireland and so establish a national art identity. Such representation of the West came to signify 'Irishness' and differentiated Anglo-Irish relations. Eventually, after much pressure, the academy accepted the 'national' art, resulting in its proliferation in annual exhibitions, notible figures were Charles Lamb, Patrick Tuohy and Sean Keating. However, very little seperated the new 'national' art and the traditional academy art. The subject matter was probably the only difference between the two. Technically they were inseparable.

The situation for displaying art had changed very little. Individual artists hired premises for exhibitors. Antique shops sold some works. Artists relied on their studios as a venue for selling and the only consistent

annual exhibition belonged to the R.H.A. A second attempt was made to bring Irish art into the mainstream of European developments. Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone, who studied the techniques of Cubism, returned to Dublin from Paris. Curiously enough, they did not acquaint themselves with Picasso or Braque, the pioneers of the modern movement, nor with the great developers of the cubist concept like sculptors, Lipshitz, Csaky, Laurens or Brancusi, nor with Chagall, nor with those painters who actually kept schools; Leger or Ozfant or Matisse. Instead, they chose a minor practitioner of Cubism called Gleizes, so obscure at the time that Jack B. Yeats, when he heard of their pilgrimage, exclaimed "who the blazes is Gleizes?"[2] However, in so far as it being an immature version of Cubism, it was still rejected by the R.H.A.'s selecting committee. Jellett became a member of the newly formed Dublin Painters Society. The society was not as selective in its choice of suitable and respectable art. In fact it was from the start, a venue in which the more progressive artists could show their work. The society accepted the cubist art and in 1923, Jellett held her first exhibition of her cubist works. Immediately, the exhibition was met with derision, notably by the critic George Russell, who wrote "what Miss Jellett says in one of her decorations she says in the other, and that is nothing"[3].

2. Michael Kane, "The Independent Artists" Structure Vol. 1 No. 31972.

3. George Russell, 'R.H.A., Modernism and Living Art' from "Circa" No. 14 Jan/Feb 1984/5.

Criticism such as this, is not surprising considering the ingrained conservatism of the Dublin art establishment. Furthermore, a nationalistic isolation had set in with the founding of the Free State, determined to exclude Ireland from foreign influences, whether industrial, artistic or otherwise.

In 1942, in the midst of the second World War, a group of artists, came to Ireland. The majority of these were English. The group, called the White Stag Group, included; Paul Egestorff, Kenneth Hall, Nick Nicholls and Basil Rakoizi. A small number of Irish artists joined, most notably Louis le Brocquy, who had himself returned to Ireland because of the troubles occuring in Europe. Things came to a head when in 1942 Louis le Brocquy's painting, The Spanish Shawl was rejected by the selecting committee of the academy. Critics who sympathised with the moderns retaliated by proclaiming that the academy was unjustified in its dismissal of all the modernist art. For the first time the unaccepted art had the full support of the critics, who up to then, had never attempted to recognize its presence, nor had any art dealers, of which there were few, approached the moderns to encourage and give support. The White Stag Group dispersed, replaced by the Living Art Group, a collection of mainly Irish modernists bent on progressively transforming Irish art. In 1943, after again being refused admission into the R.H.A.'s exhibition, the Living Artists organised and

opened their own exhibition in the College of Art in Dublin. The first Irish Exhibition of Living Art had been established and with it, the first major challenge to the academy and one which was successful. In many ways, the IELA was a Salon des Refuses occuring not in Paris but in Dublin. On display were works by Mainie Jellet (the founder), Mary Swanzy, Nano Reid, Norah McGuinness, Jack P. Hanlon, Ralph Cusack and Louis le Brocquy. Many of the images relied on on the influence of Cubism and to some extent reflected the change of attitude in Irish art. The group took it on themselves to challenge the academy and for a while at least, injected some enthusiasm into art in Ireland. Their exhibition cleared the air of much prejudice and let a new generation speak for itself. However, one of the most significant developments was the positive reaction from the public. In Brian Fallon's words, the public responded to the Living Art Exhibition so warmly "because it recognised that here at last was an 'Irish School', not in the chauvinistic or made in Ireland sense, but a new and vital generation with something of its own to say".[4]

4.Brian Kennedy, 'R.H.A., Modernism and Living Art' from "Circa" No. 14 Jan/Feb 1984/5.

The 1940's and 1950's in Dublin had been characterised above all by mass-emigration and unemployment. Few opportunities arose for the setting up of a private gallery but surprisingly enough, a number of dealers courageously ventured into the limited market of Irish art. Deirdre McDonagh, who had been selling the works of Jack B. Yeats and other R.H.A. members in her gallery - The Brown Jacket Book Shop - never achieved great success. Few works were sold, due to the economic situation. The shop eventually adopted its operations to faciliate reproductions and mature artists. Victor Waddington, on the other hand established probably the first major professional commercial gallery in Dublin. The gallery opened in 1930 in South Anne's Street and immediately displayed the works of John Keating, Norah McGuinness and Nano Reid. Waddington also took over the management of Jack B. Yeats whose reputation increased enormously because of the promotion he received. For the first time artists in Dublin had a professional gallery which was sympathetic to their cause, a gallery fully committed to the promotion of Irish art regardless of concept or status. Many dealers and potential dealers followed suit, opening small though not really competitive galleries in Dublin. The Tom Nesbett Gallery, the Grafton Gallery (not the present Grafton Gallery), the Carmel Gallery, the Gory Gallery and the Emmet Gallery opened by the turn of the 1960's. These galleries mainly acted as picture-framers and watercolourists. It wasn't until the David Hendriks

Gallery and Leo Smith's Dawson Gallery opened that the private gallery was utilised to its fullest. David Hendriks opened his gallery in 1956, displaying works by Picasso, mainly etchings from the Vollard suite, ceramics by the French potter, Lacaf, and modernist Irish work by Sean Keating, Maurice MacGonigal PRHA, Patrick Hennessy, Robertson Craig, Thomas Ryan and George Collie, all of whom were closely linked to the R.H.A. Patrick Pye, Barbara Warren, Arthur Armstrong and Kitty Wilmer O'Brien were among the avant-garde group. A complete mixture of approaches co-existed until about 1959-60, when Hendriks chose to concentrate on Modernism. (Further details will be discussed concerning the Hendriks Gallery in the following chapter).

During the 1960's, the Irish Republic experienced a number of rapid economic changes which affected the social and cultural behaviour throughout the country. The population had increased dramatically, rapidly changing from being a country predominantly rural to majoritively urban. Vastly improved international communications contributed enormously to the de-isolation of conservative Ireland. International influences were inevitable. The proliferation of art magazines, books, catalogues and articles on the Irish market brought Irish artists up-to-date with art trends occuring throughout the world especially American art. Art in America during the 1960's and early 70's was dominated by Pop, Op, Kinetic, Minimalist and

Conceptualist art movements. They were a reaction to Abstract Expressionism and more importantly they were a reflection of a particular society at a particular time. The clarity of colour, the simplification of imagery, the duplification of commercial items and blatent exploitation of reknowned social figures were elements associated with the American way of life. The plagiarism which occured in Irish art during the 1960's demonstrates the unwillingness of Irish artists to develop a distinctive Irish art style. The artifical colouring and flatness of Cecil King's and Patrick Scott's paintings, the geometrical patterns of Michael Farrell and the harsh precision of Robert Ballagh's work have little or no relation to an Irish society or environment. In the words of Frances Ruane, "The plastic colours of Pop and crispy-clarity of superrealism are aesthetic extensions of Southern California where sunlit days reveal colour with an uncompromising harshness. The materials Irish artists used and muted colour range make perfect sense in their context."[5] The Hendriks Gallery greatly facilitated Irish artists with an opportunity to see for themselves the art of America, on several occasions, Hendriks displayed Kinetic and Minimalist art in his gallery, needless to say, this is where the major influence came from.

5.Frances Ruane, "The Delighted Eye" Irish Painting and Sculpture of the Seventies, 1980.

By the early 1970's, the number of galleries had increased dramatically. Bruce Arnold opened the Neptune Gallery, Tom Caldwell, the Tom Caldwell Gallery, Gerry Davis, the Davis Gallery, Susan McDougal, the Lad Lane Gallery, Oliver Dowling, the Oliver Dowling Gallery and John Taylor, the Taylor Galleries (successor to Leo Smith). There was also the alternative gallery previously set up in 1960, the Independent Artists and in the late 1960's, came the Project Art Centre. However, many galleries would close within the space of a few years due to the competitiveness of the art system. Dublin had at last established a commercial gallery environment, but who would benefit, the artist or the dealer?

CHAPTER TWO

The Present Commercial Gallery System in Dublin

There are five major commercial galleries contributing to the promotion and distribution of art in Dublin: David Hendriks, John Taylor, Oliver Dowling, Tom Caldwell and the Grafton Gallery. Collectively, they mastermind the marketing of the visual arts and also manage the vast majority of professional artists working in Ireland. The David Hendriks, located at 119 St. Stephen's Green, is the most established commercial gallery in Dublin. It first opened as the Ritchie Hendriks Gallery on the ground floor of Brown Thomas' Store, 3 St. Stephen's Green in 1956. Two years later it moved location to where it presently resides. Almost immediately David Hendriks based his gallery on the professionalism of London galleries, arranging foreign art movements and artists to display in his gallery. Even the interior was decorated to reflect a modern gallery, the walls were hung in grey and white striped paper with grey carpeting. He also installed good lighting so that the works on display were shown in the best of conditions. Initially, Hendriks was simply looking for saleable work, closely reflected current art trends. Today, the David Hendriks gallery's director is Blaithin de Sachy - since the death of the former owner four years ago. The John Taylor Galleries, located at 6 Dawson Street, opened in 1979. Prior to setting up his own gallery, Taylor co-managed the Dawson Gallery with its owner, Leo Smith. The experience and clients Taylor got to know while working with Leo Smith provided the skill and knowledge to 'go it alone' and when

Leo Smith closed in 1978, Taylor opened his own commercial gallery. The space and lighting facilities in the gallery are probably the best in Dublin. Oliver Dowling established his gallery in 1976. It is now, and has always been, in 19 Kildare Street. Dowling's knowledge of art and artists stems from his previous career, working in the visual arts office for the Arts Council. For the first eighteen months of the gallery's existence, Dowling only displayed international artists but gradually Irish artists were shown. Tom Caldwell Galleries, located at 31 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin, and 56 Bradbury Place, Belfast, Proves to be an important opportunity for artists to display their art in both the north and south of Ireland, without too much difficulty. His Dublin gallery was established during the late 1970's but its location is somewhat of a disadvantage, being in a basement outside the city centre. Whereas Ciaran MacGonigal's Grafton Gallery is situated right in the heart of the city, at 3 Ann's Lane, South Anne Street. The gallery opened in 1984 and is to date the newest commercial gallery in Dublin. Ciaran was previously employed as the chairman for the visual arts in the Municipal Gallery in Parnell Square and on occasion gave lectures at the National Art Gallery.

The five galleries I have just mentioned are the leading administrators of the visual arts in Dublin. Although the galleries are similar in that they operate under the title of 'Agent', they nevertheless, have their own individual approach, appearance and promotional devices.

Basically, there exists two seperate, though sometimes overlapping, gallery systems in Dublin. At the top of the range is the private gallery, controlled by agents. The other, an alternative co-operative gallery, usually controlled by artists or a committee, selected by artists. Commercial private galleries are part of the private sector and earn most of their income from the sale of works of art. The buying and selling of art, being a trade like any other, is subject to much misunderstanding. There are innumerable laws defining what the permissable relationship between agent and artist are, what the agent who buys and/or sells a work of art can claim for it, and expect of it, in what circumstances works of art can be bought or sold, what exactly it is that one buys or sells and so on. There are of course numerous requirements and restrictions asked of the artist, usually by his associated gallery. However, before becoming too involved with the generalisation of the art system, I would like to turn my attention to the role of the agent.

Agents have only recently become associated with commercial gallery operations in Dublin. During the late 1970's, the government saw fit to define the practise of the dealer (most, if not all, galleries practised as dealers then), in order to keep track of the galleries' earnings, losses etcetera, for tax purposes. The dealer was looked upon in the traditional sense, as one who purchases and

disposes works of art in an effort to gain a considerable profit, usually unknown and undeclared to the state. As a way of eliminating the believed misuse of the system, gallery owners and adminstrators had to define their role outlining their relationship with their artists and works of art. To avoid having to declare profits from dealing (and thereby having to pay large taxes), most, if not all, chose to lable them as agents. That is not to say that all agents are agents simply because they wish to avoid tax, it is only to bring to mind one of the obstacles a gallery would face if it chose to operate as a dealer. Agents have their tax problems, but none were prepared to disclose them however. It was not then (late 70's), nor is it now, financially worthwhile for galleries to operate solely as dealers, because Dublin does not have an art market large enough to entertain this practise. However, the dividing line between agent and dealer is a very thin one indeed, and one wonders how much and for who the line exists. Each gallery in turn has denied being involved in the dealing of art, proclaiming they are purely agents and at no stage do they purchase art simply to sell and make a profit. Surprisingly enough, when asked if he knew of an agent in Dublin who deals in art, Ciaran MacGonigal, of the Grafton Gallery, pointed the finger at Oliver Dowling as a definite suspect. However, Oliver Dowling, in reply, denied partaking in such acts and instead pointed the finger to a different gallery, carefully not mentioning any names. Of course, one after the other they refused the allegation quickly, outlining with great detail

how they, as agents, operate. Whether or not agents actually deal, will, continue to be questioned. Nevertheless, they still have a definite role to play.

The role of an agent is a representative one. Acting as advisor and manager is only part of it. The agent provides a professional venue where artists can exhibit their works of art, but unlike an open exhibition, not every artist is allowed to exhibit. To be permitted an exhibition in a private gallery, the agent either approaches an artist, (this is likely to happen at group shows or graduate exhibitions), or the artist can approach the agent. Artists can phone or write to an agent asking for an appointment or personally call into the gallery with a portfolio in hand. The latter is probably the least appropriate in that the agent may have a busy schedule and might be unwilling to view the artist's work, hence it could be a major setback for the artist. By arranging an interview with an agent, the artist and more importantly, his work, will have the agent's full attention. Agents greatly differ in artistic taste and appreciation, looking for different qualities in the artist and his art. One would imagine that agents immediately look for saleable work, regardless of quality, content or style, taking into consideration that it is a business and, like any other business, sales are of prime importance. But, most agents remarked their selection is based on their personal likes and dislikes in art. Ciaran MacGonigal said he will not display

any art which he does not like, regardless of whether it might sell or not, whereas Tom Caldwell directs his attention to the saleablity of the work. Most galleries make their selection to tie in with the gallery's established image, if it has one. The David Hendriks Gallery seems to be quite flexible with its choice of art styles and images, ranging from the controlled precision of Robert Ballagh's super-realist style and T.P. Flannagan's mystical watercolourist landscapes to Paddy Graham's loose expressionist figurative paintings. John Taylor is also quite adventurous, ranging from Pauline Bewick and Brian Bourke to Louis le Brocquy. Oliver Dowling, on the other hand, only displays works which are within the Minimalist, Conceptualist bracket; Anne Madden, Rog Johnston and Nigel Rolfe.

When an agent has agreed to exhibit the work of an artist, for whatever reason, he will more than likely play safe and show a small selection in one of the gallery's group shows. The agent would be courageous (or some would think foolish) to organise a one-man show straight-away. This would, of course, depend on the artist having a reputation or not. Art being a commodity, as seen through the eyes of an agent, is marketed as a potential saleable product and like any new product on the market, samples have to be displayed in order to create a demand. The group show, is the agent's most effective device for bringing together the gallery's range of products and displaying them to the

potential buyer. It is an effective way of observing which artist and which art is in greater demand. Group shows are usually a combination of established and non-established artists in one venue. Normally, there is a large variety of artistic styles and approaches on display, therefore, the likelihood of a sale is relatively good. It is an appropriate way, if not the best, for an agent to introduce new artists onto the art market without taking too high a risk. If the new artists' work fails to sell, hopefully the more established artists' work will.

It takes a condiserable length of time for an artist to establish any sort of reputation. If and when this occurs, and in some cases before it occurs, agents seize the opportunity to bring the artist with the gallery so that if the artist is going to make money, he will make it for his gallery. This is done by a verbal contract, in gallery terms this means the artist is part of the 'stable' or gallery artist. The verbal contract is a very dubious affair. There are no universal laws governing its use. All commercial galleries in Dublin operate it, but it differs from one gallery to another and even from artist to artist connected with the same gallery. As the name suggests, the contract is agreed verbally between agent and artist. More often than not, the artist is agreeing to whatever the agent offers or demands. Artists who do not agree to the conditions of a contract of one gallery approach other agents until they are

satisfied with the arrangements. Ciaran MacGonigal is the only agent in Dublin who will send a typed letter outlining the conditions of the contract to the artist. The contract, verbal or otherwise, is a pledge of the gallery's committment to the career of the artist. In return, he will demand an equal amount of determination and loyalty from the artist. Basically, the verbal contract consists of a number of requirements and restrictions to which the artist must conform. Usually, an artist is asked to provide a considerable quantity of work to be viewed and selected by the agent for a one or two person show. Normally, exhibitions of this sort are scheduled every eighteen months to two years. The selection of work and the date of the exhibition are chosen by the agent. All private galleries in Dublin prohibit their gallery artists' from displaying in any other gallery in Dublin unless otherwise agreed by the agent. Of course, this allows the gallery artist to exhibit outside Dublin. However, David Hendriks, Oliver Dowling and Ciaran MacGonigal will insist the artist pay the full gallery commission if a work is sold through the agent. Most galleries in Dublin do not allow their artists to sell work from their studio. The David Hendriks Gallery has, on several occasions terminated contracts with artists who persisted in dealing from their own studio or workshop. Ciaran MacGonigal believes clients and potential buyers should be denied access to an artist's studio because it defeats the purpose of having an agent in the first place.

One can understand the agent's point of view, considering that it is he who is arranging exhibitions and promoting the artist, but, from the artist's situation, he must wait over a year, even two years, to have a respectable display of his art. How can he financially support himself between exhibitions and still produce the goods? Selling works from the studio is a quick way of making money, if one can do it. However, to prevent his artists from engaging in such acts, and from getting financially burdened, Tom Caldwell provides some of his gallery artists with a regular monthly income. It appears he is, at present, the only gallery director in Dublin to do so. It is not known, whether this practice is common to any other commercial galleries in Dublin. Many artists finance themselves and their art by teaching but this can affect their own art production, both in quantity and quality.

The agent in satisfying his part of the contract, will provide all the necessary promotion and management the artist requires or sees fit to employ. Apart from facilitating the artist with a professional venue the agent advertises his artists' in order to create interest, demand and sales. It is as much to the gallery's benefit as to the gallery artist that a show is publicised. In establishing reputations and sales, the agent is securing his gallery's business and continuance. Invitations are sent to individuals known to partake in the buying of art works.

These include prominent collectors and individuals with a general interest in purchasing art. None of the galleries would disclose the names of individuals or groups who they regularly invite to their shows. The Grafton Gallery, due to its involvement with commercial business like Smurfits, and corporations, who occasionally provide sponsorship for the gallery, will invite these and others to attend an opening night of an exhibition. The opening night is an opportunity for bringing together a wide range of artistically, and not so artistically interested parties. The agent attempts to create the best possible conditions for sales. It is commonly said; 'if you don't sell on the first night, you won't sell at all', and in most cases this is true. A catalogue, comprised of reproductions of the artists' work accompanies the opening night. It is a handy way for buyers to familiarise themselves with the work, its price, size and content. Also, the agent supplies posters which are usually displayed in art colleges, theatres and other prominent places to publicise the exhibition and the artist. All private galleries in Dublin except the David Hendriks Gallery, advertise their artists' exhibitions in 'Circa Magazine', the only magazine concerned with the arts in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Private galleries are quite selective of who they have at an exhibition, whether it is opening night or not. Even their method of advertising suggests they only want the artistically interested individual, preferably with the

intention of purchasing, rather than looking. Public media is never used to inform who, where and what is currently on display. One never sees an advertisement of an exhibition in a daily newspaper or a commercial on the television to tell the masses about the gallery's list of activities. Private galleries are content in keeping 'art' for the elite, upholding the traditional 'snob' atmosphere the art world supposedly emulates.

Getting back to the role of the agent, they rarely organise exhibitions for their artists outside Ireland. It is left to the individual artist to arrange all the necessary adminstration for his own show in a foreign country. Of course, the gallery will insist that the artist is represented under the gallery's name and will also demand a full commission if a work is sold. Agents are extremely reluctant to outline how they actually promote their artists. I would imagine that some, if not all, partake in dealing, so as to build reputations quickly and to keep prices rising for an artists' work. I cannot provide evidence to back this claim, but base my opinion purely on 'hear say' from artists and lecturers I have spoken to. Again, all agents denied operating as dealers but as the Tom Caldwell Gallery remarked, "one is more than just an agent", and that I assure you is not meant to indicate the friendship or loyalty an agent has to his artists. As payment for the agent, for providing space and adminstration etcetera, a commission of

one third of the sale price is taken for the gallery, though the commission can go as high as forty or even fifty percent, depending on the contract arrangements. The David Hendriks Gallery and John Caldwell Galleries provide artists with a framing facility. However, the cost of framing is charged in full to the artist or is included with the commission cost. In Belfast, Dr. Jamsid Mirfenderesky is director of the Fenderesky Gallery. He provides all the frames without charge. The frames are on loan to the artist, but if a work is sold the price of the frame is added to the price of the artwork, so, in that way, the artist need never pay for framing or worry about how to get his work framed for an exhibition. Dublin galleries proclaim that expenses of the opening night; wine, invitations, catalogue, posters, etcetera, are free of charge, but, as Michael Kane pointed out, numerous artists involved with the private gallery have, on several occassions, had to arrange the printing of catalogues and posters and pay for them themselves.

It seems most professional artists in Dublin, accept the verbal contract, however dubious it may appear. There are, however, some groups and individuals who disapprove of the private gallery system. The Independent Artists and the Project Arts Centre are the two which originally set up to oppose the system, to provide an alternative. The Independent Artists, established in 1960, held their first exhibition in a basement in Baggot Street.

It consisted of works by James McKenna (its founder), Edward Delany, Patrick McElroy, Gerard Dillon, Richard O'Neill, Edward Mooney, Christina Rundquist and Edward Maguire. These were later replaced by John Behan, Brian Bourke, Joseph O'Connor, David O'Doherty, Patrick Hall and Michael Kane. The group sought to provide an exhibition, open to all professional artists working in the thirty-two counties of Ireland. Operation as a co-op, the group orientated its gallery operations to benefit all its participating artists, rather than a dealer/agent or arts body. Initially, the Independents congregrated in opposition to the policy of the Living Arts establishment. "The complacent flux of artistic activity, a barely perceptible ripple in the broader flow of life, had encouraged somewhere in the late fifties the contamination of doubt. The affliction in its fluid state had been generated by an ill-defined opposition to the policy of the Living Art Exhibition, an awareness of its gradual decline from having been a kind of avant-garde movement into a fashionalbe salon. Disaffection was mainly caused by the fact that it had become a salon without standards."[1]

1. Michael Kane, 'Independent Artists' "Michael Kane and His Life" Page 44.

The Living Art group failed to concern itself with the real purpose of diaplaying art, preferring to dispay art which would create "a kind of 'impact' a group exhibition was expected to have, rather than the best interests of each individual artist, his style, development and preoccupation (and this 'impact' usually contrived according to canons to taste issuing form London magazines and Sunday newspapers and the newly flourishing art book industry), the indefinable infection in the nebulous content of art affairs was crystalised, quite suddenly in 1960. It took the form of a new group to be called the 'Independent Artists'."[2] At first, all artists in the group contributed to the adminstration of the exhibitions but as time went by, a committee was elected to direct the group's activities. Today, the Independent Artists Committee is made up of : Veronica Bolay (secretary), James Quin (administrator), Michael Verdon (treasurer), Henry J. Sharpe (chairman), Eoin Butler, Gerry Cox, Anita Groener, Alice Hanratty, Padraig O'Faolain and Michael O'Dea. These people are the selecting committee who choose the art to be displayed in their annual exhibitions. Due to the lack of a secure venue, the Independent Artists exhibitions take place in art colleges, art centres or semi-state commercial galleries.

2. ibid.

For over twenty-seven years the group has continued to uphold its policy - that of displaying new and young emerging artists, whose art is sympathetic to the realities of the environment (socially or psychologically), form which it evolved. The Independent Artists have provided the opportunity for young artists to introduce and familiarise themselves with the art game. The group is also operated on a commission basis. However, the percentage taken on sales of art is always one-third. Advertisement, catalogues, posters, etcetera, are usually charged with a summission fee, not greater than £5 per artwork. Framing is sometimes subsidised but normally, the artist is expected to provide his own framing. The Independents do not promote artists as agents would. They merely provide a venue where artists, who might be unlikely candidates for a private gallery's exhibition, can display their art. However, "Independents is a selected show and it's merely rhetoric to pretend that in its present form it is somehow more democratic than those exhibitors it set up in opposition to. In fact, it shares quite a few of the characteristics of their shows i.e. the committee get their work exhibited. It would appear that Independent Artists have only flirted with the idea of taking a swipe at what they perceived as an 'establishment' stranglehold, and instead all they've done is to replace one heirarchy with another."[3]

3. Nicola White, "Gallery and Exhibition Spaces in the Republic of Ireland" Page 14.

The Project Art Centre, established in 1967, is the longest established arts centre in Ireland. Jim Fitzgerald and Colm O'Brien provided the initial inspiration. Their desire was to bring together the various arts of drama, music, painting and sculpture under the one roof for a brief experimental period of time. As Jim Fitzgerald put it; "In the future let us build local and regional theatres. Let us have attached to them concert halls for music, studios for painting, exhibition galleries and workshops. Let the public come and go among the artists as they did in the Middle Ages"[4]. For the first two weeks December 1967, the Gate Theatre played host to a wide range of art and artists - widely contrasting styles of music, from the Dowland consort, to the Jim Doherty Trio and Dolly McMahon, drama for children and adults, a poetry reading, a teach-in and an exhibition of paintings. The paintings were supplied by John Behan, Brian Bourke, Charlie Cullen, Michael Kane and John Kelly. Michael Kane also contributed a brief essay for the catalogue. The Project group shortly moved to Lower Abbey Street and then to 39 East Essex Street where it is today. The director of the centre and the visual arts is Tim O'Neill and it is he who selects and arranges all the exhibitions to be held in the centre. Mr. O'Neill explained that the centre does not operate as a commercial company.

4. Jim Fitzgerald, 'Project Arts Centre' "Michael Kane and His Life" Page 65.

Unlike a private gallery the artists on display are not promoted other than with posters and catalogues. The policy of the gallery is to "provide a necessary venue for an alternative cultural viewpoint that is not recognised elsewhere, especially young artists and artistic groups demanding recognition. Secondly, to allow visual exchange on an international level of leading artists from abroad to show their work and Irish artists taking their work abroad. Thirdly, to make attempts to reach and involve a wider commmunity."[5] The Project does not provide a contract, written or verbal, for artists. All exhibitions are based on 'open submission', in that way all artists who submit their work stand an equal chance of getting displayed as anyone else. A commission of approximately one-third of the sale price will be taken for the gallery. As regards having an artistic identity or style, the Project does not have one. It is usually identified as being the most adventurous of all the galleries in Dublin. I suppose the professionals are openly welcomed, but because it receives a very large funding from the Arts Council, (over £82,000 was allocated to the Arts Centre in 1988), therefore, as Tim O'Neill remarked, it can afford to gamble with artists and groups of artists and have their exhibition fail, knowing the following year's Arts Council fund will arrive to continue the centre's upkeep.

5. Patricia Butler, "A Guide to Art Galleries in Ireland" Page 12.

The Temple Bar Gallery, situated at 4 - 7 Temple Bar, cannot afford to risk as much with artists and artistic alternatives as the Project can, because it does not receive near enough funding as it should. This year, the gallery received £12,000 from the Arts Council, as a result, its exhibitions are more selective, tending to rely more on sales than the Project. It is because of the Project's flexibility, that, I feel, artists use its gallery as a stepping stone to the private gallery. A 'supermarket' of the arts where anything on display is quite mediocre or is usually there because a private gallery did not want it. Of course, there are and have been very professional artists with exceptionally good work who have displayed in the Project, but it seems that they are using the Project in the hope that an agent will approach them to display their work in a private gallery. As Oliver Dowling explained, the Project Centre and others like it, does not provide a professional individual concern for an artist, unlike the agent who will personally manage and promote the artist and his work. The Project and the Independents will arrange an opening night, inviting, as agents do, prominent collectors and art buying individuals. They will also invite private gallery agents in the hope that the artist will get an opportunity to exhibit in a private gallery. Framing is also in the hands of the artist. The alternative gallery : Project Arts Centre, Independent Artists, Grapevine Arts Centre and the Temple Bar Gallery allow young artists to 'get their foot in the door' of the

art world. They also seem to bring the arts to the community but they fail to provide incentives for artists to continue to display in their gallery instead of working their way to the heirarchy of the private gallery. There are too many perks in the private gallery for the alternative to compete with. The artist has the individual attention of an agent, the best space, lighting and promotional devices and a secure and consistent exhibiting venue. But whatever downfalls the alternative galleries have, they enable artists, young amateur and professional to gain access to the art market. Many well known, successful Irish artists such as; Robert Ballagh, Michael Kane, Paddy Graham, Cathy Carman, Eithne Jordan, Michael Cullen and Brian Maguire, began their careers in galleries such as these or have benefited from displaying their works there.

CHAPTER THREE

Part I - Alternatives to the Commercial Gallery System

The gallery system in Dublin is adopted by most artists in Ireland. But, if an artist disapproves of the artistic pressures a gallery may bring to bear, or simply dislikes the idea of receiving not more than fifty-percent of the price his art actually fetches on the gallery wall. He may choose to manage his own career. The Irish artist Richard Kingston decided to act as his own agent administrating his exhibitions and sales. Using the living room of his house for exhibitions Kingston was able to display his work and facilitate an audience. No commission was taken but the considerable cost of framing, catalogues, invitation and other promotional elements had to be met by the artist. There was also a substantial amount of time lost on producing his art because of the difficulties involved in organising an exhibition. This practice used by Kingston relieves the artist of many pressures and restrictions he would normally have if he was under contract with a gallery. Being one's own agent is a courageous step to take for an artist but in a sense, he is really only replacing one form of gallery operation with another. Of course, not all artists could employ this option because not all artists are good administrators and it is logical for these to use the agent as much as possible. Also, there are very few artists who know the right people to promote their art; critics, collectors, etcetera. However, there is always the alternative of totally rejecting the commercialism effort and producing and displaying unsaleable art. Mural painting,

performance and billboard art are some of the activities artists can incorporate and indeed have. In 1987, ten David Allen billboards, five north and five south of the river Liffey in Dublin, were utilised to demonstrate a sort of detachment from the existing consumer selling structure of the Irish art market. The artists involved were; Chris Maguire, Paddy Graham, Michael Kane, Anita Groener, Alice Hanratty, Chris Davis, Brian Maguire, Padraig O'Faolain, Barrie Cooke and John Kindness. However, all but one or two of these ten artists are associated with commercial galleries in some form or other - a slight contradiction on their behalf. Nevertheless, activities of this sort are possible. One must ask, how exactly artists benefit from such a practise of billboard art other than satisfying an artistic desire, communicating to a larger audience and disinvolvement from a gallery environment? Financially, it does not seem practical considering there are no profits to be made. It is most unlikely that an artist will make a professional career from it. More often than not, artists will eventually conform to the gallery system mainly because they realise that it is easier, far more secure and above all financially beneficial.

Of course there is always the option of leaving the Dublin gallery system altogether and approaching a foreign gallery, where there is likely to be a different sort of operation. In the majority of cases, artists working

in Dublin look to London, where there exists numerous prestigious galleries plus an extremely healthy art market. In most cases, artists travelling to London from this country will approach the major galleries like, Fischer Fine Art, Waddington Gallery, Gimpel Fils, Marlborough Fine Art and the Hanover Gallery. These galleries alone are reknowned for their dealing of art and artists and have helped to develop and popularise many leading British artists such as Francis Bacon, Donald Sutherland and Lucian Freud. Unlike Dublin galleries where directors are 'agents', London gallery directors are dealers. Dealers operate under a written contract which basically amounts to this : the artist hands over to the dealer all of his work in return for a guaranteed income, paid monthly, quarterly or annually. There might be augmentations if more of the artist's work sells for higher prices than the estimate upon which the agreed income is based. The most free arrangement would be the verbal contract used by Dublin agents. Between the written and verbal contract are all sorts of intermediate types of contract, giving the dealer, or the artist, power and freedom (more or less). The written contract is most definitely the strictest form of agreement and dealers tend to be happier the more completely they can control the situation. The 'selling' of an artist, after all, can be a long and expensive job, and dealers prefer to have some guarantee that all efforts and expenditure will not go to benefit some other dealer. Generally, when a gallery artist of a London gallery

has a one-man show, the dealer's share is one-third of the proceeds of all sales. The considerable cost of framing has to be met by the artist, but the dealer usually pays for the catalogues, posters, etcetera, also providing an opening night party. When he gives an unknown artist an exhibition, the dealer, like any director of a gallery in any country, takes a gamble. It is because of the risks involved that the rate of commission is so high. There is no reduction in the rate of commission if the artist proves to be a big success. "Thus the dealer's initial gamble can prove to be usefully profitable and he may decide it is to his advantage to bind the artist to him by a contract, on the principle that, as one dealer put it, it is silly to buy golden eggs when you can buy the goose that lays them."[1]

The 1960's was the period when the written contract became the dominant feature in London gallery operations, and was greatly encouraged by the high-powered activities of the Marlborough Fine Art Gallery. Marlborough caused some envy and ill-feeling among other established dealers mainly because their gallery artists left to join Marlborough.

1. Robert Wright, "The Art Game Again!" Page 196.

It was particularly galling for those who, having nursed certain British artists to the point where they were beginning to yield handsome returns, found that "those artists were succombing to the lure of contracts from Marlborough that would provide them with handsome and regular incomes, releive them of such mundane worries as income tax problems and guarantee them exhibitions every year or two. As inducements to sign exclusive long-term contracts with Marlborough, Frank Lloyd (owner and director of Marlborough during the 1960's), offered artists advances, staggered pay-outs from Swiss banks, expensive colour catalogues and international exhibitions."[2] Such inducements proved to be perfect, both for attracting artists from other galleries to Marlborough. Gimpel Fils, having groomed and promoted many of its gallery artists, lost Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Lynn Chadwick and Kenneth Armitage. The Hanover Gallery lost Francis Bacon and Roy Butler. The promotional devices used by Marlborough were soon to become a part of all London gallery operations and many British artists prospered because of it.

2.JohnR. Taylor and Brian Brooke, "The Art Dealers" Page 174.

Having said that, however, London galleries are in a position to operate as dealers simply because there is a very healthy art market, numerous collectors, both private and corporate, and above all a prestigious art history which places London as one of the main artistic centres of the art world. Dublin galleries are in no position to compete with London, Paris or New York and will not be able until Irish art is taken more seriously both at home and abroad. Nevertheless, art in Ireland today is doing remarkably well considering the small population and poor economy.

Part II - Paddy Graham - At Home and Abroad

Paddy Graham, born in Mullingar in 1943, is currently a member of the David Hendriks stable. His art rails against the religious and political repressions of his upbringing and through his loose expressionist painting style has managed to capture a powerful emotional atmosphere in his work. Graham began his career when he displayed his work in shows like 'Group 65' and 1916-66 Commemoration Exhibition, held in the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin. His involvement with the Emmet Gallery, Independent Artists, Project Arts Centre and Lincoln Gallery has provided him with the opportunity of representing Ireland in touring exhibitions like 'Making Sense' in 1981. He has recently shown his work in Los Angeles and London and is currently considering changing gallery and moving to London.

The Dublin commercial gallery system is to Graham, the best available to artists in Ireland "because it cannot realistically do much more than it is doing for artists at present". Unfortunately, there are no resources available to agents to expand the art trade in this country. It is not possible for agents to practise as dealers because they have a 'limited budget' from which to survive and a 'limited art market' to supply. "Few galleries actually deal, John Taylor for instance, buys and sells Yeats' paintings, but living artists are not promoted in this way". Artists are far better off being gallery artists simply because "everything stems from the agent's influence in the art market, his reputation and guidance". It is foolish for

an artist to believe he can become his own dealer. For one thing, the artist is isolated and detatched from the gallery environment and however bad this environment may be, at least there exists the possibility of familiarising oneself with other agents, critics and collectors. Who knows what might come of it ? But Graham has, in a sense, managed his own career, in fact, as he himself remarked; "I have writen my own catalogues before, taken slides and photographs of my work to show galleries". He has also travelled to London several times, in an attempt to become associated with reknowned dealers and galleries and succeeded in doing so.

Graham agreed that certain groups like the Project Arts Centre are necessary starting points for young artists trying to introduce themselves to the Irish art world. But the Project, and others like it, is simply the first in series of stepping-stones to the big league of the private gallery. "Its success are largely due to its continued funding by the Arts Council" and although it will definitely continue as a venue for art, it is most unlikely that it will ever be anything other than a 'stepping stone'. Graham himself has used the Project, Lincoln Gallery and many other galleries to get where he is today, and if there were no 'stepping stones' to use most artists on the market would not be there. Graham acknowledges that it is very difficult for artists to gain any sort of reputation, he should know. The Expressionist technique practised by Graham has not alway

been in the mainstream of art, both in Ireland and abroad. Graham's determination paid off eventually, when the art world focused on the new art movement, neo-Expressionism. The art world looked to Germany where it had the greatest output, but there was a condiserable contribution made by Irish artists, most notably Brian Maguire and Paddy Graham. Irish agents and critics were quite suspicious of the movement though Dorothy Walker praised the Irish artists involved. Graham remarked; "I am sick of their praise, their cutting remarks and their ignorance of this (expressionist) art. The problem with showing your work in Ireland is that you can't paint serious art. Critics, dealers, even artists prefer to see or paint pictures rather than make art". Graham also finds that there are no galleries in Dublin capable of facilitating large scale works and that most are reluctant to display art that is shocking or might be controversial. As a result, many artists look to foreign galleries to accommodate their art because they have the space and are far more flexible in their outlook on art. However, it is also possible that a foreign dealer or collector might approach an artist working in Ireland, as is the case with Paddy Graham and Vincent Price. Vincent Price, one of the worlds' leading art collectors and promoters, accidentally or not, heard of Graham's reputation and travelled to his studio in Temple Bar in Dublin, to discuss the likelihood of organising a one-man show in the United States. Shortly afterwards, Graham displayed his art in the

Rothbery Gallery in Los Angeles where for the first time he experienced the American art system. "My paintings were selling between $35,000 to $45,000, drawings averaged between $2,000 and $4,000 each!" The gallery not only administrated the exhibition but provided the artist with the best quality full colour catalogue, posters and arranged for interviews and reviews in "six leading art journals and papers." Whereas in Dublin, paintings were priced between £7,000 and £15,000 and drawings between £100 and £200. But American galleries can easily afford to advertise their artists to the full because to the American dealer, exhibitions of living artists are simply regarded as 'window dressing'. The real profitable business is done behind the scenes usually by selling the work of dead artists in auction rooms or to other dealers and collectors. The Rothbery Gallery took fifty per cent of the sales price which leaves the artist with a very modest sum indeed. However, as Graham pointed out, not all of his share was to go into the bank. All transport arrangements and costs, insurance and flight tickets had to be paid by himself. The Hendriks Gallery, who demanded that the gallery be represented as the artist's agent, provided no financial aid to Graham, nor did the Rothbery Gallery. However Graham had no ill-feelings towards the Hendriks because he believes the gallery would have assisted if it was in a position to do so. Could Irish galleries ever promote their artists to the same extent as in America or Britain? Graham explained that it is most unlikely that the Irish art

market will be in a position to be able to compete with the major art world markets. If the economy was to prosper, if the population was to rapidly increase and if the purchasing of art was to become a fashion, then maybe Irish artists could experience the treatment artists in London, Paris and New York receive.

CONCLUSION

The commercial gallery in Dublin, although a fairly new phenomenon, is at present the leading contributor to the distribution of visual art in Ireland. It appears that the majority of artists are content with how it operates and how their art is promoted by agents. The restrictiveness of the verbal contract does not prohibit their willingness to participate in the system. Yet, there are those who resist the temptation of being a 'gallery artist' and choose to adopt alternative. However, I feel that, although the Independent Artists and Project Arts Centre are essential for young emerging artists. They nevertheless, fail to provide a professional and prestigious venue. These and other alternatives, have enabled many artists to begin their careers but they are usually rejected by artists who are lured to the private gallery. Unfortunately, these alternatives are not realistic competitors to the private gallery system and generally function as a 'stepping stone' to better things. Of course, they may not wish to challenge such galleries as the Hendriks or Taylor, nor wish to become agents for artists. Alternative gallery systems, have in their own way, many advantages over the private gallery. For one thing, the artist is in a position to choose when he wishes to exhibit his art, sell when and how he likes and above all is not tied down by the demands of an agent. However, I still believe, as does Paddy Graham, that the private gallery system is the best for artists and Irish art. The personal concern and attention of an agent benefits many

artists who are part of a 'stable' and although the pressures of a contract can be great, at least the artist is secure in the knowledge that his agent is trying to sell his art and establish his reputation. I also believe, that it is just a matter of time before agents introduce the written contract to their operations simply because art in Ireland is beginning to achieve recognition both at home and abroad. Nevertheless, the present is achieving remarkable results and it can only improve.

APPENDIX A

Interviews held with the following:

Davis G.	The Gerry Davis Gallery
Dowling O.	Oliver Dowling Gallery
Fellan G.	David Hendriks Gallery
Graham P.	
Kane M.	
MacGonigal C.	The Grafton Gallery
Maguire S.	Tom Caldwell Galleries
Taylor J.	The John Taylor Galleries
Taylor P.	The John Taylor Galleries

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