

## Eamon O'Kane

### *Re-enactment*

27 June - 23 August 2009

*Re-enactment* by Eamon O'Kane features two films commissioned by ArtSway that were shot on location at Beaulieu in the New Forest. The films, and the relating drawings and sculptures in the exhibition, explore the artist's own family background, and how history can be subjective and open to numerous interpretations.

For the first of his two new films, O'Kane staged a re-enactment in the New Forest of a meal King James II had in 1689 when he had the city of Derry in Ireland under siege. The meal took place on the 20th of April 1689 under a Sycamore tree in the grounds of a house that is now owned by the artist's parents; the re-enactment took place on the 19th of April this year almost 320 years to the day of the actual meal. The furniture used in this film was constructed from the actual Sycamore tree, which was struck by lightning a decade ago, and is installed in the gallery space alongside the video documentation of the re-enactment.

King James II was the last monarch to hunt in the New Forest, and O'Kane's second film is a re-enactment of a hunt that was, like the meal, also filmed in the Forest. O'Kane deliberately distorts real events by transposing the re-enactment of the meal to a different but historically related location – in this case from Ireland to the New Forest. The hunt also recalls the feeling of a military skirmish – the artist playfully manipulates our perceptions of historical events. Both the films for the meal and the hunt were reconstructed featuring, in period costume, members of the Earl of Essex Regiment of Foote – authentic re-enactors and proponents of 'living history'.

Other works in the exhibition include a charcoal wall drawing of the Sycamore tree under which King James II had his meal, alongside portrait paintings of the main protagonists of the two films – including John Keyes, the original owner of what is now O'Kane's parents' house. Maps and photographs charting the history of the house and other previous occupants are included alongside architectural plans outlining ideas for the restoration of parts of the house. By interweaving his own personal background into actual historical events, O'Kane suggests how history can be both personal and impersonal, and also easily open to construction and manipulation.

*Re-enactment* is the sixth and final part of the touring project CASE HISTORIES consisting of a series of international exhibitions of new work commissioned by Rugby Art Gallery and Museum; the Contemporary Art Society and Economist Plaza, London; RARE Gallery, New York; Galerie Schuster, Berlin; Plan 9, Bristol; and ArtSway, New Forest. CASE HISTORIES is financially supported by Arts Council England, Culture Ireland and Bristol City Council.

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## **Eamon O’Kane Biography**

Eamon O’Kane (b. 1974) has studied in Dublin, Belfast and New York. He has exhibited widely and is the recipient of many awards and scholarships including the Taylor Art Award, The Tony O’Malley Award and a Fulbright Award. He has shown in exhibitions curated by Dan Cameron, Lynne Cooke, Klaus Ottman, Salah M. Hassan, Jeremy Millar, Mike Fitzpatrick, Sarah Pierce, Jeanne Greenberg-Rohatyn and Apinan Poshyananda. In 2006 he was short-listed for the AIB Prize and received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. He was short-listed for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in London in 2007.

His artwork is in numerous public and private collections worldwide including Deutsche Bank; Burda Museum, Baden Baden, Germany; Sammlung Südhausbau, Munich and Limerick City Gallery. Eamon completed a three-month residency at Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris in 2008. For further information please visit: [www.eamonokane.com/tour](http://www.eamonokane.com/tour)

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ArtSway is open: Tuesday - Sunday 11am - 5pm. Admission is free.

## **Exhibition Associated Events:**

### **Gallery Talk: Eamon O’Kane in Conversation with Peter Bonnell Saturday 27 June 2009 at 3pm**

Eamon O’Kane will be in conversation with ArtSway’s Curator Peter Bonnell discussing the themes and ideas behind his exhibition *Re-enactment*. O’Kane will talk of the project’s inception, and subsequent tour of CASE HISTORIES, detailing the work’s presentation at different venues, and how *Re-enactment* contextualises his overall artistic practice. **FREE: Booking Essential.**

### **Art in Context (Living History): The Art of Re-enactment A talk by Helen Down, Treasurer, Earl of Essex Regiment of Foote Wednesday 15 July 2009 at 7pm**

Join Totton resident and English Civil War re-enactor Helen Down as she talks about her involvement in Eamon O’Kane’s two newly commissioned films for his exhibition at ArtSway. Helen is the Treasurer for the Earl of Essex Regiment of Foote - an organisation that seeks to educate children and adults of the historical background to one of the most momentous events in English history: the English Civil War. Helen will talk about the activities and background of her regiment; the importance of ‘living history’; where the regiment mount events across the country; their education activities, and also the background to the Civil War. For more information about the Earl of Essex Regiment of Foote visit: [www.earlofessessex.org.uk](http://www.earlofessessex.org.uk). **FREE: Booking Essential.**

### **Publication Launch: CASE HISTORIES by Eamon O’Kane Saturday 25 July 2009 at 3.30pm**

A 120-page, full-colour, hardback publication CASE HISTORIES will be officially launched at ArtSway. The publication will feature images from each part of O’Kane’s major international touring exhibition of the same name, with a critical text by Dan Cameron and transcripts of O’Kane’s public discussions with Paul O’Neill and Paul Hobson. **FREE: All Welcome.**

Eamon O’Kane and ArtSway would like to thank Peter Stagg, Simon Courtenay-Taylor and all at Beaulieu Estates for their invaluable assistance in the making of the two new films for *Re-enactment*.

**For press images, interviews, booking and further information, please contact Jack Lewis on 01590 682260 (+6) or email: [jack.lewis@artsway.org.uk](mailto:jack.lewis@artsway.org.uk)**