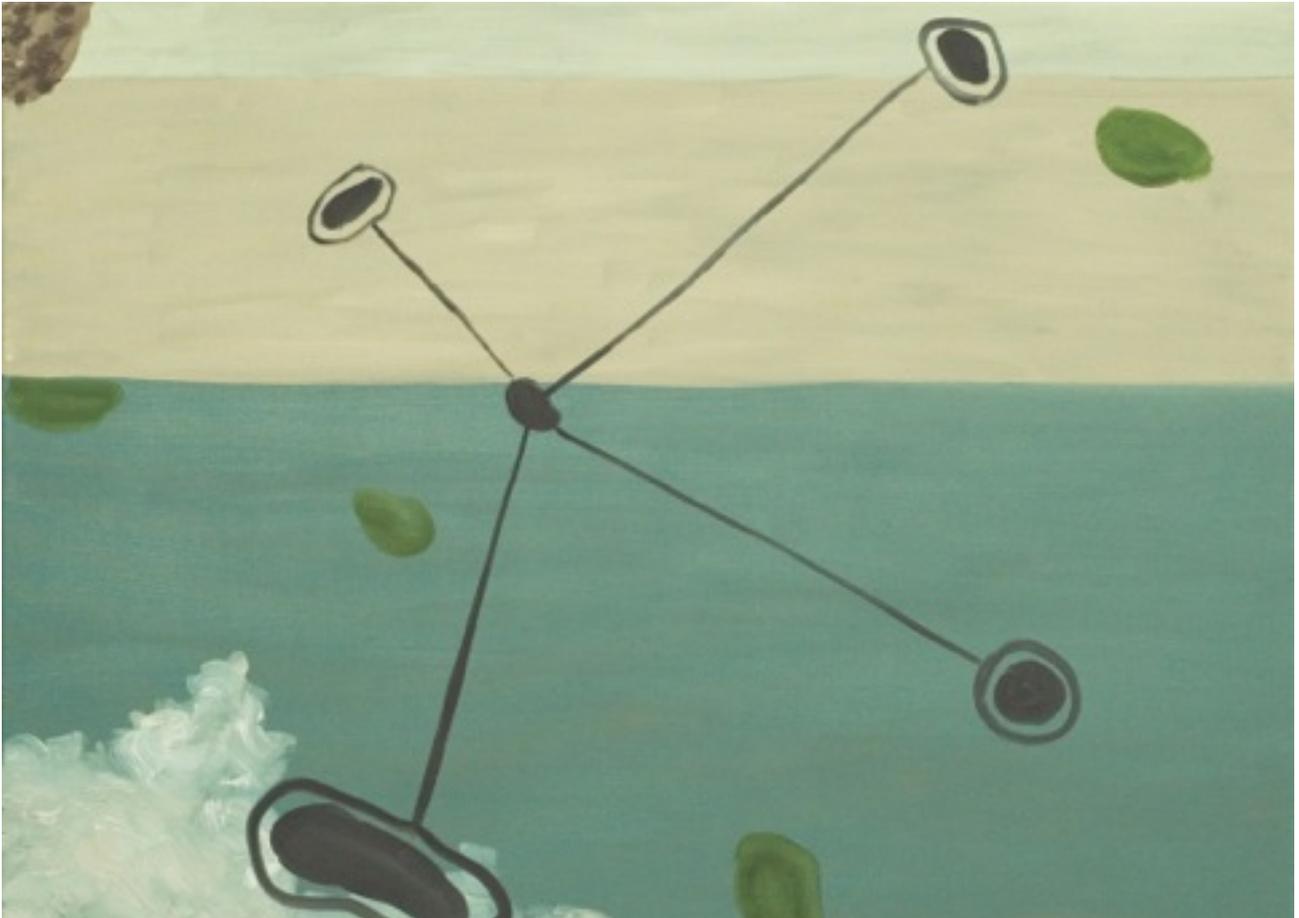
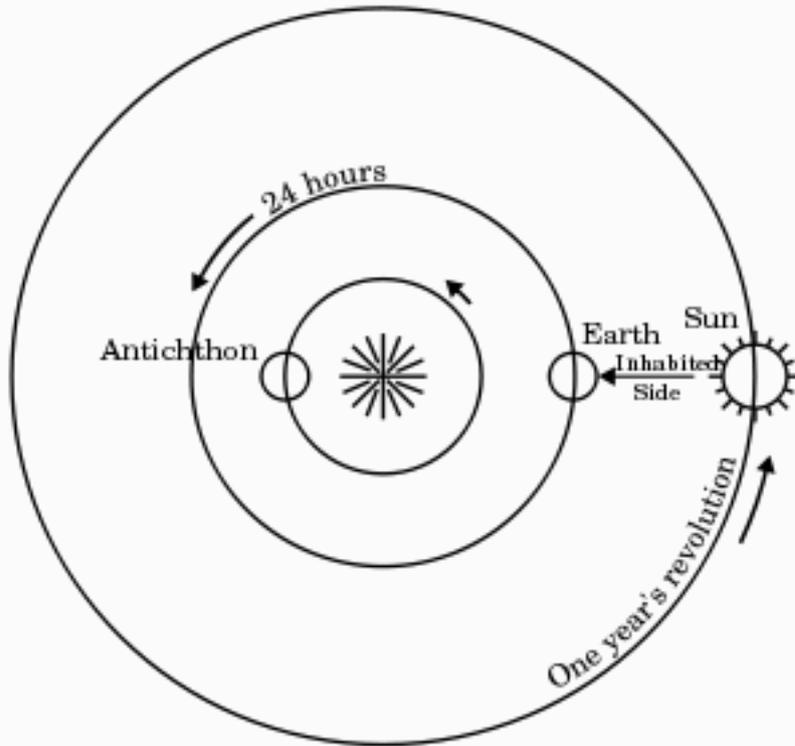
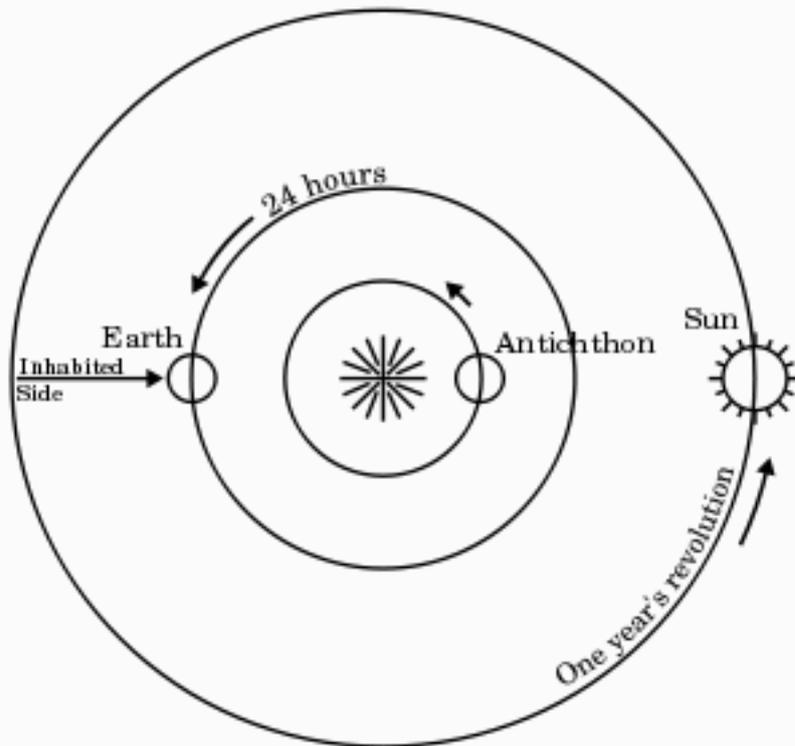


DAMIEN FLOOD: COUNTER EARTH, GREEN ON RED GALLERY, 28 JANUARY – 6 MARCH, 2010.



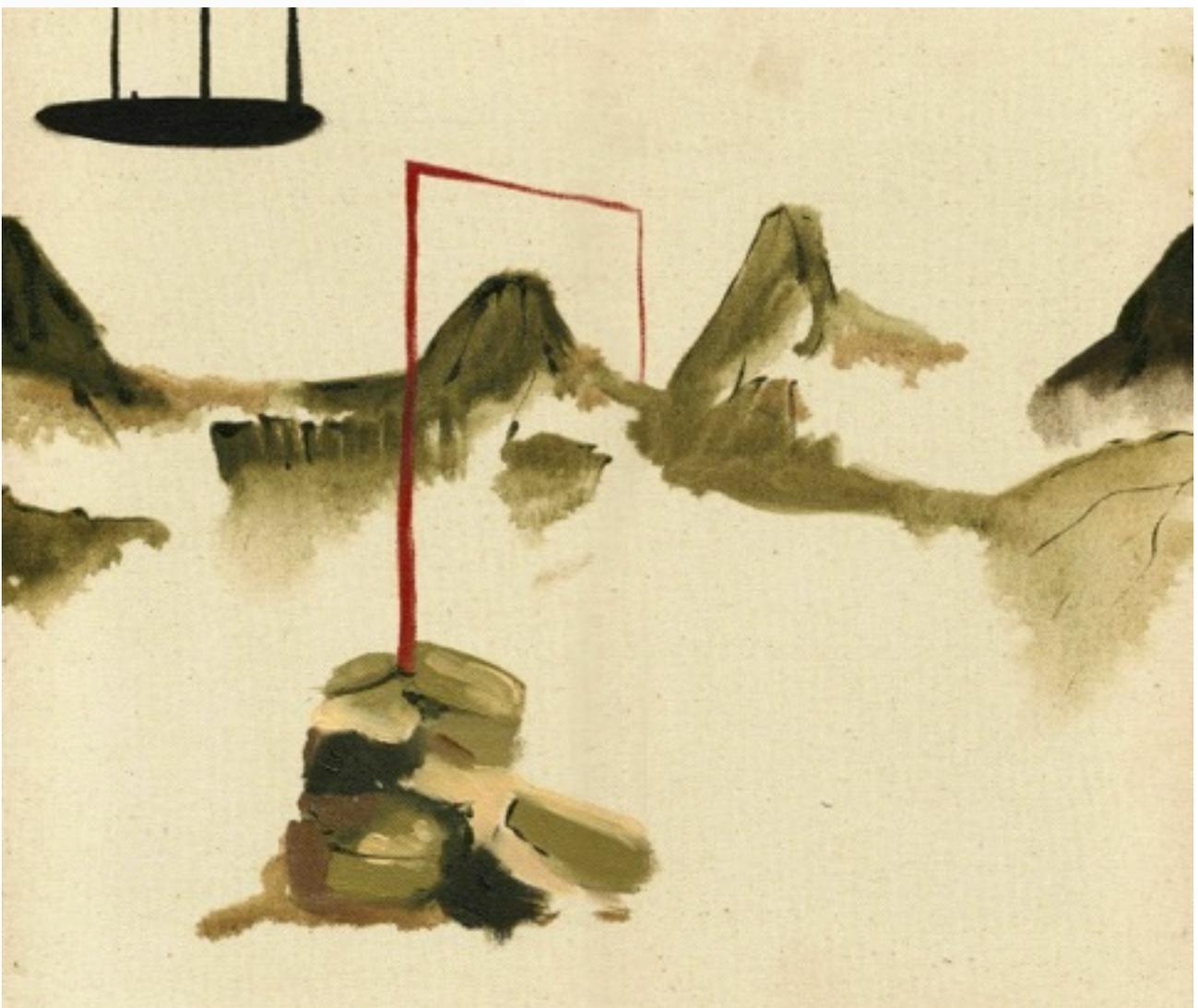
Damien Flood: *Grasp*, 2009, oil on canvas, 66 x 91.5 cm, image courtesy the Green on Red Gallery.

Counter Earth is an exhibition of twenty two new paintings by Damien Flood, currently on show at the Green on Red Gallery. *Counter Earth*, as explained by the beautifully composed accompanying dialogical text between Mary Conlon and a fictional X (PhD Cultural Theory), is a second celestial body located somewhere in Earth's vicinity. This was originally hypothesised by Philolaus (c. 470-385) as a kind of cosmological anchor keeping all living things on our Earth from taking off into outer space. *Counter Earth* is defined as "a place where everything is identical but opposite." [1]



Antichthon (Counter Earth), From Dante and the Early Astronomers by M. A. Orr, 1913; image held [here](#)

The first piece on display, *Grasp*, lays a strong precedent for the exhibition. Flood's interest in Philolaus's theory, and all that it implies, becomes apparent. Although a seemingly abstract scene, Flood's vision bears resemblance to a combination between a cosmic scene and a seascape. What could be mistaken for a constellation of cosmic orbs surrounded by other heavenly bodies, is set against the backdrop of what emulates a calm sea. The lower orb seems to project out to the viewer, off the canvas and into the gallery space. There is an implication that this is merely a snapshot of a larger world which invites the viewer to use their imagination and look beyond the immediate field of perception. This sense of both incompleteness and something out of the ordinary is prevalent throughout the show.

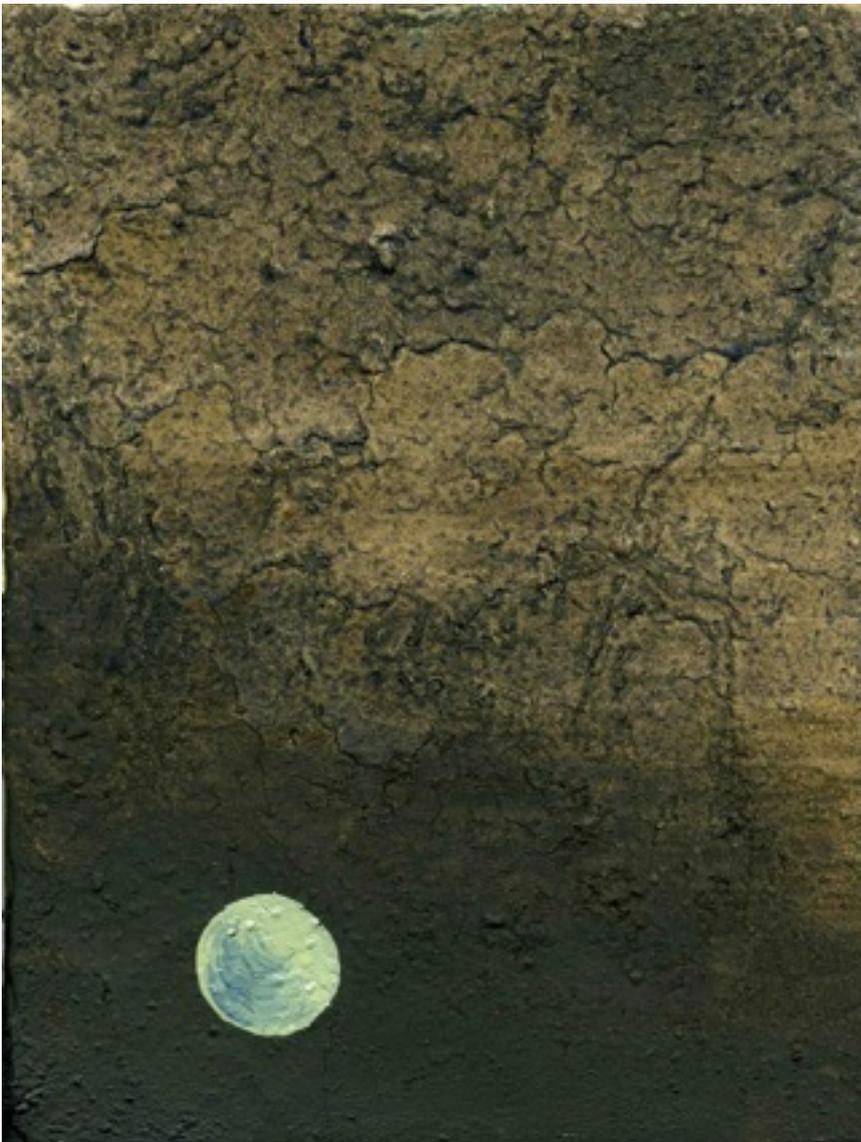


Damien Flood: *Red Line*, 2009, oil on canvas, 35.5 x 40.5 cm, image courtesy the Green on Red Gallery.

Red Line, one of the most intriguing pieces in the show, depicts mountain peaks surfacing over clouds. The scene is evocative of

Japanese mountain panoramas created with a sombre palette. The application of paint brings depth to the piece and foreign objects interjected into the scene skew our initial sense of familiarity. A red line protrudes from one peak in the foreground and draws the viewer across to another peak in the distance, while an object that resembles an upside down table in the upper-left corner draws the eye up. Flood's self-confessed interest in the discovery of new, unknown territories, the possibilities of other worlds and the philosophies of reality versus our perceptions are apparent.[2]

Beside, *Moon* takes the unusual approach of subverting a standard moon scene. Flood focuses on what lies above the moon, instead of below. Interest in texture and the process of painting become evident here. The top half of the canvas has been so thickly layered that the surface appears cracked. The finished effect replicates the moon's surface.



Damien Flood: *Moon*, 2009, oil on half oil ground, 24 x 18 cm, image courtesy the Green on Red Gallery.

Box Mountain exemplifies a concerted interest in the uncertain. A mountain rises from a pale, lifeless landscape where an indistinct object in the foreground is the only other feature in this hazy scene. What lies or once lay beneath the yellow mist is undisclosed so the viewer's imagination must fill in the gaps. *X* is also imbued with this sense of ambiguity; a dark scene scattered with x-shaped beings swarming the canvas may represent a night sky lit by a moon, a deep sea scene lit by a solitary light (perhaps a fish, perhaps artificial) or perhaps neither but rather an alternative world not known to us.

Knot shows invigorated attention to the application of paint which produces a thick swirling and knotting cord of various colours. The work seems to exude a real joy in the process of application and creation. The cord eventually emerges from the fray to disappear off the canvas, leading us to wonder where the trail leads to.



Damien Flood: *Structure*, 2009, oil and marker on photograph on wooden shelf, variable, image courtesy the Green on Red Gallery.

Similarly, *Structure*, a photograph partially covered by oil and marker, reveals a playful engagement with the process of painting. The use of

mixed media supports the sense of depth and altered perception. The small photograph rests on a wooden stretcher, emerging from the gallery wall. A row of orbs, vanishing off into the horizon, echo a futuristic landing strip. Flood's projection of this imaginary world into the physical gallery space offers a threshold to another place.

Objects and scenes presented in *Counter Earth* are half-grasped and elusive. We are drawn into Flood's fictional and intriguing world. As viewers, we cross this threshold and wander through the extraordinary landscapes presented to us.

Roisin Russell lives and works in Dublin.

[1]Exhibition catalogue, Damien Flood, Selected Works, 2010. Text written by Mary Conlon.

[2]http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/johnmoores/25/exhibitors/damien_flood.aspx