

Damien Flood
A Root that Turns as the Sun Turns
Green On Red Gallery
20th October - 27th November

In this, the artist's 4th solo show with the gallery, Damien Flood proves his considerable worth as a thinker and as an artist of real ability capable of weaving new narratives that intrigue and draw the viewer. The ground in each of his paintings is metaphor and stage for existential marks, lines, encrustations, erasions and endless non-sequiters in a vast - or is it microscopic - universe riddled with phantoms of this painted world caught between figure and abstraction, between memory and projection.

If the palette in this exhibition seems muted and understated it is because it is, notwithstanding the flash of blood-red here or verdant green there. This, it seems, is Flood at his most contemplative and mannerist. Curved lines, painted excesses, soft edges appear according to their own logic and need but orchestrated with delicate poise and measure.

A Root That Turns As The Sun Turns is a descriptive quote from Raffaello Magiotti describing Kircher's Sunflower clock to Galileo who was imprisoned at the time for his scientific research proposing heliocentrism (the belief that the Sun is at the centre of our solar system). The Sunflower clock was believed to be a heliotropic plant, a nightshade whose seeds allegedly followed the motions of the sun when affixed to a cork bobbing in water. Nicolas Claude de Peiresc a patron of Kircher believed that this plant could prove heliocentrism, which Galileo had failed to prove with his theory of the tides in his Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems. Throughout Kircher's life and with persistent requests from Peiresc this Sunflower clock was never seen. Along with Kircher's own beautiful illustrations of it only second hand reports can be found leading a lot of scholars of the time to question his legitimacy. This did not deter his wider world following choosing to believe in his unseen wonders of the world.

The work for A Root That Turns As The Sun Turns is not centred around this 'root' but the notions of belief, faith and seeing, that the story entails. These mainly large scale works reflect on how belief in something unseen can change our view of the world. Art is often a self portrait, even if it is at times unintentional. These new paintings mirror a fracturing of the artists own beliefs, a stripping away of a childhood naiveté and a re-navigation of the world around him as the artist reflects on the passing of his Mother. Some works have a feeling of limbo and loss while others are celebratory.

In the large scale painting Shadow and Pear, shapes jostle for form, trying to connect to the viewers world, endeavouring to appear coherent and readable. On the left of the canvas a Pear sits on a golden ledge, its shadow marooned on its own crimson island to the right. A swooping curved arm loops down from this island, reaching out in a gestural offering. The painting has a narrative of play and balance between the shapes and tones, everything hinging on the blue piercing object in the centre.

Parting, a large grey slab like painting, is one of the most visceral of the show. Paint is applied like lumps of flesh preened straight from the body. These chunks hover and float around each other lost in memory of what they were. The shadows cast on the left of the canvas suggest a solidity to the form, hinting at its previous life.

Seemingly unrelated sparse lines and translucent shapes make up the painting Family. They reflect and rhythmically mimic each other. Slowly these outlines reveal figures turning and shifting, enveloping each other. The painting Stare gazes out of the canvas at the viewer, peering deep into them. Looking for what lies underneath, below the skin, questioningly reflecting its fleshy appearance back at the audience.

These paintings are about our relationships, not only to the world, but to each other. They endeavour to peel back the layers of the everyday to produce a psychological reflection of an unseen world.

The artist will participate in a formal conversation with art writer James Merrigan on Saturday, November 26 at 1.15pm in the gallery and on Sunday, at 2pm, November 27 there will be a listening party where people can come hear music that has inspired and influenced the work on show as part of Dublin Gallery Weekend, 2016.