

The Westport Arts Festival is pleased to present 'Island', an exhibition of paintings by Pat Harris that will open at the Custom House Studios Gallery, Quay Westport, with a private view from 7 to 9 pm on Friday 4 October 2013 and runs until?

The beauty of Pat Harris' paintings lies in their apparent simplicity. At first they seem to be quiet paintings, portraits of recurring subjects that emerge individually from neutral backdrops in subtle gradations of creamy green, burgundy and purple. But these are not straightforward still lifes or landscapes. Harris is not directly concerned with the objects he paints but rather the rendering of their aura and the shape of the defining space around them; the space in which the border between object and background dissolves. In this way the subjects of Pat Harris' work are strangely absent from his paintings, and yet this looking beyond the objects to the background and to the space that surrounds them asserts their presence.

This contraposition is complicated further in Harris' landscapes in which small coastal islands and rocks off the north coast of Mayo hesitantly emerge from uniform mists comprised of sea and sky only to be captured and pinned down to the surface in paint.

Consistent through all of Pat Harris' paintings is his concern with formal structure and a belief in reduction, a less-is-more approach that emphasises his skill as a painter and his seductive handling of his medium

Pat Harris was born in Dublin in 1953 and studied at the National College of Art and Design from 1973 to 1978 and at The National Higher Institute of Fine Art Antwerp, graduating in 1981. In 2008 he was awarded a PhD in Fine Art by the University of Antwerp. Pat Harris has exhibited widely in Europe, with solo shows at Taylor Galleries, De Zwarte Panter Antwerp, Gallery S65 Aalst, Belgium, and at Purdy Hicks, London.

He lives in Belgium and teaches painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. Pat Harris is a member of *Aosdána* and his work is represented in numerous private and public collections including: Arts Council of Ireland, IMMA, Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, UCD, St. Patrick's Hospital, Language Centre of Ireland, AIB, AXA and The University of Antwerp.