

Eyeballs feature prominently in Kevin Mooney's latest works, on display at Cork's Sternview Gallery

CULTURE

Art review: Apparition

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The painter Kevin Mooney has hit upon a striking gimmick, which not only gives his work instant recognisability but also causes a perverse attraction the more you look: eyeballs. Four of the five paintings in this show feature them prominently, sometimes floating in abstract space, ominous, foreboding and spooky. Orbs features a disembodied owl stare. In Apparition, the title work, a skull emerges from the brushstrokes with one eyeball and one empty socket. Both are superb. The most ambitious painting, at more than two metres wide, features five ghouls, with teeth bared and hollow orbits, except for the central figure whose eyes are in its chest, or back. It's the artist's take on Van Gogh's masterpiece The Potato Eaters. Mooney nabs Van Gogh's gloomy hues, borrows his composition, and makes it his own. The high-gloss varnished surface of the smaller works adds to the surreality, as absurdity combines with black humour, a sense of premonition, a dose of art history, a handful of sci-fi influences, folk tales and Irish myth. A confident, high-impact show by an artist to watch.

Sternview Gallery at Nash 19, Cork, Mon-Fri 7.30am-4pm, Sat 8.30am-4pm, 021 427 0880

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