

CAWDELL DOUGLAS

PRESS INFORMATION

Telephone: 020-7439 2822 Facsimile: 020-7287 5488

e-mail: press@cawdelldouglas.co.uk

AN INDEPENDENT SPIRIT – THE ART OF DIARMUID KELLEY AT OFFER WATERMAN & CO



William Feilding, 1st Earl of Denbigh by Diarmuid Kelley, 18x28ins

Diarmuid Kelley has always been his own man. As an art college student he rejected the prevailing orthodoxy of conceptualism and today he steers an independent course between that approach and traditional painting, producing brilliant post modern still lifes and portraits. His latest paintings, the outcome of several months of intensive work in Ireland, will go on show from **15 May to 2 June at Offer Waterman & Co**, 11 Langton Street, London SW10.

Born in Scotland but brought up in England, Kelley has strong links with Ireland from where his mother's family comes. All the works in the exhibition at Offer Waterman & Co, one of London's leading specialists in Modern British art, were painted during a prolonged stay at his grandmother's house in Derry. "The light was fantastic and I have done some Irish landscapes which may be included in the show," said Kelley.

Current influences on Kelley's work include Sir Anthony Van Dyck, the Camden Town Group, formed in 1911 by British painters inspired by Post-Impressionism, movies from the post-Second World War period of British austerity after which he has named some paintings, and Peter Saville, the renowned designer of rock music album covers who used a Fantin-Latour still life of roses on New Order's *Power, Corruption and Lies*.

But he has always followed his own instincts ever since he went to Chelsea College of Art & Design in 1996 after graduating from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne with a Fine Arts degree the previous year. While at Newcastle he had won a number of awards including the National Westminster Bank Young Artists Competition and was runner-up in the B.P. Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery in 1995.



Not Only but Also by Diarmuid Kelley, 12x15ins

At Chelsea Kelley, who has always liked painting objects and the human figure, found himself out of step with the dominant conceptualists. He later recalled: "I painted still lifes because it was a way out of the problem where, at the Chelsea School of Art, they branded you as a sentimental booby if you did anything that wasn't conceptual. With still lifes I could isolate the business of looking and with no hint of 'interpretation'."

Kelley is still very much in "the business of looking" using live models and referring to the postcards and cut-out images he keeps in his London studio in Chelsea. He takes infinite pains over his paintings and, unlike many artists today, makes preparatory drawings.

Yet although his work may seem traditional it has a much stronger post-modern look to it than that of most representational artists. “Although my paintings may appear very conservative, they are not,” said Kelley. He likes the contrast between new and old and this is typified in *William Feilding, 1st Earl of Denbigh*, which has a plain coloured panel next to a still life. It is one of a number of pictures in the exhibition with titles inspired by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, who painted a portrait of the Earl.

“I chose Van Dyck specifically because his works are such elegant paintings and he is one of my top five artists,” said Kelley. “The roses could have been painted any time in the past 400 years but the panel introduces 20th century abstraction. Perhaps it is wilfully obscure but it makes it difficult to place the object in a particular period.” Kelley is truly an independent spirit.

February 2009

**Offer Waterman & Co,
11 Langton Street
London SW10 0JL**

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7351 0068

The gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am to 6.30pm and Saturdays, by appointment, 11am to 4pm.

For further information and images:

Will Bennett

Cawdell Douglas

10-11 Lower John Street

London W1R 9EB

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7439 2822

Facsimile: +44 (0)20 7287 5488

Email: press@cawdelldouglas.co.uk