Donal Moloney  *A Third Hill, 2007*
Acrylic on canvas, 36 cm x 40 cm

The UCC Purchase Prize is awarded to a graduate of the Crawford College of Art and Design at the annual degree show. Donal Moloney was one of the two recipients of the 2007 award. While supporting recent graduates of the College the Purchase Prize also allows UCC to acquire work by emerging artists.

*A Third Hill* is a visual fairytale, set in a constructed landscape composed of very curious looking hillocks. These mounds act as plinths, elevating the miniature figures and animals which inhabit the painting. In terms of proportion, the hills dominate the scene, and yet it is the knight on horseback in the foreground, the grazing horse and the small figure on the hilltop in the background which, in their exalted positions, attract the viewer's attention and appear to take control of the scene.

These unusual proportions, together with the vibrant colours and inclusion of the knight on horseback, add a medieval flavour to the work. This quality is reinforced by the manuscript-like presentation of the painting, with areas of the edges of the canvas exposed, creating the impression of an ageing parchment.

Moloney worked on this painting along with a half a dozen or so other works at the one time over a period of three months. He gradually built up different layers, adding to and taking from the works, modifying existing objects and leaving traces of former ones. The large hill in the background, he tells me, was at one time a large all-hearing ear.

While Moloney draws on art history as a rich resource, he also consults daily newspapers and speaks of his artistic practice as a basis for learning and information-gathering. Moloney invites the viewer into this stylized world and successfully creates a sense of mystery. *A Third Hill* is a dreamscape. It is of the world of fairy stories and the imagination.

Text written by Nora Hickey following an interview with the artist.

*Nora Hickey*
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