



The House and The Tree

Eamon O'Kane

'On 20th April 1689 King James passed thro' on his way from Mongevlin Castle to Strabane, after dining under a sycamore tree in front of the house of John Keyes esq. At Cavanacor, to whom he gave protection, which afterwards saved this gentleman's house, when those of all the Protestants round him were burned. The old oak table, at which the unfortunate monarch sat to dinner, and the antiquated china upon which the dinner was served are preserved as curiosities.'

Excerpt from 'Derriana, Consisting of A History of the Siege of Londonderry and the Defence of Enniskillen in 1688 and 1689, with historical and biographical notes,' by Rev. John Graham(Londonderry [for the author] Wm. M'Corkell 1823).

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Eamon O'Kane

Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny, Ireland 2008

'...In a recent solo show at the Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny, The House and the Tree, O'Kane re-created an attic from his family home into which he placed a short film recording the vernacular architecture of Co. Donegal which is accompanied by a soundtrack of proverbs in the Gaelic language. The installation is completed by a large-scale wall drawing of an sycamore tree that once sheltered King James II, also from his homeplace, together with the sawn up trunk of the tree which was killed by lightning. In other words the personal and the public, past and present, royalist and peasant, the real and its representation, nature and culture are all combined in this single installation, through the accomplished use of new and traditional media.'

Catherine Marshall, Senior Curator Irish Museum of Modern Art, February 2008

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The House and the Tree

Installation view

Slated roof structure with video and audio installation,
sycamore tree, charcoal wall drawing, vinyl text

2008



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Installation view

Slated roof structure with video and audio installation,
sycamore tree, charcoal wall drawing, vinyl text

2008



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The House and the Tree
Installation views
Slated roof structure with video and audio installation,
sycamore tree, charcoal wall drawing, vinyl text

2008





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The House and the Tree
Installation view (Detail)
Charcoal wall drawing

2008



'O'Kane's The House and the Tree takes as its starting point a story about his family home, Cavanacor House near Lifford. It is said that King James II stopped off at Cavanacor en route to the siege of Derry in 1689. A dining table was laid under the canopy of a sycamore tree. Subsequently, as the monarch's forces retreated and laid waste around them, James spared Cavanacor because he had enjoyed its hospitality. In 1999, the sycamore was hit by lightning, and it formed the centerpiece of the Cultural Centre show, together with a reconstruction of an original part of Cavanacor House that was demolished a half a century ago. It could well be O'Kane's most ambitious project to date and that's something for an artist who usually thinks big.'

Aidan Dunne, Chief Art Critic, The Irish Times, January 2008

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The House and the Tree

Installation view

Slated roof structure with video and audio installation,
sycamore tree, charcoal wall drawing, vinyl text

2008





The House and the Tree
Stills from video
Total running time 10 mins

2008



Eamon O’Kane (b. 1974) is a practicing artist who has studied in Dublin, Belfast and New York. He has exhibited widely and is the recipient of many awards and scholarships including the Taylor Art Award, The Tony O’Malley Award and a Fulbright Award. He has shown in exhibitions curated by Dan Cameron, Lynne Cooke, Klaus Ottman, Salah M. Hassan, Jeremy Millar, Mike Fitzpatrick and Apinan Poshyananda. He has taken part in EV+A, Limerick, Ireland six times including 2005 when he received an EV+A open award from Dan Cameron. In 2006 he was short-listed for the AIB Prize and received a Pollock Krasner foundation grant. O’Kane has had over forty solo exhibitions including shows in Berlin, Frankfurt, Dublin, Zurich, New York, London and Copenhagen. He was short-listed for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in London in 2007. His artwork is in numerous public and private collections worldwide including Deutsche Bank; Burda Museum, Baden Baden, Germany; Sammlung Südhausbau, Munich; Limerick City Gallery; FORTIS; DUBLIN 98FM Radio Station; Microsoft; Bank of Ireland Collection; Irish Contemporary Arts Society; Country Bank, New York; Office of Public Works; P.M.P.A. and Guardian Insurance; Donegal County Library; UNIBANK, Denmark; NKT Denmark; HK, Denmark; Den Danske Bank, Denmark; Letterkenny Institute of Technology; University Of Ulster, Belfast; Aspen RE, London; Rugby Art Gallery and Museum Collection. Eamon completed a three month residency at Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris in 2008. O’Kane is currently Visiting Research Fellow in Fine Art at UWE in Bristol, UK.

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The House and the Tree
Installation view
Slated roof structure with video and audio installation,
sycamore tree, charcoal wall drawing, vinyl text

2008



