

The systematic process of organic art



Visual Arts Aidan Dunne

Reviewed

Do I have to? Gabrielle Quinn. The Paul Kane Gallery, 6 Merrion Sq Until Sep 8 087-6478423

From Bethany to Beacon Falls, Donald Teskey. Rubicon Gallery, 10 St Stephen's Green Until Aug 24 01-6708055

Trek Elk, Robert Janz. Peppercanister Gallery, 3 Herbert St Until Sep 14 01-6611279

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The Arts

among the trees – lots of trees, of various species. He is no stranger to buildings as subjects. Prior to the shoreline landscapes, he explored coastal towns and Dublin city. Trees featured from time to time in the city landscapes, but a forest, and what seems to be a particularly dense forest at that, presents new problems for the painter.

Perhaps the clue as to how he might tackle it lies in the way city street in many paintings became networks of canyons, suggesting lines of approach, paths to follow, directions to take. As Gordon Teskey notes in his catalogue essay, the woods block our way into the picture, filling up the foreground. But Donald Teskey looks for points of entry, providing us with pathways, clearings, pools, buildings, distant splashes of sunlight, setting up the means by which we can negotiate the spaces.

His own working notes, reproduced in the catalogue, reveal that he was struck, and perhaps perplexed, by the verticality of the landscape after the horizontal expanses of the shoreline. A certain air of mystery that attended his city paintings, with their suggestion of hidden destinations just around the corner, of people just having disappeared out of frame, returns in the forest work. The paintings easily solve the problems by the terrain. They keep us busy, engaging the eye with their rich textures and complex spatial patterns.

Robert Janz's *Trek Elk* at the Peppercanister Gallery is even more vibrant and inventive than his show there last year. He is best known for his fast-paced accounts of flowers blooming and fading, and there has consistently been a performative aspect to his explorations of evanescence. A fine draughtsman with an instinct for expressing energy through form, he has also emerged as a strikingly good sculptor.

While there are many fine paintings in his current show, they are somewhat upstaged by a veritable menagerie of animal (and a couple of shaman) sculptures. In these, again, Janz excels at conveying energy and vitality. He builds figures out of twigs and box-wood fragments, using glue and thread and paint. His emblematic creatures include elk, wolf and shaman, and there is a mythological dimension to them. They are in a way physically insubstantial, but they are real presences, brilliantly observed and demonstrating Janz's gift for expressive line.

WITH FROM BETHANY TO BEACON FALLS, Donald Teskey departs from the Mayo shoreline that has formed the inspiration for one of his strongest bodies of work to date and looks to the woodland of rural Connecticut. There he enjoyed a residency at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, an artists' retreat consisting of a dispersed cluster of buildings spread out