

ARTFORUM

“Futures 12”

ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY

15 Ely Place

September 7–October 28

“Futures,” the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts’s annual exhibition of emerging artists, is worth watching, especially because it marks the point at which young artists come to prominence. Previous alumni include John Gerrard, Nevan Lahart, Liam O’Callaghan, Amanda Coogan, and Aideen Barry. This year’s twelfth iteration presents sculpture-*cum*-assemblages from Lucy Andrews and Caoimhe Kilfeather; paintings by Peter Burns, Ed Miliano, and Stephanie Rowe; and an attention-grabbing installation by Jim Ricks.

Ricks’s *The Poul nabrone Bouncy Dolmen*, 2010, is a tongue-in-cheek homage to the Burren area of County Clare in Ireland. An ancient Irish portal tomb, the Poul nabrone Dolmen is a famous landmark and is commonly featured in local history, folklore, and high kitsch. This is evidenced in the mass of ephemera related to the Poul nabrone Dolmen that Ricks has collected and displayed as part of his installation. Constructed like a bouncy castle, Ricks’s dolmen is a neat comment on tourist culture and the deeper contributions that heritage makes to sensibility and belief. Alongside this, Kilfeather’s subtle sculptures—*Last*, 2012, a cast concrete curtain, and *Pale Form*, 2012, a muted ambrotype print—require extra time to consider. The same is true for Andrews, whose work, including *Control Specimen*, 2012, a balancing act of water-filled wineglasses precariously sitting atop a clock face, have an intriguing quality akin to scientific investigation.

Burns’s oil paintings include elements of collage and sculpture, and have a hint of Hieronymus Bosch in their juxtapositions of brightly colored Edenic spaces with fantastical beasts. *Hanging Out*, 2012, shows a dark creature hanging from a tree, while underneath, a bright pink nude figure sunbathes in repose and nonchalance. In contrast, Rowe’s series of oils are nostalgia-tinged reimaginings of movie scenes. The artist refashions the fictional, conflating reality and memory in snapshot-size works. Ed Miliano’s “Diary,” 2012, depicts 365 scenes of the artist’s backyard. Cumulatively, the effect is one of lush abundance, and it is only on closer inspection that the nuances appear—closely observed variations of the everyday.

— Gemma Tipton