

Masses expected to flock to Dublin's largest ever art fair

Even if you can't tell your art from your elbow, the art fair at the RDS has something for you, writes

Michael Clifford

ROD Coyne has a roof over his head this weekend, which is more than he usually has when he is at work. He has no studio, preferring to paint his landscapes up close and personal. "I get twice as much work done. When you see those storm clouds coming, it tends to concentrate the mind," he said.

Coyne is one of nearly 100 artists exhibiting their wares in Dublin's RDS this weekend in the country's largest art fair. And the net has been spread far and wide to bring artists from all over the globe to Art Ireland 2001.

The exhibition caters for everyone from discerning connoisseurs to those who don't know their art from their elbow. At least 5,000 people are expected to file through the exhibition over the weekend, casting their eyes over work that ranges in price from £100 to £10,000.

Sophie Pasqualetti is over from Budapest to see what the western edge of Europe does for her muse. She is being sponsored by a pub in Skerries to design a visage that will give revellers the feel for the shore which hugs the town. She hasn't been here long but she has already caught on to Irish priorities in terms of ambiance. "The pub is the ultimate Irish experience, so they want to have an experience that takes in the surroundings," she said.

Apart from the predominantly native artists, and those who have made their homes here, there is a fair to middling overseas contingent on display. A clutch of British artists have made their way across the Irish Sea, as have a Cypriot, a South African, a French woman and a Swiss artist.

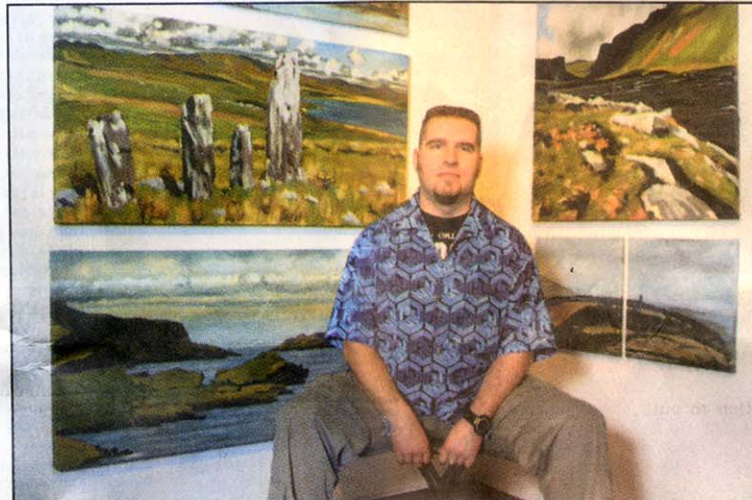
Organiser Maria McMenamin points out that while the art fair concept is



just catching on here, on the basis of last year's success, it's here to stay.

"While art fairs are well established in many other parts of Europe, the concept is still a relatively new one in Ireland. Thanks to the sheer scale and open nature of the event, the fair represents an excellent opportunity for members of the public to view a huge range of exhibits by dozens of established and emerging artists under a single roof," she said.

Frances and Stuart Buchanan from the enigmatically-named Egg Gallery in Glasgow, seem to agree. "It's not as busy as some of the other art fairs but it's very well organised, it's very people friendly," said Frances.



ABOVE: customers examine the wares at the art sale in the RDS; **LEFT:** Rod Coyne and some of his landscapes he has on sale

DEREK SPEIRS