ALMINE RECH

Songs to the Siren

Jan 24 — Mar 22, 2026 | The Model, Sligo, Ireland

There is a line in Tim Buckley's 'Song to the Siren' that seems to hover in the air: "Did I dream you dreamed about me?" The words never quite settle. They drift between intimacy and distance, like a memory that belongs to someone else.

'Songs to the Siren', a new exhibition at The Model in Sligo, begins in that uncertain space. Curated by artists Paul Hallahan and Lee Welch, the exhibition brings together works that resist resolution and embrace ambiguity. It is a show that leans into intuition and atmosphere, exploring the places where stories blur and meaning starts to unravel.

This exhibition follows 'All Flowers in Time Bend Towards the Sun', where Hallahan and Welch explored the dualities in Flann O'Brien's writing, his sharp wit, his darkness, his humour, and the delicate balance he maintained between opposites. In 'Songs to the Siren', the focus shifts to the man behind the pseudonyms, Brian O'Nolan. A tragic figure in his own world, O'Nolan never published under his real name, choosing instead to write through other voices. The exhibition reflects on this act of concealment, and on the quiet sadness of a man so loved in Irish writing, yet rarely seen as himself.

Some works are stark in their immediacy. Joyce Pensato's black and white eyes hover on the edge of legibility, her loose and dark gestures charged with haunting intensity. Others, like William McKeown's painting, breathe softly, carrying a fragile sense of light and presence. Mark Leckey's Dream English Kid unfolds like a fever dream, a collision of personal and cultural memory where time seems to dissolve.

Elsewhere, a work by Banksy is seen through a different lens. Known for his wit and irony, here his work is read as something more melancholic and dark. Around these anchor points, the exhibition gathers a constellation of voices: Zanele Muholi, Sean Scully, Christy Brown, Linda Quinlan, Jack B. Yeats, and many others. Together, their works form a mood rather than a message, a field of quiet feeling rather than declaration.

'Songs to the Siren' is not an exhibition that seeks closure. It asks instead for attention, for patience, and for a willingness to sit with uncertainty. Like the song from which it takes its name, it lingers just beyond reach; part dream, part memory, calling not with certainty, but with feeling.