

# CIRCA 103 contents

## Circa 103 Review



Janet Mullarney: *The Bermuda Triangle*, installation shot; courtesy the artist

Like Dante, the visitor to Janet Mullarney's exhibition at the Crawford Gallery becomes an unwelcome tourist in the kingdom of the dead. Consider *Limbo*. A spine of small hardwood chairs exactly corresponds to a rank of white linen garments mounted high on the opposite wall. Where each garment's starched wing touches the wall, three bleach-white fingers pinch its hem.

In the time it takes the eye to traverse the space between them, it becomes apparent that neither garment nor chair is significant in itself. This space is disturbed by the emptiness of a more profound presence. Imagine: *there*, a moment ago, twelve expectant beings, with bright, expectant eyes, sat patiently. Shedding the straitjackets of their existence, these innocent wraiths untangled themselves from the restraints of their condition. Unseen ushers took them by the hand into pale infinity. Art, like the dead, exceeds death.

On the floor of the gallery, in an atoll of salt, a little host has congregated. With this tableau, Mullarney fuses the idea of a culture, unexpectedly solidified by catastrophe, with the attempts of a civilization to preserve itself in death. Again we are brought to the precincts of necropolis. Figures recline on their sepulchres embracing animals or objects. White on white, with features blunted and dulled, they have succumbed to the shelter of time's dead sediment; some grave-panels have slid aside, revealing a sliver of nothingness inside. Nevertheless, they possess a conversational mien. Death, for this culture, is a hospitable host.

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Janet Mullarney: **The Bermuda Triangle**, Crawford Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Cork, November 2002