

## HAS BEEN HAILED ALL OVER THE WORLD BACK TO HIS HOME TOWN



# World's a stage for photo king

A ROLLERCOASTER 12 months has seen David Creedon's work gain serious international recognition and it's not over yet.

A chance sighting of his photographs of old abandoned rural houses in a Carrigaline framing shop led to an exhibition of his work in the US.

Since then, the demand to see the works, now touring the country under the title, 'Ghosts of the Faithful Departed', has been non-stop.

Their ability to touch people, allied to the photographic skills used in taking them, will make them works of art of enduring importance, according to sociologist Kieran Keohane, speaking at Fota House where the photographs are on show until July 22.

These photos are windows to the soul of another era and the people who lived in it, illustrating their humanity and showing the corrosive effects of the passage of time.

NBC, the US TV network, has expressed an interest in doing a feature on the works while they have been featured in a range of the most prestigious European photographic publications including *foto8* and *Eyemazing*.

Next week, *Amateur Photography*, the world's oldest consumer weekly photographic magazine, dating back to 1884, is sending one of



**Vincent Kelly**

its writers to spend two days with the former Coláiste Chríost Rí student.

In the same 12 months David, who lives in Carrigaline, has also gained one of the most sought-after accolades in photography — a distinction from the Royal Photographic Society in the UK.

Most recently, the quality of his work was been acknowledged by the British Professional Photographers Association, an extraordinary achievement.

"So much has happened so quickly in the last 12 months," said David.

He recalled the chance encounter which led to the first breakthrough exhibition of his prints in Chicago, last year.

The work began with a few shots of abandoned houses — their ambience and atmosphere made a huge impression on him — which he brought for framing to Mary Johnson of Carrigaline Framing. Her sister, Sarah McCarthy, home from the US and in her sister's shop for the first time, immediately responded to them, saying that although she had no expertise in the area, she would arrange for a show in the US if he could produce more shots.

David quickly set to touring the country, scouting old houses.

What confronted him were decaying structures, broken statues, old fireplaces, musical instruments, clothes in wardrobes, suitcases with people's names on them — all evoking a powerful response in him, so much so that, on occasion, he says, the hair stood up on his neck.

"I felt I was awakening ghosts," said David who photographed the scenes as he saw them, without disturbing them.

For him, it was as if he was in a holy place, that the integrity of the stories he was witness to should not be disturbed.

Some of the stories speak of the emigration of the 1950s; others lead to questions about what happens to families, how do they die out and why is there no one to take over their dwellings from them?

Not all of the houses were empty. David recalls knocking on the front and back doors of one house and, satisfied no one was inside, going upstairs to check out the rooms. One was a total ruin and the second full of rats. In the third was the owner, weak and all by himself.

Dave apologised and called in the local health services.

It is his ability to empathise with and reflect what he sees, which makes this such a powerful exhibition.

Cork photographer David Creedon, who has toured the US with his exhibition 'Ghosts of the Faithful Departed', flicks through a copy of *foto8 Magazine* in which his work is featured, and above, two of the images which make up the exhibition, now on show at Cork's Fota House. Picture: Brian Lougheed

