

'Can you hear what I see?'

That was the question posed by Longford artist Brendan Duffy and Athlone writer Jackie Gorman, as they presented their exhibition and publication.

Brendan and Jackie met for the first time in 2014, both participants in Longford Arts Office's 'Respond' project, whereby ten writers penned a response to the work of ten local artists.

Jean Healy, Art Programme Director at St Christopher's explained that Brendan and Jackie 'clicked' the first time they met.

"It's brilliant and it's been a great experience. [Respond] was just a lucky dip and it was really a perfect match."

Explaining the reason behind the title, Jackie, who has written for publications including Wordlegs, Headspace, Elephant Journal and the Irish Times, stated; "We were trying to come up with a title that could convey the work and the process and I feel the title 'can you hear what I see?' does that."

According to Jackie, the title speaks to the process that she has had with Brendan, in terms of art and poetry and the way in which paintings and poetry can speak.

Drawing on Leonardo da Vinci's statement that 'painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen', Jackie also feels it's important that it is an open question as, "most people will have their own individual reactions to a poem or a painting, a reaction that reflects their own experience and also what is being said or shown by the person who has created the work".

This time around has been a very different experience for the duo, Jackie admitted, as they had a larger volume of work to complete in a longer amount of time.

"I also think we are more familiar with each other and we have both gotten a lot out of the experience," Jackie added.

Agreeing with Jackie, Jean continued, "I'm delighted to see it. Over the years Brendan's work has really been recognised a lot."

As Brendan is non-verbal, Jean pointed out that he expresses himself a lot through his abstract works. Stating that "he really does paint from the heart," Jean also acknowledged Brendan's mother, Olive, who has always been extremely supportive of her son's work.

The first launch took place in Longford, and after running for a few weeks, the exhibition moved to Athlone, where the launch was attended by artist and art therapist Dymphna Bonfield. The accompanying publication went on sale for €5, with proceeds going to St Christopher's Services.

Adding her delight at their special guest in Athlone, Jackie concluded by saying, "We haven't any plans at the moment for another project but there's certainly a possibility we might do something together again in the future."