



*The Beautiful Book* Oil on Canvas 24 x 24



*The Purple Cardigan* Oil on Canvas 16 x 16

James Wray & Co  
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*Front Cover: The Two Doves* Oil on Canvas 20 x 24



Emma Connolly

“The moment I saw them I knew they were going to be paintings.”

Emma Connolly speaking of the magnetic qualities which attracted her to the two models, Aoife and Lisa the subjects of this exhibition.

“They had that look where they weren’t quite teenagers and not quite women.

“They were just like the opening of a flower.

“They were live walking paintings” said Emma.

For the uninitiated to understand this compulsion to capture something like Basil Blackshaw’s ‘nothingness’ or Denis Potter’s ‘nowness’ as he expired is almost impossible.

Similarly the pull for Emma to her two models according to herself has nothing to do with the conventional notion of sexual attraction.

Emma says her lust for capturing the dizzying beauty in her models is rooted in a brush with death ten years ago when she was catapulted through the wind screen of a car onto a road in County Wicklow. Those around her thought she was dead.

She argues ‘I had an out of body experience. I had a tunnel experience.

“I left my body. I met this beautiful woman on the other side. She had so much energy. She was dressed in a long white dress but she told me go back.

“ I shouldn’t be alive. I made a miraculous recovery.”

Of Aoife she said “ I saw her in Arizona cafe on the Lisburn Road where she was serving coffee. I went back and back.

“She was a little walking painting. I asked her would she sit for me. She was delighted.

“Lisa has been coming to see me in the past two years. The layering behind the people becomes much deeper the longer they come to the studio. The real person, the beauty, truthfulness and honesty which eluded me initially come out over time.”

Of her sitters Emma adds “ I saw them like sisters in my life.”

I was curious about the presence of the little birds which appear to have flown onto Emma’s canvas.

The prompt for the birds comes from the 2003 film ‘20 Grams.’ Emma buys into the theory that the departing soul from the body weighs twenty grams and she links the weight of the soul to the weight of the little bird presences in her paintings. “They nearly become alive. In a sense they become like little jewels on the canvas.”

This artist is a compulsive drawer with pencil initially. She says there comes a certain point when she knows she has realised her vision and then moves to the canvas to paint this.

“I use strictly paint brushes. The painting creates its own layers. I really keep pushing the canvas until I know in my heart the way the picture has to be. It’s perfection. It’s within the working that the paint shapes its own beautiful layers.” This is all so intoxicating!

**Eamonn Mallie October ‘010**



Emma at James Wray & Co, 2010

You are invited to an exhibition by

## Emma Connolly *‘Moments of Solitude’*

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010, 6.30 - 8.30 pm  
(continuing to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010)

at

### James Wray & Co



*The Gentle Hand* Oil on Canvas 19 x 19