



In January 2013 the Courthouse Gallery, Ennistymon presents
CIRCUS EUROPE: an international collaboration of poetry & images. With eight large collages by Machteld van Buren (the Netherlands). The exhibition runs from Saturday 12 January – 1 February 2013.

The official opening is 12 January at 4 pm with a reading and book launch and at 5 pm the launch of the exhibition.

We will have a closing reception with an artist talk and a panel discussion on 1st February at 7 pm. The theme of the panel discussion will be: 'Questioning Europe's Future'

The series of works titled '**Circus Europe**' are created by **Machteld van Buren** in 2012. The eight large collages illustrate how the struggle for survival is being waged various European countries. Eight poets are invited to offer their interpretation of these images. The Irish poets who take part in this project are **Jo Slade, Frank Golden, Jessie Lendennie and Patrick Chapman**. The Dutch poets are **Arnoud van Adrichem, Martin Reints, Lieke Marsman and Peter van Lier**.

Publisher Salmon Poetry, based in Co Clare, publishes a booklet of this project in an English edition. The collages are to be exhibited in both Ireland and the Netherlands.

Machteld van Buren is an established artist and her work is in the collections of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Centraal Museum in Utrecht and the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden.

In this project she has created eight large collages of European countries. Most of the countries are depicted as an animal: the body consists of a map onto which the realistic head of an animal has been superimposed. Great Britain is portrayed with a number of horse's heads, which form part of the landscape. The awkward juxtaposition of these figures suggests that the UK is not only struggling with its position within the EU, but is also divided by internal strife. Germany appears to be a bird of prey – not the traditional eagle, but a vulture.

The juggling acts which these circus animals have to perform to keep themselves going are indicative of how each nation functions. But just how the stunts work is not entirely clear.

The poets have been instructed to write a poem about one of the countries, making sure to include an image of Europe's future. Rather than leaving it to politicians to define the Europe of today and tomorrow, it would be good to have artists depict it as well.

Given the tone of the debate, alternatives with a playful or visionary element might actually be quite useful.

So let the fun begin: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Circus Europe!'

For more information on Machteld van Buren's work, visit <http://www.machteldvanburen.nl/>