

Art

Vera Klute: Deadweight

ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY, DUBLIN

★★★★☆

The first work one notices on entering Vera Klute's exhibition in the Ashford Gallery at the RHA is 'Birds'. It's hard to miss it: 13 stuffed birds suspended from the ceiling. Nine have suffered the indignity of crashing into an invisible window. All have yellow plastic splatters attached to their beaks, with a cartoonish impact description on each: 'WHUMPF!!!', 'GUNK!!!' and 'SPLONK!!!'.

As a comment on the sheer futility of endeavour, the work is darkly humorous, but not without truth.

The work is one of seven in the exhibition from Klute, a German artist who lives in Dublin. Her work includes sculpture, drawing and painting — all imbued with a delicious sense of subversion.

'Untitled' (2014) is a work in bronze, three sets of teeth on metal stems that chatter unnervingly as one passes. 'Deadlock' has the headless skeletons of two chickens, painted a vivid pink, locked in an unresolvable conflict.

There are two drawings, beautifully executed in pencil and water-colour on paper, that appear to be of rural vistas — sloping hills and sky — until one checks their titles, 'Meatscapes I and II', and realises that their subjects are slabs of flesh. Another drawing, 'Idle Hands', has the fingers of two hands intertwining; closer inspection reveals there to be one digit too many on each.

The least compelling work is the diptych, 'Overcast'. Each of the pieces describes a clouded sky. Searching for some twist in them to match that in her other pieces, one finds there is none. But perhaps that is Klute's intention: to confound expectations at every turn.

Deadweight reveals Klute to be an artist of daring and intelligence, from whom one can expect much in the future.

■ Deadweight runs until Feb 23.

— Marc O'Sullivan