

Desperate Lives in the Global Economy

Oil Paintings of the World's People

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Theme: [History](#)

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Caoimhghin Ó Croidheáin (pronounced Kee-veen O Cree-awn) is a prominent Irish artist who has exhibited widely around Ireland. His work consists of drawings and paintings and features cityscapes of Dublin, images based on Irish history and other work with social/political themes.

The paintings below illustrate the devastating social consequences of globalization and the impoverishment resulting from the “free market” economy.

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A series of oil paintings examining the daily existence of people making a living in the worst working and living conditions in the global economy.



Aftermath of Suicide Bomber, Morgue in Rawalpindi, Pakistan
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

A man looking for relatives at a morgue in Rawalpindi in Pakistan after a suicide bombing in which at least 35 people were killed and dozens more wounded in November 2009. Soldiers and civilians had gathered outside a branch of the National Bank of Pakistan to collect their monthly salaries and pension payments when the bomb exploded.



Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

Kibera is the second largest urban slum in Africa (after Soweto in South Africa) with a population estimated at between 600,000 and 1.2 million inhabitants. It is located in southwest Nairobi, about 5 kilometers from the city centre. Improving the situation for the people who live there has been beset by problems such as petty and serious crime, difficult vehicle access, and the lack of building foundations as much of the ground is composed of refuse and rubbish.



Favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

Many favelas in Rio de Janeiro are shanty towns built up the side of hills with access only by stairs and narrow pathways. They are affected by landslides in heavy rain and their inhabitants regularly have to face the problems of drug wars and petty crime. Many were constructed in the 1970s when a construction boom attracted rural workers from poorer states in Brazil. It is estimated that about 19 per cent of Rio de Janeiro's population is living in one of 600 favelas around the city.



Dharavi Slum, Mumbai, India
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

While Dharavi has been featured in films such as Danny Boyle's 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire*, the difficulties such as sanitation issues, an inadequate water supply, overcrowding and poverty faced by people who live there are some of the worst in the world. It is estimated that around 1 million people live in Dharavi making it one of the largest slum in Asia.



Soldering Circuit Boards, Toy Factory Shantou, Guangdong, China
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

Factory conditions in China have come under much criticism for issues such as subsistence wages, long working days, seven day weeks and illegal overtime hours. In some cases workers need permission to leave the factory grounds and live in cramped conditions sharing large dorms. Foreign investors, who have a huge presence in China, often violate the most fundamental human and worker rights. Opposition to such conditions can lead to being fired, or even arrest and imprisonment.



Phone Recycling, Mumbai, India
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

In many slums around Mumbai people worked in traditional industries such as pottery and textiles. Now there is a growing recycling industry processing waste from other parts of Mumbai. Many of these industries are carried out in one-roomed factories manufacturing products that are distributed globally. While there have been some projects set up to improve living conditions, Dharavi remains a source of cheap labor for local and foreign investors.



Rubbish Dump Recycling, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

It is believed that over 3000 scavengers live and work around the Stung Meanchey municipal rubbish dump situated on the outskirts of Cambodia's capital city Phnom Penh. Many of the scavengers are children who have to leave school to earn money for their families. They work up to 14 hours a day looking for glass, plastic, metal and any other materials which can be recycled. Fumes from burning rubbish, dirty needles, flies and truck accidents pose huge threats to the safety and health of the workers there.



Ship Dismantling, Alang Shipyard, India
Oil on canvas (150cm x 150cm / 59.1 in x 59.1 in)

Many ships such as supertankers, car ferries and container ships are dismantled on the beach at Alang in the state of Gujarat, on the west coast of India. Thousands of people work in this industry and millions of tons of steel and other materials are recovered and then sold as scrap. However, it is a very dangerous business and the process maims and kills many workers each year and the shoreline is contaminated with oily waste, asbestos, toxic paint and other toxic materials.

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