



PENARTH SHOW: Artist who envisions nightmares and fairytales gives a glimpse of his Merthyr roots

Quirky view of a fragile dreamscape

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HIS work is the stuff that *Dreams, Fairytales, Myths and Nightmares* are made of.

Using signs and symbols in a narrative context, referring back to his personal predicaments, intending also to refer back to more basic human issues, Michael Gustavius Payne's paintings are products of both the conscious and unconscious mind.

The Merthyr-born artist, whose images are often borrowed from the imagery of established myths and folktales, says, "These are made from the same ingredients as dreams, fairytales, myths and nightmares."

"The great difficulty in creating this kind of work is perhaps in retaining the fragile balance between both the conscious and the unconscious."

"I want to be informed and aware of conscious interpretations but also free to allow images to appear and develop openly, without prejudice or fear of (mis) interpretation."

His quirky approach takes ideas from established Celtic and Greek legends which are then interwoven with his own history as a young man growing up in the rapidly disenfranchised mining communities of Wales.

What saves his work from disturbing the viewer too much is his humour, which comes through in intriguing and symbolic pictures.

The artist believes that contemporary culture is now highly conscious of its regional roots in a global world.

"I think some of the content may appear dark for some tastes, though the images are no darker than many myths, fairytales, Bible stories, computer games or news reports."

● **Dreams, Fairytales, Myths and Nightmares** can be seen at the Washington Gallery in Penarth from November 3-21.



ON EDGE: *Mother and Children*, an oil painting on canvas by Michael Gustavius Payne