

Exhibition links Scotland with the west

Andrew Hamilton,

AN EXHIBITION from Scottish artist Callum Kellie was officially launched at the X-PO in Kilnaboy last Sunday.

The exhibition, which is entitled 'Frae the Friends and Land I Love' focusses on the changes which have taken place in Aberdeenshire in Scotland as people there have moved away from rural life centred on agriculture to urban life fuelled by employment in the oil industry.

"Throughout our turbulent and trouble past, so many of our people were forced to leave their native soil and their families as they sought to find their place in the

world in distant lands, today again this statement rings true, not only does our economy once again falter but also it has become increasingly more difficult for farmers to make a living from the land alone," said Senan Killeen from the X-PO.

"This has resulted once again in our people, both young and old, moving to the urban centres, both far and near, in search of better fortune. Kellie's work offers an insight into a society, in this case Aberdeenshire, that has experienced a large shift away from agriculture and rural life.

"In his work he attempts to capture the social, cultural and environmental effects of this change.

This has great resonance for the west of Ireland as we are experiencing and will experience in the near future the changes Kellie's work portrays."

The exhibition will include a number of films made by Callum which capture the effect the oil industry has had on the relationship between a father and a son, as the father leaves his rural life to go work on the offshore oil rigs. The films *North Father* and *North Son*.

"The sense of separation and disconnect of the father from his family as a result of working on the rigs prevails throughout. The missed birthdays, the missed Christmases, the missed births, all lead to the ul-

timate breakdown of his marriage," continues Senan.

"The exhibition provides us with a fascinating contrast and comparison to the west of Ireland as a whole. It offers visitors a fascinating insight into an area that has underwent great changes, comparable to the changes and challenges that the west of Ireland is experiencing.

"As a result it offers visitors the opportunity to reflect on the changes occurring in the west and the challenges and changes we will face in the future."

The exhibition will run from Monday to Thursday 8pm to 9.30pm and on Friday from 10.30 to 12pm until April 6.

The changing face of rural life explored

FRAE the Friends and Land I Love by Callum Kellie is the next exhibition taking place at the X-PO Kilnaboy. The exhibition charts the effects of the changes of emphasis that has taken place in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, as people have moved away from rural life centred on agriculture to urban life fuelled by employment in the oil industry.

Frae the Friends and Land I Love are the words of the great Scottish writer Rabbin Burns, "from the friends and land I love". Artist Callum Kellie lives and works within Aberdeen concentrating on photography, video and sculpture. Through these, he tackles subjects he sees around him and try to make sense of what happens to him in his everyday life knowing others are living it as well.

This exhibition is expected to resonate with people in Clare and the wider West of Ireland where emigration has been widespread down through the ages. In recent decades, there has also been a move away from the land with young people moving to urban centres.

Kellie's work offers a fascinating insight into a society, in this case Aberdeenshire, that has experienced a large shift away from agriculture and rural life. He poignantly captures the social, cultural and environmentally effects of this change.

His films 'NORTH: Father' and 'NORTH: Son' captures the effect the oil industry has had on the relationship between a father and a son, as the father leaves his rural life to go work on the offshore oil rigs. The sense of separation and disconnect of the father from his family as a result of working on the rigs prevails throughout. The missed birthdays and Christmases all lead to the ultimate breakdown of his marriage. The contrast between the man-made feel of 'NORTH: Father' and the rural backdrop of 'NORTH: Son' creates a fascinating context on which the story unfolds. The narrative is strengthened by a series of photographs that beautifully capture both the rural Aberdeenshire and the industrialised man made oil rigs.

The film *You See* captures the sense of abandonment that resulted from people moving from the rural to the urban. The film has a haunting feel, with the voice of a child providing the narrative, as we travel through an abandoned farm and farm house. The old barn once brimming with life of the animals and the herdsman, now lies harrowing idle, rubble sprawled all round.

The launch of the exhibition takes place on Sunday from midday to 2pm and continues to April 6.

