

Deadly DA at the Hop Store

THE painter Anne Yeats may have smiled inwardly as she opened an exhibition in the Guinness Hop Store during the week. The somewhat bizarre event was intended to celebrate the death of patriarchy and was the first part of Robert O'Driscoll's enterprising plans for the future of the world. Phase two — the substitution of matriarchy as the dominant force in our lives — is scheduled for the Abbey Theatre next month.

Dr. O'Driscoll is a Canadian academic who in the eighties ferries plane-

ART: Patrick
Gallagher

loads of Irish returnees to Toronto to take part in his Celtic jamborees. He has devoted his notable ability and flamboyant personality to the study and promulgation of Celtic awareness and to this end involved many great men of our time from W. H. Auden and Buckminster Fuller to Marshall McLuhan and John Cage.

Being also a gifted fundraiser he made sure that Guinness was lined up to sponsor the doing-down of Deadly Da and another great grandname would support the imminent installation (through dance) of Mighty Ma in the Abbey. The current manifestation includes an exhibition of paintings done jointly and severally by a trio of male Canadian artists who call themselves La Raza, one of these a Dublin Caprani.

Their large unframed and unmounted canvases are nailed to the brick walls as though they were graffiti in Belfast. They have the same lurid impact as their Ulster progenitors and the same subject matter of tyranny and brutality.

THE second and more compelling component of the Patriarchy Show is a video of O'Driscoll's book-length poem "NATO and the Warsaw Pact are One". This publication (available at the exhibition) relies heavily on typographical effects and on extensive back-up notes which render its techniques of da-da and concrete verse accessible.

The poet recited part of it at the opening. His elegant grey beard jutted, his voice surprised with its volume and sinister import, his well-creased trousers suffered as he threw himself on his knees in declamatory rictus.

The video will run all through the exhibition, linking the Biblical Beast of the Apocalypse to the Valley of the Black Pig described by W.B. Yeats.

It is best that Bob (for so he is known) O'Driscoll should here speak for himself:

"The myth at the centre of the poem is of a Celtic god who incarnates through a big toe . . . this is transferred to modern times through the BIG T O (Toronto) and explains Hitler's desperation to get to Speak of Christ in the Second World War and so be in a position to kill the incarnate God."

Anne Yeats was the ideal person to open this presentation. Her presence drew the energies of her father's mystical investigations down the Celtic continuum into the Hop Store and her conman sense reassured us all that there is a welcome in Dublin 1991 for the High Nonsense and for words borne on a Canadian breeze.