

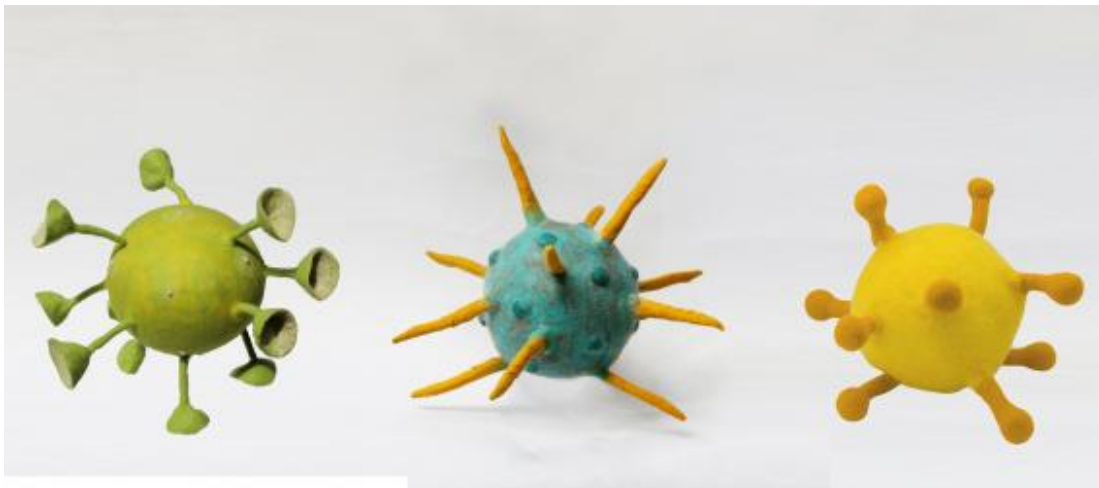


Kilkenny to host international contemporary crafts show next year

Story by John Donohoe

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Three Viruses, by Nikki Collier, 2016.

Monumentality / Fragility, a major exhibition of contemporary crafts featuring 76 makers from 19 European countries, including seven Irish participants, will show at two locations in Kilkenny in February 2019. Ireland is the only country to host this exhibition outside of Belgium with the National Design & Craft Gallery, Castle Yard and Kilkenny Castle presenting the display of over 170 exceptional objects. It will be officially launched on Thursday, 7th February 2019 and open to the public from Friday, 8th February.

Monumentality / Fragility is the 2018 edition of the European Prize for Applied Arts for which artists were invited to draw inspiration from the paradoxical nature of the dual theme, Monumentality / Fragility, proposed by BeCraft (World Crafts Council – Belgique Francophone). Six hundred makers from across Europe applied to the open call from which 76 makers were selected by an expert jury. The seven Irish participants are jewellers Eimear Conyard and Annemarie Reinhold; basketmaker Joe Hogan; silversmith C  il  n    Dubhghaill; ceramicist Nicola Kelly; and textile artists Caroline Schofield and Niki Collier.

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The European Prize for Applied Arts aims to reward the best creations of contemporary expression in applied arts and craftsmanship. The exhibition and the winners of the BeCraft Master Prize (€3,500) and the World Crafts Council Europe Young Talent Prize (€3,000) are chosen by international experts on the basis of criteria of artistic merit, technical mastery and innovation. The European Prize for Applied Arts exhibition was launched in the Grand Hall, Mons Anciens Abattoirs in Belgium on 20th October, 2018 and is an initiative of BeCraft in partnership with Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, the City of Mons, WCC-Europe and WCC-International.

About the Irish craftspeople

Niki Collier (textile artist)

Niki Collier is a Dublin-based designer-maker who explores sources of empowerment and balance within us and around us. She creates objects in felt, fibre and wearable technology to comment on interrelationships between emotions and cultural constructs. Her work is distinguished for its intimate understanding of handmade craftsmanship, informed by science and community. www.nikicollierdesign.com (<http://www.nikicollierdesign.com>);

Artist statement:

Textile sculptures inspired by microscopic photos of viruses. This work intends to provoke discourse about the dichotomous relationship between function and form. Their looks and what they do evoke the opposite scale of our emotions. On one hand, these felt representations of viruses look cute, colourful and in this medium even cuddly. On the other hand, they can cause a lot of discomfort, their impact could have long term effect on our health, and in certain instances their invasion could just kill us.

Eimear Conyard (jeweller)

Eimear Conyard is Course Manager at the DCCol Centre of Excellence in Jewellery and Goldsmithing and is a contemporary jewellery designer-maker and hollowware silversmith based in Kilkenny. She previously lectured at the School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University in the UK and at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Canada. Her pieces are an exploration of material and form. Exceptional quality of craftsmanship and accuracy is carried through both her jewellery and silversmithing. That jewellery is not merely adornment but also an object independent from the body is a driving force in Eimear's work. Whether wearable or sculptural, a marriage of contrasting materials and surface finishes enhances the pieces. www.eimearconyard.com (<http://www.eimearconyard.com>);

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Artist statement:

These works are influenced by the Bronze Age gold collection in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin which have a monumental cultural significance but their physical forms depict a remarkable survival; they are fragile treasures from the past. My work is an expression of an imagined continuity between the Bronze Age and the present. I seek to add to the monumental cannon of Irish artisan works. Without a clear written history to convey

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the concepts that occupied the Bronze Age Irish mind, we rely on the visual to find context for the present, and wonder at how fragile the work that we make today will appear to future generations.

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Joe Hogan (basket maker)

Joe Hogan has been making baskets at Loch na Fooey, Clonbur, Co. Galway since 1978 and in that time has earned a reputation for making strong, durable baskets of the highest quality. He creates unique sculptural objects using traditional basketry techniques which take inspiration from the land and incorporate found objects such as pieces of bog-wood. The colours in these award-winning baskets are those of the natural willows which are grown by the maker himself at Loch na Fooey. Joe also makes Irish indigenous, functional baskets such as the creel. www.joehoganbaskets.com (<http://www.joehoganbaskets.com>)

Artist statement:

I have tried to make a form with monumentality and yet it is from humble material. The ash wood could have been burned for fuel wood if it had not made its way to me. Now it has a second life for a while but nothing is permanent.

Nicola Kelly (ceramicist)

Nicola Kelly uses a broad media palette that includes clay and thread. Central themes in her work most often revolve around issues that can be related to the human condition, fragmented time, isolated shards of memories and allegory mired in the quotidian. Nicola achieved an M.A. in Art & Process, Crawford College of Art & Design, Cork in 2018 and recent exhibitions include Future Marginalia, MA Graduation Show at Crawford College of Art & Design in 2017 and New Artists Exhibition at The Blue House Gallery, Schull, Co. Cork in 2015. She was presented with Best Thesis Award by Visual Artists Ireland in 2014. www.nicolakelly.ie (<http://www.nicolakelly.ie>)



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Artist statement:

Monumentality and fragility are used in my work to explore loss and death. Through form, condition and position, this monument that comprises 512 perilously stacked porcelain objects corresponds to the number of days my partner survived from diagnosis to death. The predominant characteristic of ceramics – fragility – has been used as a strategy to provide a reflection on the precarious nature of human existence. I have used the very fragility of this material as my subject matter to represent a state of extreme tension that indicate and threaten a sickening inevitability of impending destruction. Often repetition is used as a visual device to overcome issues of scale and that can facilitate grand visual gestures. I use this strategy to set up a tension or dialectical impact with its audience. I employ the fragility of clay as a central motif to reflect on the precarious nature of human existence. The use of the persistent traditional and ancient vessel form with its embedded knowledge of skills and ideas is used in my work for the potential semiotic significance it can offer while it also extends this medium's unique possibility of combining form and surface.

Cóilín Ó Dubhghaill (silversmith)

Cóilín Ó Dubhghaill's research interests focus on the intersection between traditional craft processes and new technologies, exploring the appropriation of industrial technologies for craft production and the development of new ways of using traditional craft processes and materials in the production of studio work. Ó Dubhghaill trained at Grennan Mill Craft School, Kilkenny and Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, graduating in 1996. He worked as a designer for industry in India, the Philippines and the UK. In 2005 he received a doctorate from the metalwork department at the National University of Art and Music, Tokyo Geidai, Japan. Ó Dubhghaill was appointed Senior Research Fellow in the Art and Design Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University in 2007. www.coilin.com (<http://www.coilin.com>);

Artist statement:

In this work, the thin skin of the sheet metal is forged, stretched, and expanded to form a monumental presence from multiple pieces using welding and hammer forming techniques. In these two pieces I have used the form of a tulipiere vase as a starting point for this investigation of form and a reflection on the relationship between object and value. Tulipiere are an intriguing example of specialised product design. They originate in the 17th century Dutch Tulip Mania. I'm interested in them as monuments to excess from a time that parallels more recent fragile economic bubbles.

Annemarie Reinhold (jeweller)

Annemarie Reinhold is a maker and designer who creates work inspired by the natural world. Using traditional metalsmithing techniques, Annemarie creates sculptural and wearable work which captures the movement and beauty of the constant flux in nature. Annemarie initially studied Art, Craft and Design at the Grennan Mill Craft School in Co. Kilkenny. She graduated with a Degree in Metals and Jewellery from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2016. In 2014 she won the Newbridge Silverware Design Competition and a Future Maker Award in 2016. Currently Annemarie is taking part in Bishopsland, a residential course focusing on traditional silversmithing and jewellery skills. www.annemariereinhold.com (<http://www.annemariereinhold.com>)

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Artist statement

When I think of monumentality I think of eternal qualities. By creating work in silver, I use the durable qualities of the metal to capture the constant flux of nature, and to treasure these moments. In nature, everything is in constant flux. I wish it would be possible to preserve special moments, to capture their beauty. This is what I aspire to achieve by making structural forms, reflecting delicate and fragile moments in something that will last; the durability of metal. A unity of monumental and fragile characteristics.

Caroline Schofield (textile artist)

Caroline Schofield's work is driven by an engagement with craft and a curiosity about narratives contained within materials from industrial steel, stone, fabric, string and found objects. She manipulates and creates installations with these items, referencing personal histories, place, people and memory. Her current work focuses on materials to form a mediation with people on memory. She is particularly interested in participatory and collaborative art and health work, and has collaborated with artists', women's and children's groups. Caroline lives and works in Kilkenny. She studied Textiles in NCAD and received an MA in Art & Process from Crawford College of Art & Design in 2015.

carolineschofield.blogspot.com

Artist statement:

Title - Transitory ^{SEP}

It's 2018 - we are living in the age of humanity - a powerful race walks on earth - but time and nature are unkind and temporary. This work looks at a paradigm of life and time, the stitch forms a temporary figure and shadow on the wall, a specimen held by pins impermanent once they are removed.

Established by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland in 2000, the National Design & Craft Gallery is Ireland's leading centre for contemporary craft and design. It exhibits Irish and international designers, artists and makers who push boundaries in their engagement with the making process. Its mission is to inspire appreciation, creativity and innovation, and it plays a critical role in building understanding of craft and material culture in Ireland. www.ndcg.ie (<http://www.ndcg.ie>)

The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCol) is the national agency for the commercial development of Irish designers and makers, stimulating innovation, championing design thinking and informing Government policy. DCCol's activities are funded by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation via Enterprise Ireland. DCCol currently has 64 member organisations and over 2,500 registered clients. www.dccoi.ie (<http://www.dccoi.ie>);

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