

MADE IN CORK:

The Arts and Crafts Movement 1885 -1925

November 18, 2016 – February 25, 2017

Preview: 5:30 pm, Thursday 17 November, 2016

Crawford Art Gallery, Cork is delighted to present the exhibition, *Made in Cork: The Arts and Crafts Movement 1885 -1925* from November 18, 2016 – February 25, 2017 guest curated by Vera Ryan in collaboration with the gallery.

This fresh perspective on the Irish Arts and Crafts movement brings together key artists including James Archer, Michael J. McNamara, Joseph Higgins and the lesser known Annie Croke and Kathleen Murphy O'Connor.

William Morris (d.1896) and Walter Crane (d.1915), leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement in England were socialists. However, when the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland was founded in 1894 its aims were broadly patriotic. It hoped to stimulate the production of arts and crafts in Ireland, dispelling the traditional hierarchies between fine and applied art, by making the craftsman "less of a machine producing many objects from one pattern" and more of an individual working from original design through exhibitions, lectures, publications etc.

Many ideals of Morris and Crane were espoused by James Brenan, headmaster of the Cork School of Art (from 1860-1889) before the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland was created. Brenan worked at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 and saw the prevailing theory of the application of Art to Industry in a positive light. The magnificent extension to the Cork School of Art, built in 1884, with £20,000 donated by local businessman WH Crawford provided the city with the finest art school in the country and the means to excel at woodcarving and lace-making amongst other applied arts.

Such was the quality of work being produced in Cork, that in 1893 a chair carved by Annie Croke from County Cork was exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair. The intricately carved armchair and other furniture in the exhibition, exemplifies the expression of the Arts and Crafts ideal of beautiful and useful objects for use in the domestic home.

Taking inspiration from Gaelic League's metalwork demonstrations at the Cork International Exhibition of 1902, shortly afterwards the Youghal Art Metal Workers were formed. The new Abbey Theatre purchased a number of huge mirrors for interior decoration and, a number of these magnificent works, will be displayed alongside for the first time since the Abbey Fire of 1951.

"Made in Cork The Arts and Crafts Movement 1885 - 1925" brings to life the cross section of people involved in the Arts and Crafts movement in Cork, where artisan workers in lace and metalwork, the

Cork School of Art, artists, craftspeople, religious orders and business families like the Days, Egan & Sons, and James Watson & Sons flourished and influenced the wider social structure of Cork and beyond.

For further information and images please contact dawnwilliams@crawfordartgallery

EDITOR NOTES

Further information about the exhibition:

"Made in Cork: The Arts and Crafts Movement 1885 - 1925" affords an opportunity to see a substantial representation of Michael J. MacNamara's work for the first time. Michael J. Mc Namara studied in London with Walter Crane, first president of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society of England from 1888 to 1890. Archival material shown in the exhibition includes a letter from Crane to Mc Namara. McNamara and James Archer both studied and taught in the Crawford School of Art and showed regularly at the Arts and Crafts exhibitions, of which there were seven between 1895 and 1925

Perhaps McNamara's greatest pupil, and one of Ireland's most talented sculptors of the time, was Joseph Higgins. Higgins and his future wife Katherine Turnbull showed at Arts and Crafts exhibitions, where the traditional hierarchies between fine and applied art were dispelled. While the main focus of the exhibitions was however applied art, Higgins excelled as a sculptor and painter. Through the objects exhibited, associations can be traced between Daniel Corkery who gave Higgins his first portrait commission in 1908, Terence Mac Swiney a friend of Higgins whose portrait was painted by Hugh Charde, a member of the Munster subcommittee of the Arts and Crafts Society, and silversmith Barry Egan who became deputy Lord Mayor after Mac Swiney's death in 1920.

In 1894, the year the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland was founded, James Watson and Company opened in Youghal. Their stained glass windows grace hundreds of Irish churches. The Crawford Art Gallery acquired numerous designs and cartoons from the Watson studio sale in 2014, some of which will be exhibited.

2016 is the centenary of the Honan Chapel, for which Egan's made vestments and some altar plate. Most of its masterpieces, though, were designed and made in Dublin. The presence in this exhibition of some pieces designed and made in Cork is a reminder of the civic contribution to this beautiful chapel, the jewel in the crown of the Arts and Crafts movement in Ireland.

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5:30 pm, Thursday 17 November, 2016

Public Talk

Guest Curator Vera Ryan will talk about the exhibition:

1 pm, Friday 18 November, 2016 – Crawford Art Gallery Lecture Theatre

Publication

An online text to accompany the exhibition written by guest-curator Vera Ryan will be available on the Crawford Art Gallery's website. <http://www.crawfordartgallery.ie>

About the Curator

Vera Ryan is a freelance art historian who curated *Angels in Danger: The Watson Archive*, Crawford Art Gallery (2015). She taught art history at the Crawford College for many years. Her publications include the trilogy *Movers and Shapers: Conversations in the Irish Art World*

About the Crawford Art Gallery

Crawford Art Gallery is a National Cultural Institution and regional art museum for Munster, dedicated to the visual arts, both historic and contemporary. The permanent collection comprises over 2500 works, ranging from eighteenth century Irish and European painting and sculpture, through to contemporary video installations. At the heart of the collection is a collection of Greek and Roman sculpture casts, brought to Cork in 1818 from the Vatican Museum in Rome.

Through its temporary exhibitions, publications and education programmes, the Crawford Art Gallery is committed to fostering recognition, critical assessment, and acknowledgement of historical and contemporary Irish and international art practice. Located in the heart of Cork city, the gallery is a critical part of Ireland's cultural and tourism infrastructure, welcoming over 200,000 visitors a year.

How to get to the Crawford Art Gallery

Crawford Art Gallery is located in the heart of Cork City centre, adjacent to Cork Opera House and Opera Lane, just off Patrick Street. Ten minutes' walk from Cork's Kent Train Station and five minutes' walk from Cork Bus Terminus. Disabled parking zones are available at the front entrance of the gallery at Emmet Place and Academy Street.

Access & Education

For details on guided tours, access and education contact: emmaklemencic@crawfordartgallery.ie
www.crawfordartgallery.ie/education.html

Admission / Opening Hours

Admission to the Crawford Art Gallery and *Conflicting Visions in a Turbulent Age 1900-1916* is free.

Monday - Saturday: 10 am - 5pm (last entry 4:45pm); Thursday: 10 am - 8pm

Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays