

# Crawford Art Gallery



photo credit: Helena Hunt/BBC/Lion TV

Press Release  
04/02/2020

## Crawford Art Gallery features on BBC2 special on the nude in art

As nearly a million viewers across the UK and Ireland tuned in on Monday night to watch art historian Mary Beard's new programme *The Shock of the Nude*, Cork's Crawford Art Gallery lit up the television screen and Twitter feeds. Crawford Art Gallery joined esteemed international institutions, like Uffizi Gallery in Florence and Musée d'Orsay in Paris, as the backdrop for Beard's study of public perceptions around nudity in the arts across centuries.

Beard was attracted to Crawford Art Gallery, the only national cultural institution outside Dublin, where a titillating live conservation project *The Fig Reveal* took place last summer. Sculpture conservator Eoghan Daltun removed the fig-leaves from six male figures from Crawford Art Gallery's historic collection of beloved Canova Casts.

With banter and doses of humour, Beard gleefully watched and assisted as Daltun chiselled at the removal of Apollo Belvedere's fig leaf. (Beard likens the procedure to dentistry and Daltun responds that he "... wouldn't want to go to your dentist, Mary.")

Now that the much-loved sculpture gallery in which the works are displayed has been redecorated (an iconic blue wall colour, sponsored by Pat McDonnell Paints in Cork) it was the turn of the casts to receive the next phase in their conservation work from an expert conservator.

After material research, it is thought these fig leaves were added following the arrival of the Canova Casts in 1818. From pope to prince to the port of Cork, the casts have a rich and storied history. Born out of the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, they were a gift to the Prince Regent (later King George IV) who, in turn, gifted them to the people of Cork.

Episode 1 of *The Shock of the Nude*, featuring Crawford Art Gallery and *The Fig Reveal*, is available now on BBC iPlayer and episode 2 will air on Monday February 10 at 9pm on BBC2.

## ENDS

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### Notes to the Editor

Crawford Art Gallery's *The Fig Reveal* was part of Cork Midsummer Festival (13 – 23 June 2019) and a live conservation project.

The campaign won Best Social Media Campaign at the Cork Digital Marketing Awards 2019.

The removed plaster leaves, as seen in *The Shock of the Nude*, are on display in Crawford Art Gallery's Sculpture Galleries.

### More about Crawford Art Gallery

Located in the heart of Cork city and free to enter, Crawford Art Gallery, is home to a collection of national importance and is a must see for locals and

tourists alike. Welcoming over 265,000 visitors a year the Gallery is open seven days a week and delights in all visitors young and old.

Originally built in 1724 as the city's customs house, (when Cork was one of Europe's most important trading ports), the Gallery is described by many visitors as an "Oasis" offering the tranquillity and atmosphere only a building with such history and beauty can provide. As well as offering a stunning place for reflection, Crawford Art Gallery is right in the middle of a vibrant shopping, cultural and hospitality area. As well both historic and modern exhibition spaces, the Gallery boasts an award- winning Café in stunning surroundings serving fresh local produce for which cork is famous.

Crawford Art Gallery is home to an expansive collection featuring works from the 18th century to present which are of key national importance and tell a compelling story of place and history. It is also home to the famous 'Canova Casts', which were gifted to the city of Cork nearly two centuries ago. Well-known and loved works by 20th century Irish artists such as Seán Keating, Harry Clarke, John Lavery, Jack B. Yeats, Norah McGuinness, Mainie Jellett, Gerard Dillon and Muriel Brandt feature in the gallery's historic collection, while the modern collection features work by contemporary artists such as Eilís O'Connell, Gerard Byrne, Dorothy Cross, Maud Cotter and Hughie O'Donoghue. The Gallery hosts numerous temporary exhibitions by local, national and international artists showcasing visual art, film.

#### Opening Hours

Monday–Saturday 10.00am–5.00pm

Late opening Thursdays until 8.00pm

Sundays and Bank Holidays

Gallery: 11am - 4pm

Entry Free



An Roinn  
Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of  
Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht