

Crawford Art Gallery



Award-winning comic book artist Will Sliney

Press Release

Daphne Wright: *A quiet mutiny*

Crawford Art Gallery announces a large-scale commissioned exhibition of new work by artist Daphne Wright titled *Daphne Wright: A quiet mutiny* from 15 November 2019 – 16 February 2020.

Daphne Wright's work quietly addresses the human condition and the important stages of life we all pass through, that are at once poignant and mundane. In this exhibition, over two gallery floors, Wright creates worlds that are beautifully eerie: familiar objects from everyday life come under the artist's scrutiny including buggies, houseplants a fridge and a child's drawing. Expanding on her existing sculptural practice, Wright focuses on the materiality of dry, unfired clay creating a dichotomy of familiarity and fragility. Wright's objects are chosen for their momentary quality, these objects are only fleetingly valued in our daily lives.

Wright continues her examination of the human condition in a series of small abstracted creatures rendered in clay. Guttural and primordial they stand mutely together on metre-long shelves. Wright was prompted to produce these condensed sculptural objects by observing the obsessive craze for collectible figures amongst her sons and their friends. Collecting is often an intense but transient phase most children pass through but leave behind as they mature. This is how children learn about categorisation which is further reinforced by schooling and society. Wright explores the essence of what collectibles represent to children as transitional objects on the path to adolescence, one of the interim states that are the core concern of her practice.

In *Shopping Trolley*, Wright focuses upon our daily humdrum visit to the supermarket and the drudging push of the trolley in our modern-day quest for to gather food. Wright reduces the trolley, a ubiquitous symbol of consumerism, to its essence. The bare structure, basket and baby seat, underlines the potential fractures and stresses created within this fundamental task— one very often associated with a woman’s role of managing budgets and young children simultaneously.

Wright is also concerned with boundaries and explores the liminal and transitory areas of life, the cusp of childhood and adulthood, which her sons have now reached, as well as the borderline between life and death. Drawn by the artist’s young son and realised by the artist in compressed clay dust, a stab victim lies on the gallery floor. The fragility of the materials used is poignant and disturbing, and this is underscored by the boy’s cartoon-like depiction of his peer, whether fictional or real, being slain in a sadly all too common occurrence.

In the video *Is Everyone Ok?* we see an older man in poor health with his face brightly painted like a lion who bears the mental scars of a career spent in middle management. Calling out team-building clichés, he intersperses these with personal responses to queries about his wife’s health. The effect is unsettling as he resides at the interface between work and retirement, usefulness and redundancy. A second video *Song of Songs* poignantly investigates the relationships of care adults have with more vulnerable family members. A man holds the hands of an elderly woman in a pose taken from a classic lovers’ death scene in opera. The power struggle between the actors is palpable as they sing a kind of elemental duet exploring jealousy and long-term relationships. The woman chews and creates dissonant sounds not familiar coming from an older person— all the time, the male figure aids and accepts her noises and movements.

The exhibition *Daphne Wright: A quiet mutiny* will be accompanied by a publication with texts by Ellen Mara de Watcher and Oliver Basciano.

Preview: 5:30 pm, Thursday 14 November, 2019

Artist Talk: 1pm, Friday 15 November, 2019

Publication Launch: 5:30 pm Thursday 13 December, 2019

Exhibition Dates: Friday 15 November, 2019 – Sunday 18 February, 2020

ENDS

Dyane Hanrahan
Marketing & Communications Manager
E dyanehanrahan@crawfordartgallery.ie
T +353 (0) 21 4907856
M +353 (0) 86 8278151
W www.crawfordartgallery.ie
Crawford Art Gallery,
Emmet Place,
Cork, Ireland.
T12 TNE6

More about the Artist

Daphne Wright's work manoeuvres things into well-wrought but delicate doubt. She creates worlds that are at once beautiful and rather eerie and which feel like the threshold to somewhere new. Recent exhibitions have included *The Ethics of Scrutiny: The Freud Project*, curated by Daphne Wright, Irish Museum of Modern Art (2018); *Daphne Wright: Prayer Project*, Davis Museum at Wellesley College, MA (2017); *Kapi Çalana Açilir*, Abdülmecid Efend Köşkü, Üsküdar, Istanbul (2017); *Emotional Archaeology*, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin (2017) and *Arnolfini*, Bristol and National Trust, Tyntesfield (2016). Daphne Wright is represented by Frith Street Gallery, London.

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 230,000 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 Jellet, Gerard Dillon and Muriel Brandt feature in the gallery's historic collection, while the modern collection features work by contemporary artists such as Eilis O'Connell, Gerard Byrne, Dorothy Cross, Kathy Prendergast 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