



Image: Provision

muscle: a question of power

Crawford Art Gallery, Cork
28 April - 20 August 2023

Anna Furse, the award-winning UK theatre artist, writer, and academic, creates a unique, muscular experience at Crawford Art Gallery.

muscle: a question of power is an immersive experience that takes visitors on an audio-guided journey through Crawford Art Gallery's historic collection of Canova Casts and culminates in a short film exploring the muscularity of professional women.

Designed to bring visitors up close and personal with these ancient Classical forms, **muscle** is an invitation to contemplate the idealised nude, and its legacy today.

muscle engages with society's contemporary and often damaging obsessions with beauty and perfection, strength and power. It alludes historically not only to the Ancient Greek cultivation of mind and body in service to the State, but to the Nazi obsession with Antiquity in its effort to sculpt the flesh of the German nation according to Greek ideals.

In exploring examples of the traditional male heroic body, **muscle** raises specific awareness of women and muscle, and how the so-called 'weaker sex' gains agency through the acquisition of physical strength. This does not settle the matter, however, since the question of the body's muscularity and strength remains an on-going question in today's gender discourse.

Visitors to Crawford Art Gallery will be prompted to experience these sculptural forms not only visually, but also viscerally and imaginatively. Voiced by Furse, the audio-guide will refer the spectator to their own body sensations and presence. The experience will speak to

and raise their curiosity as visitors are invited to follow gentle but precise instruction as they progress amongst the Casts.

The celebrated Canova Casts – once objects of international relations and teaching – are located in a beautiful setting at the entrance to Crawford Art Gallery, a dazzling blue space filled with ancient gods and athletes in which **muscle** takes place.

Visitors will have the opportunity to book a free timed daily slot for this 40-minute experience and will be provided with a headset and warm welcome. Alternatively, by scanning a QR code, they can use their own device and headphones during regular gallery opening hours.

The experience culminates in a new video film, **women talking muscle: a question of power**, made in collaboration with Kilian Waters, in which Furse engages the voices of women who work professionally with their muscularity: a 73-year-old (and still active) dancer-choreographer; a para-athlete; a soldier; a pole-dancer; a bodybuilder; and a top fashion model.

muscle collaborators include: sound artist Graeme Miller, filmmaker Kilian Waters, and graphic designer Dave Darcy.

ENDS

For additional imagery please click [here](#)

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More about Crawford Art Gallery

Crawford Art Gallery remain open until Autumn 2024 after which time it will close for capital redevelopment of the building.

Crawford Art Gallery is an Irish national cultural institution, dedicated to contemporary and historic visual art, located in a significant heritage building in the heart of Cork city. Offering a vibrant and dynamic programme of temporary exhibitions, it also houses a collection of national importance which tells a compelling story of Cork and Ireland over the last three centuries.

Originally built in 1724 as the city's Custom House, the Gallery is home to the famous Canova Casts, gifted to Cork two centuries ago. Featured in the

Gallery's collection of more than 3,000 objects are contemporary artists Aideen Barry, Gerard Byrne, Maud Cotter, Dorothy Cross, Tacita Dean, and Sean Scully as well as much-loved works by Irish artists James Barry, Harry Clarke, Mainie Jellett, Seán Keating, Daniel Maclise, Norah McGuinness, Edith Somerville, and Jack B. Yeats.

An oasis of calm and tranquillity, Crawford Art Gallery is open seven days a week, free to enter, and a must-see for locals and tourists alike. Welcoming over 250,000 visitors annually. The Green Room at the Crawford café serves the best of local Cork and Irish produce, treated with a light hand by chefs committed to simplicity and flavour.

More about Anna Furse

Anna Furse is an award-winning theatre artist who began her many experiments in 1981. Artistic Director of BloodGroup, Paines Plough and Athletes of the Heart, her many international productions include most recently *Don Juan. Who?* (Maldinko Gledalisce, Ljubljana), *SeaWoman* (Dah Teatar Belgrade), *When We Were Birds* (Cultural Centre Zizi, Palermo, Live Collision Festival, Dublin), *Other People's Shoes* (Michael Cacoyiannis Centre, Athens). Work in Ireland includes a 3-year commission from Create Ireland, Dublin, within the EU funded CAPP Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (2015 - 2018): *Anna Furse Performs an Anatomy Act, a Show and Tell* (Live Collision Festival, Dublin) and an Artistic Residency at Trinity College Dublin. Her many experimental works have included projects that overlap medicine with performance, topics including seven projects on infertility for live performance, installation and BBC radio, funded by an Impact Award from the Wellcome Trust, and four plays on hysterias. She is a published author of creative and critical writing and was Director of the MA in Performance Making at Goldsmiths, University of London for 20 years (now Professor Emeritus). Her recent duet of the affect of the global crisis on mental health *a crack* premiered in London in January. Anna's academic career is extensive. She is Visiting Fellow at The American College of Greece and the Institute for Hellenic Culture and the Liberal Arts (DEREE), and Co-Director of the PeARL Performance Studies Lab with the Higher School of Economics (HSE), Moscow.

<http://www.athletesoftheheart.org>

**Crawford
Art
Gallery**



Opening Hours

Monday–Saturday 10:00am–5:00pm
Late opening Thursdays until 8:00pm
Sundays / Bank Holidays 11:00am – 4:00pm
Open Daily | Entry Free

Free Tours

Sundays and Bank Holidays 2:00pm

Thursdays 6:30pm

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An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
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