

Group

As a major exhibition of contemporary art opens, we follow five up and coming Irish artists. Interviews by **Mary Downes**

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Olga Fitzpatrick (31)

Ceramic Artist/Sculptor: The things that inspire me most are everyday things but I also look at lots of different artists' work. I'm interested in female artists' representations of women and their role in society – artists such as Frida Kahlo, Paula Rego and Marlene Dumas.

The work I make is sculptural. The figures are quirky nudes. Although they're solid forms, in clay, their poses are quite whimsical. The figures are really 'conversation pieces'. When friends call to visit, they can't stop analysing them!

Obviously it's great when people fall in love with a piece. I love the fact that my figures are perched in homes in Manhattan and Italy. There are little pieces of me all over the world!

While I'm still making my figurative clay pieces, I'm also attending a night class in bronze casting. Like most women, I have a fascination with shoes so I'm currently making very ornate Louis XIV-type shoes, which I plan to cast in bronze. I'm also making abstract wall pieces, using oxides and glass with clay.

Olga's work can be viewed by appointment. Phone 086 8769831

Ian Pollock (28)

Sculptor: I'm a self-taught artist working exclusively in bronze. I like the fact that bronze is so permanent, in a world where everything is disposable. My work is very traditional. I use objects set in a particular way to try to create the mood I'm looking for. At the moment I'm working on a number of pieces including one involving a flight of birds, another a tower of books.

I sold my first piece when I was 22 at the Dunlavin Arts Festival in Co. Wicklow. I remember sitting in a pub afterwards, having pints with a friend, with a grin you could hang your washing off!

Now my work is in collections of the OPW and UCD as well as private collections in Europe and the US. But the art fair at the RDS is where most people get to see my work. It's a great forum because people get to meet artists in a relaxed environment.

At the moment I'm most proud of a piece I've just finished, entitled *Warning Signs*. It's a piece with wine glasses, mid-flight, falling off a shelf. I think good art should reflect something of the mood of the person who made it and *Warning Signs* certainly does that.

Ian's work is on www.ianpollock.com

Deborah Donnelly (26)

Painter: My style of painting is expressionist, maybe even a little naive, but with an adventurous quality. I love the work of Lucian Freud, Bacon and Klimt. I really love Andy Warhol too. Lately, I am into anything kitsch.

I grew up in Dublin and graduated from NCAD in 1998. My family love art and I never had any doubt in my mind as to what I wanted to be. My teens were spent at European festivals where I sketched portraits for a few quid. NYC was the big bang for me – full of galleries and interesting people. This is where everything took off. I was always a hard worker and I soon

painter. Things are happening so fast now with shows in London, Boston, NYC and Zurich. In December, I'll be in Rome. I believe that everyone is born an artist, the problem is staying one. I know I will always paint. It is just something I have to do.

Deborah's work can be seen on www.deborah-donnelly.com

Louisa Sloan (26)

Multimedia Artist: It was probably due to a lack of career advice that I found myself in art school. However, now being grateful for the initial lack of direction, I think the best career advice is to work with what you know and be honest in what you do. I had considered working in stables, but shied at the early mornings.

I studied sculpture at NCAD and completed a Masters in Film Production in 2001. I have since been exhibiting regularly, at venues such as the Guinness Storehouse, Dublin and at the Darklight film festival, Belfast.

My final medium is often photography and/or video. However these choices of medium are mainly a means of documenting site-specific works that I have developed.

For me, art has the ability to make a connection between the artist and a viewer. If only for a second, the two parties share an understanding. I always feel a strange moment of absolute freedom when I feel that I 'get' a piece of art.

Louisa's work is currently on show at the Rubicon Gallery, Dublin. She will be doing a musical performance at the opening of Open 04 on December 5 at the Crawford Gallery, Cork. See also www.rubicongallery.ie/flix, www.lead-whitegallery.com, www.5th.ie/tripswitch/trip-switch.htm

Daragh Muldowney (32)

Photographer: I first became interested in photography about 10 years ago when I did a scuba-diving course in Florida. This new beauty blew me away. I wanted to capture it. A year later I got my first manual camera and began learning the basics. I started taking pictures of anything that caught my interest.

I would describe my style as abstract nature photography. I concentrate on form, texture and colour, specifically within the natural elements.

The abstract presentation entices you to look closer. I have a close-up of a pinecone on which I have had many different comments as to what it is: fungus, fish, small stones... I also took a close-up of a flame, which resembles a dancing woman.

Two months after giving up my job, I had my first solo exhibition in Dublin. The night went much better than expected. Over 150 people turned up and I managed to sell 16 large format pieces. This confirmed for me that I was doing the right thing.

Daragh's work can be seen on www.dulra-photography.com

► You can see work by Ian Pollock, Daragh Muldowney and Deborah Donnelly at the fourth Art Ireland exhibition (www.irishartfair.com) which starts today and runs until Sunday at the RDS Main Hall.

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