

Cork Textiles Network

Knitting and Stitching Show 2016

Exhibition Report

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Introduction

This report shows the work carried out before during and after the Knitting and Stitching show in the RDS in October 2016. Elements for the exhibition will be detailed and reviewed and improvements and notes will be made for the next year.

The show dates for this year were set at the earliest yet, 20th – 23rd October. The show was held in the Simmons Court venue. The stand size allocated to us by Twisted Threads was bigger again, now measuring 4 meters x 8 meters.

The Brief

The title of 'Rewind' was chosen to tie in with the Wandsford Quay Gallery exhibition, 'Play' and the School of Music exhibition, 'Remix', in November.

Rewind was set to give members an opportunity to revisit skills and techniques that they may have used or learned in the past and to rework past pieces to develop a past piece to give it a new lease of life.

Of all the briefs in the past this one seemed to go down well with members. The brief was issued in June giving a reasonable lead-in time for members to produce pieces.



The submission and curation process

Submission was set for the end of October. Members were instructed to send in a full photo and a detail photo of their piece along with a brief 20-50 words about the piece and their process.

Amanda Hogan, Lesley Stothers and Anne Kiley met to review all submissions. Submissions from 23 members were received. Some had multiple submissions and due to the enlarged stand size and the dimensions of works submitted we were able to select all but one piece, though this artist had a second piece selected. A good idea of layout and groupings could be gained by looking at thumbnails together.



Transport and equipment

Once again Amanda Hogan and Lesley Stothers travelled up in convoy. Anne Kiely travelled with Lesley. Clodagh Evelyn-Kelly joined the team at Simmons court. Though there were a lot of pieces they were mostly wall hung. Lesley had borrowed the steel plinth legs from Nuala O'Donovan, these are light weight and stackable so are easy to transport. They can be used in a number of different positions giving high medium and low plinth options.

The hanging kit was restocked prior to leaving and had adequate tools and materials necessary to hang the exhibition. An electric screw driver would be a bonus to this kit. Amanda brought 2 ladders

Set up

Prior to departure Amanda and Lesley gathered the necessary equipment together from various members and sources.



It was decided that the exhibition title would be cut from thin MDF wood and painted and wrapped with yarn. Lesley approached Jean Bradley who persuaded the furniture design tutor, Fergal Sommers in CSN, a local college who was able to laser cut 2 sets of letters. Lesley then painted them white and wrapped brightly coloured yarns around them.



The hanging team arrived on site at 1pm. Mary Cuthbert arrived with the Dublin members pieces, Caroline Moore travelled to Dublin to hand her piece in by hand and a piece was delivered on behalf of another artist.



After a quick lunch Lesley and Anne set about placing the works in preparation for hanging. Clodagh set about repainting some of the plinth legs and a plinth top. This painting is inevitable as there is often small amounts of damage in transit and this year we were faced with a red carpet to work with which required us to paint some of the legs white rather than grey. Amanda hung grey paper panels for the title lettering which was attached by double-sided tape however this had failed and the letters needed to be screwed in place the following morning. The exhibition hall closes at 7pm on Wednesday and for the first time the team ran out of time. Amanda, Lesley and Anne returned early the following morning to finish up.

Correct screws were bought this year which made the hanging quick and secure.

Another addition to the stand this year was the storage cupboard. This provided an essential storage space for packaging, extra postcards for restocking and somewhere for members on the stand to leave their shopping and bags whilst on the stand thus leaving the front desk clear of clutter. It also gave a space for the plug to hang out of view. Though this was much used it probably only needs to be 1m x 1.5m next time.



The Show

The layout of the whole event had been altered this year which meant the gallery area was at the back of the hall instead of the far side. This proved to be beneficial for the galleries as the public were naturally drawn to the back due to the layout of the retail spaces. However, the show as a whole was much smaller. Some of the regular galleries such as NCAD and the Design Crafts Council of Ireland were absent and were missed.



The change in date brought in some school tours and this year a couple of the schools had set their students tasks to find and observe different forms of textiles. This encouraged students to 'look' more closely and to ask questions.

Thursday and Friday was very busy all day, Saturday was quieter until midday and Sunday was quiet until later in the afternoon.

Staffing

Maybe because of the dates being earlier and during term time the numbers of members attending the show was low again. This was however a good opportunity for our Dublin members to help out and their help was invaluable. Lesley and Amanda were present each day for back up and manning the stand at times of no staff. Thanks must go to Violet Shirran, Arlene Shawcross, Diane Payne, Sally Hewetson, Clodagh Caulfield, Jane Horner and Maura Hennebry who all gave their time to help out on the stand and promote the network.



Visitor's book

Members manning the stand were encouraged to direct comments to the visitor's book. There were a great deal of positive comments...



'Once again an excellent show always one of the best'
T. Kelly

'Beautiful exhibition' Caroline Schofield

'Beautiful work' Sheila Jordan

'Wonderfully creative ideas coupled with excellent workmanship' M McGrey

The book shows that among the visitors from Ireland we also had visitors from Iceland and Edinburgh. Amanda also met American and French visitors. There were quite a few people who remarked on how they always came to the show and made a point of visiting the Cork Textile Network exhibition.

Meet and greet

During the show we were approached by David Pritchard, the husband of Sue Stone who had a solo show in the gallery area. He was very impressed with many aspects of the Cork Textiles Network, remarking on the very high standard all of the work was. He asked how we curated our members and was surprised to learn that we were an open membership group. His sons run a very popular blog and facebook site called 'textileartists.org' he is going to recommend that they contact the network with a view to featuring it in an article in the blog. David was given Carmel Creaner's details as a point of contact for this purpose. David also said that though the blog and facebook page have a large UK and Irish following they have a very big presence in America.



Helen Marriot, manager of the show sought us out and remarked on how impressed she always is with the CTN exhibition stand and that she was able to expand our stand confident that we would fill it with a high quality exhibition.

Amanda Hogan and Lesley Stothers had a conversation regarding the CTN 20th birthday celebrations in 2018. Further to an email that Amanda sent during the summer Helen was able to agree to taking the CTN stand on the tour of Knitting and stitching shows in 2018. CTN will have to bear the cost of transporting the show pieces to the UK for the Alexandra Palace show. From there Twisted Threads would transport the show back to Dublin then back to Harrogate where CTN would then be responsible for collecting and returning the exhibition back to Ireland. Helen has offered to provide any technical and costing details that would be required for funding applications. The network would also have use of Liz and her hanging team so this would cut down the equipment and bulk for transporting. CTN would also be responsible for manning the stand at each venue, this would mean having at least 3 members present incurring travel and accommodation expenses. Accommodation expenses could possibly be cut by members staying with friends and family.



This is a great achievement for CTN and planning of logistics and finances should start immediately. Amanda Hogan has agreed to manage this project.

Lesley and Helen also entered into discussion about Lesley having a solo exhibition for the same 3 shows. This would give Lesley an opportunity to access transport but would take her out of the equation for staffing the CTN stand.

It may be worth approaching truck and van hire companies to seek support/sponsorship for hire of a vehicle in either or both directions.

Further support should be sought from the Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Cork County and City Arts office, Cork Craft and Design as well as other private sponsors.

Take down



Dublin members were told they could collect their pieces from 4pm on Sunday and any sales were released after 3pm.

Violet Shirran, Mary Cuthbert and Clodagh Evelyn-Kelly came along to help pack up. This worked very well in that the packing of pieces was done quickly and cars were loaded back up.



Financial report



Submission fees were set at €20 per person everyone paid. Lesley and Amanda incurred various expenses for accommodation and equipment as well as fuel and food.

There were 2 sales both for the same artist, congratulations go to Jane Horner selling 2 of her beautiful bowls.

Detailed report attached.

Improvements for next year

More members need to be available to help out on the stand. The deal is a good one if help is given, for 2 ½ hours help on one of the days provides a pass that is valid for the week worth €66 plus quite a few of the retail stands will give an exhibitor's discount.

Update of all member's gallery pages on the website is imperative with pending national and international attention. Suggest that someone is appointed to assist Carmel Creaner in this task.

Conclusion

This year was more exhausting than other years for some reason. Though the stand was bigger and had a better layout for hanging in small groups that went together well it was still a difficult collection of works to hang together.

Though the network makes a loss each year at the Knitting and Stitching show the publicity gained benefits the network and its members and in particular this year with the attention of the popular blog site 'Textileartists.org' who have an international presence and following. The publicity opportunities here are potentially huge for the group and its members.



A very special thank you goes to Lesley Stothers and Anne Kiely for putting the works in their places to produce a cohesive exhibition that showed the works to their best. Until you experience this task 1st hand you do not fully appreciate what a mammoth task this is and the show definitely would not be the same without them. Thank you too to Clodagh Evelyn-Kelly who worked solidly for the afternoon on Wednesday painting plinths and hanging Leiko's lace piece beautifully.

Thanks go to Sally Hewetson who made herself and her home available for the drop off of pieces by the Dublin members, thanks also to Mary Cuthbert who collected the pieces from Sally and delivered them to the stand on Wednesday afternoon.

Thank you again to Clodagh and to Violet Shirran who helped to take down the stand and load the cars.

Most of all a huge thank you goes to all of those who gave us such amazing pieces of art to hang to make the exhibition such high quality.

The offer of touring the Network exhibition in 2018 is a huge gain for the network and a real testament to the standard of work members produce each year. The network's reputation is growing every year. Taking a quote from the visitor's book...

***'From strength to strength a stunning display of work,
well done all!'***

