

**PRESS RELEASE 27th October 2023**

**IRISH GOTHIC *-* A solo exhibition by Patricia Hurl now open at County Hall**

Wexford County Council and Wexford Arts Centre in partnership with the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) are pleased to present *Irish Gothic* by artist Patricia Hurl.

The exhibition, selected from a major retrospective hosted by IMMA earlier this year, presents one of Ireland’s most accomplished artists. Hurl’s work is by its nature political, and traverses the disciplines of painting, multi-media and collaborative art practice. Since the 1970s, she has created work that deals with loss, pain, frustration and loneliness.

The exhibition demonstrates Hurl’s characteristic use of highly expressionistic layered brushstrokes that tend to blur distinctions between the figurative and abstraction. This stylistic blend intensifies the visceral qualities and emotion in Hurl’s work in paintings such as *The Company Wife* (1986) which comprises a group of men in suits gathered as a jovial unit, juxtaposed with the solitary figure of a seated woman. Typically, of Hurl’s early work the faces are obscured, and the paint is applied with an urgency that hints at the emotion felt by a woman living in a male-dominated society.

Sketchbooks, diaries, magazines, and newspaper cuttings are central to Hurl’s practice and an integral part of her process, a selection of which is included in the exhibition. The catalyst for the ongoing *Warrior* series came from media coverage surrounding the treatment of women internationally and closer to home, such as the Belfast rape trial of 2018.  Creating helmets as props Hurl set about producing a series of portraits where her face is partially obscured by the helmet, but the eyes convey a tremendous strength. Hurl portrays women as warriors; mothers, sisters, friends are all affected by horrific acts but often powerless to ease the suffering of loved ones.

Originally from Dublin and a former member of Temple Bar Galleries and Studios, Dublin, [**Patricia Hurl**](https://imma.ie/artists/patricia-hurl/) often works in collaboration with artist Therry Rudin. Hurl was a lecturer in Fine Art Painting at the Dublin Institute of Technology and studied at the National College of Art and Design,1975 and at Dun Laoghaire School of Art and Design,1984. Hurl previously ran the Damer House Gallery in Co. Tipperary along with Therry Rudin. In 1984, she won the Norah Mc Guinness award for painting.

Hurl’s work was recently included in *The Narrow Gate of the Here and Now: IMMA 30 Years of the Global Contemporary: Queer Embodiment;* IMMA, Dublin 2021 – 2022;*Elliptical Affinities: Irish Women Artists and the Politics of the Body, 1984 to the present,* Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda, Co Louth and Limerick City Art Gallery, 2019 – 2020. Hurl has exhibited in selected group and solo shows and has represented Ireland in symposiums in Atlanta USA, Caversham, S.A., and Zaragossa, Spain.

The exhibition runs until 29th November 2023

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For further information on *Irish Gothic* or artistPatricia Hurlplease contact:

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