



The members of Croi: Nicola Henley, Vivienne Bogan, Kathrynna Cushieri and Jane Seymour



Her And Him, painting by Vivienne Bogan



Gulls Gold Coast, oversize textile by Nicola Henley

Artists join forces for Origin exhibition

Croi, a group of four women based in Clare, are offering a unique package of paintings, textiles, glasswork and ceramics to hotel operators

In Dublin last week, passers-by in Fitzwilliam Street Upper were treated to the surreal sight of a full-sized crinoline ball gown made of glass being hoisted aloft very carefully from the pavement so it could enter the Origin Gallery through a gigantic, first-floor window. "The gallery front door was wide enough, but it would

never have got around the bend in the stairs," said gallery owner Noelle Campbell Sharp. The sensational piece can be seen in an exhibition by Croi, a new artists' collective formed by four women based in east Clare. Think of it as a 21st-century take on "on your bike". "These days, private collectors willing to invest in contemporary art are few and far between, and artists struggle to survive on gallery sales,"



Ros Drinkwater
Fine Arts

explained textile artist Nicola Henley: "About a year ago, the four of us decided to get together and offer our paintings,



The Dress of Self Reliance, ballgown made of glass by Kathrynna Cushieri

glass, ceramics and textiles as a bespoke package to hotel operators, their architects and interior designers. Big compa-

nies are in a prime position to support Irish artists – and they have the purchasing power. By launching at the Origin, we

hope we can persuade them to come in and see our work." The girls could be on to a good thing. Before the crash,



Lidia Alone, ceramic by Jane Seymour

Irish hotels in particular had a reputation for good art. The Merrion still has one of the finest collections in Ireland. All four artists have exhibited widely both in Ireland and abroad. Nicola Henley's large-scale textiles are inspired by bird flight over coastal landscapes and the natural world. These involve multiple skills (dyeing, painting, and screen-printing on cotton calico) before she textures the surface by adding Japanese handmade paper, and stitched silk and muslin. Ceramist Jane Seymour put the focus on the nude female figure with a series of coil-built vessels burnished with pebbles and smoke-fired in wood shavings and seaweed. The paintings of Limerick-born Vivienne Bogan move between figurative and abstract art with lyrical depictions of the landscape

and fauna as in Her and Him, a portrait of crows, a species that mates for life. Kathrynna Cushieri makes magic in glass. Her ball gown, entitled The Dress of Self Reliance, and constructed from more than 100 pieces of glass, was inspired by a modern-day fairytale by Amy Bender. "My daughter was about to go off to college, and I wanted to make something to connect us in a loving way, something that would help her be self-reliant," she told me. Certain tiny details need a little explanation. "The bees perched on the sleeves stress the importance of being mindful of the environment, the eyes on the skirt are a nod to my daughter's skill as a photographer." Croi; Origin Gallery, 37 Fitzwilliam Street Upper, Dublin 2, 01-6629347