



Press Release 28/05/19

The Fig Reveal
17 - 21 and 24 - 28 June 2019

Crawford Art Gallery conservation project removes the fig-leaves from six male figures from the Canova Casts

"The statue that advertises its modesty with a fig leaf really brings its modesty under suspicion." Mark Twain

Over the course of two weeks, as part of Cork Midsummer Festival, sculpture conservator Eoghan Daltun will remove the fig-leaves from six male figures from Crawford Art Gallery's historic collection of Canova Casts.

After material research, it is thought these fig leaves were added following the arrival of the Canova Casts in 1818. From pope to prince to the port of Cork, the casts have a rich and storied history. Born out of the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, they were a gift to the Prince Regent (later King George IV) who, in turn, regifted them to the people of Cork.

Now that the much-loved sculpture gallery in which the works are displayed has been redecorated, it is the turn of the casts to receive the next phase in their conservation work from an expert conservator.

This unusual conservation work to be undertaken by conservator Eoghan Daltun will solve the mystery of what lies beneath the fig leaves. Will the casts require some sensitive remodelling to restore them to reflect the marble originals in the Vatican Museums? Gallery staff can't wait to find out and are inviting the public to witness this important conservation work.

Fig leaves have often been used to conceal nudity in art, a direct reference to Adam and Eve's use of them to cover their modesty following their expulsion from paradise. After the 'fig reveal', the plaster leaves will be retained and placed on display as archival objects in their own right.

Mary McCarthy Gallery Director invites Visitors to drop in and watch the conservation work live in the sculpture gallery weekdays from 17 - 21 and 24 - 28 June 2019, and to follow the Gallery on Twitter /facebook and Instagram for live updates of The Fig Reveal. This is a significant moment in the ongoing cast story.

There is also a talk at 1pm on Thursday 20 June where the public can join conservator Eoghan Daltun and curator Michael Waldron to discover the secrets behind the Canova Casts.

The six plaster casts to receive conservation treatment are *Adonis*, *Apollo Belvedere*, *Laocoön and His Sons*, and the *Belvedere Torso*.

ENDS

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More about the Canova Casts:

From pope to prince to the port of Cork, the Canova Casts have a rich and storied history. Born out of the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, the Canova Casts were a gift to the Prince regent of the time who in turn, gifted them to the people of Cork. The Casts are therefore both artistically significant and a curious footnote to international history.

The Canova Casts, a series of sculptures, were a gift to the City 200 years ago and now the much loved Sculpture Gallery where they are displayed, is transformed. A contemporary colour scheme, revised display and new visitor interpretation meet the demands of today's audiences.

More about Eoghan Daltun:

Eoghan Daltun is a conservator of sculpture and a sculptor in stone. Based near Eyeries on the Beara Peninsula, he studied sculpture restoration and conservation at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Carrara. Since 2001, he has practised as a conservator of sculpture throughout Ireland.

More about Crawford Art Gallery

Located in the heart of Cork city and free to enter, Crawford Art Gallery, is home to a collection of national importance and is a must see for locals and tourists alike. Welcoming a quarter of a million visitors a year the Gallery is open seven days a week and delights in all visitors young and old.

Crawford Art Gallery, as one of the oldest collecting institutions in Ireland, is committed to presenting and caring for its national collection for this and future generations, and continue to conserve the works in the collection.

Originally built in 1724 as the city's customs house, when Cork was one of Europe's most important trading ports.

Crawford Art Gallery is home to an expansive collection featuring works from the 18th century to present which are of key national importance and tell a compelling story of place and history. It is also home to the famous 'Canova Casts', which were gifted to the city of Cork nearly two centuries ago. Well-known and loved works by 20th century Irish artists such as Seán Keating, Harry Clarke, John Lavery, Jack B. Yeats, Norah McGuinness, Mainie Jellet, Gerard Dillon and Muriel Brandt feature in the gallery's historic collection, while the modern collection features work by contemporary artists such as Eilis O'Connell, Gerard Byrne, Dorothy Cross, Maud Cotter and Hughie O'Donoghue. The Gallery hosts numerous temporary exhibitions by local, national and international artists showcasing visual art, film.

www.crawfordartgallery.ie

Monday–Saturday 10.00am–5.00pm

Late opening Thursdays until 8.00pm

(2nd floor closes at 16:45pm)

Sundays and Bank Holidays

Gallery: 11am - 4pm

Café: 11am - 4pm

Learn and Explore

For details on the Learn & Explore programme guided tours, access and education, please visit our website: www.crawfordartgallery.ie