



Fashion's pulling power is obvious in Uta Burke's Warrior Lady Bag



Brewing interest in the Prickly Pear Teapot by Michael McCrory



Dates for the Alexander McQueen Retrospective at The V&A have been extended

The year of Irish Design will present collectors with plenty of opportunities to invest in the heirlooms of tomorrow

Creating tomorrow's antiques, today



Rebecca Marsden combines cellular memory and the sea in this dress design



Ros Drinkwater Fine Arts

Today's global fine art and antiques market exists because our ancestors invested in the art and artifacts of their times. There is no better time to follow suit than 2015, the Year of Irish Design, when exhibitions and workshops across Ireland focus on the heirlooms of the future.

Ever since museums caught on to the pulling power of the frock, fashion has been very much part of the art equation. The proof of the pudding is that a month before opening, London's blockbuster spring show, the Alexander McQueen Retrospective at the Victoria and Albert Museum, has already sold 30,000 tickets, prompting an extension of the show's run and the release of an additional 50,000 tickets.

Opening this week at the National Craft Gallery in Kilkenny, Fresh Talent focuses on the wave of Irish designers that has emerged since 2011. A range of disciplines is represented, from ceramics and architecture to product design and design engineering, but the exhibits that would have caught Alexander McQueen's eye are the fantasy fashion designs by multi-award-winning Sligo designer Rebecca Marsden.

What's exciting about this new wave of designers is that they have fresh sensibilities. Having achieved a First Class BA Honours from the Jämer School of Art & Design, Marsden worked in London for Korean designer Eudon Choi, in Paris for Sharon Wauchob and in New Delhi for Amit Aggarwal before returning to her native Sligo. While she takes inspiration from the raw energy of the Atlantic, she is also influenced by science and technology and how both can be adapted for fashion.

One of her most amazing creations is a dress (pictured left) from her oddly titled 2012 Cellular collection. The materials used are bizarre: brass taping (something commonly used in industry) that has been sliced and pleated to create an organic structure.

The genesis of the concept is equally startling. It all began when Marsden came across the theory of cellular collision. "This involves the idea of cellular memory," she explained, "when a person receives an organ transplant, they begin to see the emergence of traits from the donor. I was fascinated by the idea of these organic things rippling up to the surface, so that's what I set out to explore, the flow through the textile element, in terms of how it is pleated and folded."

"My donor became a marine biologist, so when the young woman received his heart she began to find fascination and interest in the incredible sub-seaworld. The aquatic colours and forms grew around that concept."

Marsden has been showered with



Kate O'Kelly's Tubular echoes childhood memories at PortfolioSolomon

offers to work overseas, but she has no plans to move. "It's a testament to how things are moving in terms of Irish design that more of us are staying in Ireland," she said.

Mearns, in Dublin, thanks to the opening of the Solomon O'Donovan's second venue, the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCI) now has a showcase in the capital. Over the next 12 months PortfolioSolomon will exhibit work from the DCCI's Portfolio programme, featuring more than 100 of Ireland's top designers and makers of ceramics, jewellery, glass, metals, paper, textiles, calligraphy, furniture, woodturning and basketry.

The opening exhibition offers 80 ceramics by 20 different makers. These include Andrew Ludick's colourful coil-built pitchers, Nialla O'Donovan's exquisite Pine Cone rendered in unglazed porcelain, and Manly Parslow's Elliptical Vessel that cries out to be held.

Director Tara Murphy has a particular talent for sourcing objects that combine beauty and wit, viz the flash of fashion in Alison Kay's Heeled Grey Wedge Form (think Cuban heels). In a similar manner to Rebecca Marsden, ceramicist Kate O'Kelly marries traditional craft with industrial processes. A huge childhood influence was her grandmother's Georgian house, filled to the brim with beautiful crafted objects, hence her piece entitled Tubular, a hunk of industrial coil sitting on the ubiquitous Georgian motif - claw feet.

A third notable interior design exhibition (part of ID2015) in Dublin is 21st Century Irish Craft from the national collection at Collins Barracks. Highlights include Uta Burke's Warrior Ladybag, 2013, Michael McCrory's Prickly Pear Teapot, 2011, and Zelouf + Bell's intriguing Ladderback Fern Chair. The talented duo are just back from Paris where they showed their work at the prestigious Maison & Objet exhibition.



Zelouf + Bell show their Ladderback Fern Chair at 21st Century Irish Craft



Catch Alison Kay and her Heeled Grey Wedge on Balfe Street until March 14

Events Calendar

- Until February 6: Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Chancery Lane, Dublin 8, 01-4759514 Wild Cries of Haha: new work by Richard Proffitt
- Until February 6: Eight, 1st Floor, 8 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, 01-6750172 Dream Lover: new works by Sean Guinan, Ramon Kassam and Aiden O'Sullivan
- Until February 12: Donagh Young Gallery, 1 James Joyce Street, Dublin 1, 01-8558600 Lobby Part II: installation by Tamara Shaw and Sarah Tynan
- Until February 19: Nag Gallery, Basement, 59 Francis Street, Dublin 8, 01-4738978 Keith Lindsay: Sound and Projections Installation
- Until February 22: RHA Gallery II, Royal Hibernian Academy, Gaietyhar Gallery, 15 Ely Place, Dublin 2, 01-6612866 Erris: photography by Amelia Steen on the theme of human presence in the landscape
- Until February 22: Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny, 056-7761106



Paintings by Hugh Frazer showing at the Doorway Gallery



Studio Scene with Elephant by Michael Cullen showing at the RHA Atrium, Dublin 2, until April 26

- Portraits from the David Kromm Collection
- Until February 25: Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin 2, 01-8961116 Gallery 1, Niamh O'Malley: exhibition of new films; Gallery 2: Mairead O'Hea: exhibition of new paintings
- Until February 26: Doorway Gallery, 24 South Frederick Street, Dublin 2, 01-7645895 Connect: paintings by Hugh Frazer
- Until February 27: Graphic Studio Gallery, through the arch, off Cope Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, 01-6798021 Rainbow For Sale: new work by Lisa Malone
- Until March 21: Korlin Gallery, Anne's Lane, South Anne Street, Dublin 2, 01-6705033 The List: new work by Paul Soweriff
- Until March 29: Irish Museum of Modern Art, Kilmaham, Dublin 8, 01-6129900 Duncan Campbell: four film works by the 2014 Turner Prize winner



The Twelve Pins by Harry Kernoff at Morgan O'Driscoll

Saleroom briefs

• Good news for those planning to consign works to Morgan O'Driscoll's next Dublin Irish and International Art sale on April 20: in addition to viewings at the RDS, in what is a first for an Irish auction house, he will hold viewings in St James Street in London from April 13 to 15, thus presenting the works to a wider international audience. O'Driscoll's valuers will be travelling through Ireland in the coming weeks. For details, call 028-22338 or 086-2472425, or see morganoddriscoll.com.

• Ireland has proved to be a sculptural treasure house over

the last 12 months. At Sotheby's, a life-size terracotta masterpiece by 19th-century French artist Aime-Jules Dalou sold for €362,500, the previously unrecorded 18th-century marble bust of Homer by Francis Hanwood discovered in a private collection went for €242,500, and a late 12th-century/early 13th-century Corpus from a Dublin private collection soared high above its estimate of €10,000-€15,000 to realise €278,500.

Sotheby's specialist Christopher Mason will be in Dublin this week on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 3 and 4, to offer free appraisals of European sculptures and works of art. To make an appointment, contact Sotheby's on 01-6711431; see sothebys.com.

Object of desire



Edison by Davide Groppi

2015 is the International Year of Light. This marks the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the laser, the 100th anniversary of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, and the 100th anniversary of The Book of Optics by Muslim scientist Ibn al-Haytham, whose understanding of vision and light laid the foundations for modern optics.

What better purchase than this cutting-edge lamp by Italian designer Davide Groppi, seen in a recent Dublin exhibition and entitled Edison? To buy it, contact the Nag Gallery on 01-4738978 (price €180).

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