

Press Release for Catalogue and Film Launch

sitting: a portrait project by nick miller

IMMA and Laois County Council cordially invite you to the catalogue launch of *Sitting*, a portraiture residency by Nick Miller. Recent recipient of the inaugural Hennessy Portrait Prize, Miller was artist-in-residence in the Laois Arthouse, Stradbally, Co Laois, in July 2014. To be shown alongside the launch will be the screening of *Sitting*- a short film by Lisa Fingleton, which documents the experience.

Date: Thursday 4th December

Time: 1pm(sharp)

Location: the Lecture Room, followed by reception in the Johnston Suite, Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). **Launch by:** Christina Kennedy, Senior Curator, head of Collections, IMMA.

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Nick Miller was invited to the Laois Arthouse, Stradbally, Co Laois, as artist-in-residence by Muireann Ní Chonaill, Laois Arts Officer and Curator of the *Sitting* project.

Once the preserve of the rich and famous, the opportunity to have one's portrait done was afforded to all through the *Sitting* project at the Laois Arthouse. Being in an artists' studio is a rare experience and is usually only witnessed by those directly involved in the arts, so this was an important chance for the public to encounter one of Ireland's foremost contemporary painters. This residency gave a glimpse into the working life of the artist, offering the opportunity to experience the process and see the results of the encounter one hour later.

Portraiture underpinned the residency and saw Miller paint 34 portraits over the period of a week in July 2014. Making up the majority of these images were 32 watercolours, each of which had a strict timeframe of one hour. The two remaining paintings were of Laois-born sculptor Cathy Carmen and poet, Pat Boran and were painted in oil, over the course of a day. These final oils are a welcome addition to the Laois County Art Collection.

Further enrichment of the residency were the Miller portraits borrowed from the National Collection, IMMA. Five large portraits were displayed in the Gallery and elsewhere on the ground floor and offered an interesting insight into Miller's practice.

Documenting the residency was Film Maker, Lisa Fingleton. Placing herself unobtrusively in Miller's studio, Fingleton chronicled the experience of both the sitter and the painter and captured the essence of the event in progress. Also documented through the lens was every day from the arrival of the works from IMMA through to the final day when all the portraits were displayed and Head of National Collections at IMMA, Christina Kennedy, interviewed Miller about the residency.

This catalogue and film documenting the *Sitting* residency are a meaningful record of the time artist Nick Miller spent in the Laois Arthouse in July 2014.

Further details from: Muireann Ní Chonaill, Arts Officer, Laois County Council, Portlaoise, Co Laois. Email: artsoff@laoiscoco.ie telephone: 057-8664109

