



VOLUNTEER: Donnybrook art collector Patricia Tsouros with Nick Miller's nude painting of herself. 'I have no problem with nudity and I love Nick's art, so I really enjoyed it,' she says. Photo: Gerry Mooney

Artist Nick's friends rush to embrace the bare essentials

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WHEN artist Nick Miller was looking for life models he didn't expect to be inundated with offers from friends and strangers to bare all — but that's what happened.

Once the word was out there was a stampede of women offering to pose in the nude. Now Miller, from Co Sligo, has opened an exhibition featuring naked portraits of subjects including friends, acquaintances and one-time strangers, as well as his wife Noreen, who he has been painting for years.

The exhibition of 24 watercolours is entitled *Standing, Sitting, Lying* and is unusual in that the models were not commissioned, but instead were all volunteers.

The artist said the project came about after a dinner party with a group of art-loving friends, during which he talked of his difficulty in finding models who would pose naked.

"One of the women at the table, Patricia, said she would love to do it. I didn't think she would go through with it — but she came up to Sligo for a week and sat for me.

"After that, some other friends of friends got in touch and the male model — Derval — even flew over from London



BACK TO BASICS: Sligo artist Nick Miller with some of his work in the Rubicon Gallery, Dublin. Photo: David Conachy

to be painted. "It was a big commitment for all of them and a risky adventure for all involved. But it worked."

He explained that *Standing, Sitting, Lying* is not just about nudity and pointed out that there is one clothed subject, the Buddhist Lama Otrul Rinpoche.

"It's about getting back to basics — looking at people in their natural form, looking at people as animals. It reminds

me of animal nature, in a very positive way."

Mr Miller said it takes a certain kind of person to volunteer as a life model.

He explained: "All those who volunteered to model for me were really fit for it, they weren't shy at all and they really enjoyed the experience."

"Physically, anyone is suitable as an artist's model. But as an artist, I only want to use people who have a willingness

and an enthusiasm for the job. If someone doesn't want to be there, I don't want to paint them."

Volunteer Patricia Tsouros, an art collector from Donnybrook in Dublin, said she was curious about it as an experience and wanted to be painted by Miller, whom she admires as an artist.

"I have no problem with nudity and I love Nick's art, so I really enjoyed it," she explained.

"I knew his portrait would be more abstract than glamorous and I liked that. It was also a great way to see exactly how an artist works."

Since the exhibition launch last week, the artist now has a list of those who want to be painted.

But despite his luck, he says he can understand why art colleges are reportedly finding it so difficult to hire life models to sit for students.

"It's a very badly paid profession and very hard work. Sometimes artists don't realise just how important the job of a life model is. If they were paid better, there would be no problem."

Nick Miller's *Standing, Sitting, Lying* can be viewed at the Rubicon Gallery in Dublin until November 11. Works range in price from €875 to €9,800.