

# Get the picture of art as an asset class

The first conference in Ireland aimed at people who invest in art, or would like to, takes place in Dublin next month

BY ROSANNE MCDONNELL

As a professional seeking to specialise in art law, I had to travel overseas to conferences in London, New York, Switzerland and various parts of Europe to understand the legal and business challenges that faced these markets and then adapt them to the Irish situation.

Networking and the sharing of information and experience through conferences like ArtSummit Ireland help me stay involved in this business.

No one person has all the expertise. It is a collaboration that involves all kinds of people operating within the art market, including tax experts, legal advisers, dealers, art economists and risk strategists who work in wealth and collection

management.

As an industry, in global terms the art world is incredibly small and still very traditional. However, art is now considered an asset class and private transactions are discrete. This adds allure, intrigue and excitement, particularly when a well-established artist comes to public auction.

One fascinating aspect of the business is how the market reacts to a "sleeper" when one appears at auction. A "sleeper" is a work of art that has gone unrecognised and whose true creator has not been revealed.

It may have lain neglected for decades, if not centuries, until such time as it is attributed an Old Master, such as in the recent case of the Rubens portrait found in a country house in Glasgow.

This causes a frenzy on the international art market. So remember to have a closer look at that painting hanging on your living room wall that your great-grandmother gave you, as it may hold more than sentimental value.



Rosanne McDonnell, co-founder and lead creator of ArtSummit Ireland

## Advice for art collectors

I am not an art dealer, and so I cannot advise on current buying trends and values. However, I would advise any person starting out to consult with an experienced art gallery or dealer. When building an art collection it is best to diversify, particularly if you are collecting for

investment purposes. If someone wants to liquidate their art collection to raise finance, the market will respond better to different works of art at various times, and so a diverse collection will maintain a certain value through its lifetime.

It is important to understand the manner in which commercial platforms strategically place works of art on the market in order to bol-

ster the artist's reputational value. This is done by adjusting supply to increase demand.

Sometimes, the most enjoyable way of collecting art is through patronage of a young artist, as you can feel part of their journey. This is done by supporting the artist's public and commercial exhibitions. Over time, their work will sustain a level of development which often

leads to exhibitions in regional and national cultural institutions such as the RHA and Imma. The artist will then be raised onto another platform, and that work that you purchased for a couple of hundred euros over time could be valued at a couple of thousand – and that is likely just the beginning.

## The genesis of ArtSummit

ArtSummit is the first independent art business conference to be held in Ireland, focusing on the art collector in commercial terms, whether they are well established collectors or merely interested in art investment. It covers all aspects of the art market. The conference will explain the importance of the art ecosystem and how it works in order to create value in an artist's work. It will inform the person who is interested in investing in art about how to invest wisely. It is an enjoyable yet informative evening, with networking and investment opportunities. There is also a tour of the Merrion Hotel's outstanding art collection, led by a member of the National Gallery of Ireland.

## Guest speakers

The conference will open with a key note address from Sean Rainbird, director of the National Gallery

of Ireland, on the gallery's recent acquisition of some of the Yeats Family Collection and the increase in value of Irish art.

The audience will hear from Rowan Gillespie, an Irish sculptor, whose journey to international fame is a fascinating one. Oliver Sears will discuss what it takes to be an art collector today. An insight into national and international buying trends will be given by Dr Clare McAndrew, a highly respected international art economist who works closely with Art Basel and advises Christie's and Sotheby's on the international art market trends.

Swiss lawyer Dr Anne-Laure Bandle will talk about art attribution disputes and forgeries in the international art scene. Finally, the audience will hear from industry experts about the future of art investments in terms of Brexit, Vat and the blue-chip art market from Alan Hobart of Pym's Gallery, London.

Outside of learning, it will be an evening of wine, food, culture and conversation – a perfect way to end a working week.

Rosanne McDonnell is a solicitor, art collector and co-founder and lead creator of ArtSummit Ireland, which takes place at the Merrion Hotel on Friday, November 3. For more information or to buy tickets, see [artsummitireland.com](http://artsummitireland.com)



Paul Brady's garden is a mix of his preferred styles, incorporating tropical and architectural influences with a particular fondness for ferns and hostas



All pictures: Paul Brady



Paul Brady and his garden in Ashtown, Dublin 15

# Fuelling a passion for planting



**Ali Rochford** Paul Brady's day job is running a Maxol service station, but in his spare time he's created a beguiling and leafy haven at his suburban Dublin home

You don't need to have lots of space to have a great collection of plants. On a shady L-shaped plot in Ashtown, Dublin 15, Paul Brady has created an oasis of restful planting with many interesting plants.

Brady works full time as a Maxol garage manager, but has a passion for all things green and is studying horticulture in his spare time. His interest in gardening might be a hobby in name, but the results he has achieved in his suburban plot are little short of what one would expect from a seasoned professional.

He describes his gardening style as a mixture of tropical and architectural, and has a fondness for ferns, hostas and heucheras. Among the 700 or so plants he grows, hostas are his absolute favourite.

"I've always loved hostas," he says. "I just like the variety in the leaves and the different colours."

Brady has no problems with slugs, the scourge of hostas, and puts it down to the fact that the park area around him has a lot of birds who take care of them.

He has up to 40 hostas in his collection, including some miniatures such as 'Blue Mouse Ears' and 'Cracker Crumbs'. His top hosta is currently one called Raspberry Sundae. It has striking pink leaf stems and it is still looking good in October. Hosta 'Praying hands', with its unusual rolled leaves, is another choice plant in his collection.

The garden, attached to a three-storey terraced house, is on a corner site with the L-shaped space effectively at basement level and a balcony on each floor above, from where you have a good view of the tapestry of plants below. The garden is paved with raised planting areas around the perimeter.

Containers abound and there is a greenhouse, which is Brady's pride and joy, and a potting station tucked neatly under the balcony and stairs. Among the plants in the greenhouse is a small collection of young Daphnes, including the in-demand Daphne

bholua 'Jacqueline Postill'.

Any time saved with the lack of a lawn is spent with the demands of watering the many containers. There's a Wollemi pine in a large, deep pot; more pots line the stairs and balcony; and metal bins that were formerly in use at the garage where he works have been filled with hostas and ferns.

Brady says using large saucers during the summer is essential to keep plants in pots looking good. They are removed for the winter so plants do not get waterlogged.

Living in Ashtown, the Bloom Garden Festival happens just across the road from Brady. He visits every year, and makes sure to pick up a few choice plants from his favourite suppliers.

"Billy from Kells Bay knows me now. He is how I got into ferns," he says. "I can see the whole garden being taken over by ferns in the next few years."

He currently has four different tree ferns: Dicksonia antarctica, Cyathea cooperi, Cyathea medullaris and Cyathea australis. He is particularly fond of his Cyathea australis, which has done very well this year and brings a light-starved corner of the garden to life.

Currently in his third year of a part time horticulture course in the Botanic Gardens, Brady has taken a somewhat circuitous route to studying horticulture. He started out in the civil service, then moved into retail where he has worked for 20 years, and is currently the licensee of the Maxol garage on the Navan Road in Dublin.

He hopes to work in horticulture in the future, ideally either on a large estate or in the field of horticultural therapy, as he sees

how a spot of gardening can lift the spirits.

As part of his management role at Maxol, he is involved in fundraising for the anti-depression charity Aware, and has succeeded in raising €1,500 so far by opening his garden to the public. While he loves hearing compliments about the garden and says they spur him on, he finds it a slightly daunting process. Nevertheless, the results he achieves make all his hard work worthwhile.

As well as textured and unusual foliage plants such as acers, euphorbia, Tetrapanx, salvias, Rhododendron Sino Grande, Diosma – the confetti bush, brunnera, grasses, fatsia japonica and Fatsia polycarpa.

Brady's tastes also extend to the more traditional flowers – there are foxgloves that will flower next year, a large wisteria clothes the entire side wall, and more roses in pots at the front door. He mentions that his mother is very fond of roses, and he would like to grow more. As a teen, he developed his parents' garden and still enjoys looking after it.

One rose he grows is Rosa 'Geoff Hamilton', in honour of the great Gardener's World presenter who inspired him as a teenager. He never misses an episode of Gardener's World, and says he has learned a lot from it.

One thing Brady doesn't like is for a plant to get the better of him. The only thing he is struggling with at the moment is how to grow the grass-like Restios from South Africa; but I'd imagine that, like the rest of his plants, it will be thriving before long.

Follow Paul on Instagram: @paul.brady75



A bathroom decorated in Orla Kiely's distinctive patterns

# From the Big Apple to the big leagues

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"Growing up in Ireland in the 1970s had a great influence on my creative vision: my 1950s modernist family home, my mother's great style, the area we lived in Dublin, just two minutes from the beach, also close to the greenest fields, and the mountains were not far either," she recalls.

"It was all this natural beauty that influenced my taste for colour, which you still find today in all our prints, my love for green, from moss to seaweed, the greys and browns of those rainy Irish skies, the mustards of the wildflowers found on the roadside."

Turning her attention to the Orla Kiely: A Life in Pattern exhibition in London next May, Kiely says: "It is an in-



Being surrounded by natural beauty as a child influenced Kiely's taste for colour

credible honour and privilege to have an exhibition dedicated to our work at the Fashion and Textiles Museum. It has allowed us to explore our design development and the huge print archive we have amassed over the years.

"Going through those archives and editing what to show is a huge challenge. Part

of the process of planning the exhibition has also involved working with our long-time set designer on designing the space.

"The show will be an immersive experience into the print world that brings everything we make to life, we will be celebrating the Stemprint, of course, but also delving into

the world of our fashion, bags and homewares.

"I hope the visitor will leave the museum inspired, happy and having a good insight into what goes on in the world of Orla Kiely."

So what's next for her?

"I have been very fortunate to work with some great partners and create beautiful products," she says.

"As for the next dream project? A hotel interior would be amazing. Earlier this year we completed an apartment. It would be great to expand on this.

"My style has always been to remain true to myself. It's vital to evolve each year with new designs and distinctive prints, capturing a new spirit each season, which speaks to women everywhere. For

me, it is this complete picture we create that I love, the way our customer lives her life, through our love of colour and pattern. We reinvent the everyday, and make it a little more special.

"It is the joy that people feel when they use our print in their lives, and it is their support over the years that has helped turn the company into a success."

She is also clear about being true to oneself and trusting one's instinct.

"Instinct will always guide a good design decision. Over time it becomes clearer, but the challenge is always to be better and that, of course, is the most exciting part. If something we are working on does not feel right, be it a print or product, we move

on and keep going until we find it.

"Of course, we work within timelines, so these decisions are made quite quickly, but the moment you can see that perfect coat or bag come together, it will always be the Eureka moment and you just know it is right."

On working with her Dubliner husband and company co-founder, Dermott Rowan, Kiely says: "Working with Dermott is great. Since starting the company we each brought something different, which is why it works so well."

"While he focuses on the business, I have been able to dedicate my time and energies to the design. Having that trust and confidence makes it possible to build a company together."