

Claire Curneen

To this I put my name

based on a talk to CASW, October 2014



In 2012 I received an Arts Council Ambassador Award to spend time in the National Museum of Ireland and Mission Gallery in partnership with Ruthin Craft Centre. The idea of the award is to build relationships between artists and institutions - one international and the other based in Wales.

The National Museum of Ireland is based in Collins Barracks, so you are immediately reminded of its military past. The markings of 100 paces on the exterior walls in the courtyard set the tone: you can almost hear the boots on stone. The very texture of the building creates an impact. There seems to be a contradiction between the austerity of the stone facade and the delicate intricate delights of the objects held within the walls.



I spent time with some of the objects from the decorative arts collection in Dublin, with the support of the curator Audrey Whitty. I found the relationship between myself and Audrey very stimulating – maker and historian exchanging knowledge.



Audrey Whitty: Curator

The images which follow – the Fonthill Vase, a Japanese blue and white vase, a majolica plate, the Corleck Head, a Belleek picture frame, a porcelain grotto and black bog oak jewellery - give an indication of the range of objects that made a strong impression on me during the time I spent in the decorative arts collection in Dublin.



The Fonthill Vase, dating from 1300s, is one of the museum's most treasured artefacts: it is probably the earliest documented piece of Chinese porcelain in Europe.

The Corleck Head (1st or 2nd century AD) is a three-faced, stone, carved, larger-than-lifesize head which creates an immediate impact.



I am slightly unnerved by the perversity of the Belleek pottery picture frame, but I can't help being drawn to it. The exquisite modelled surface is extraordinary: it is a celebration waiting for the photographs it may hold.



Here are some of my drawings from my stay in Dublin. They show some of the links that I was making between the objects in the decorative arts collecting in Dublin and my own work.



I've also included a photograph of my studio in Cardiff taken as I was preparing for an exhibition of work based on my time spent in the National Museum of Ireland and Mission Gallery, Swansea.

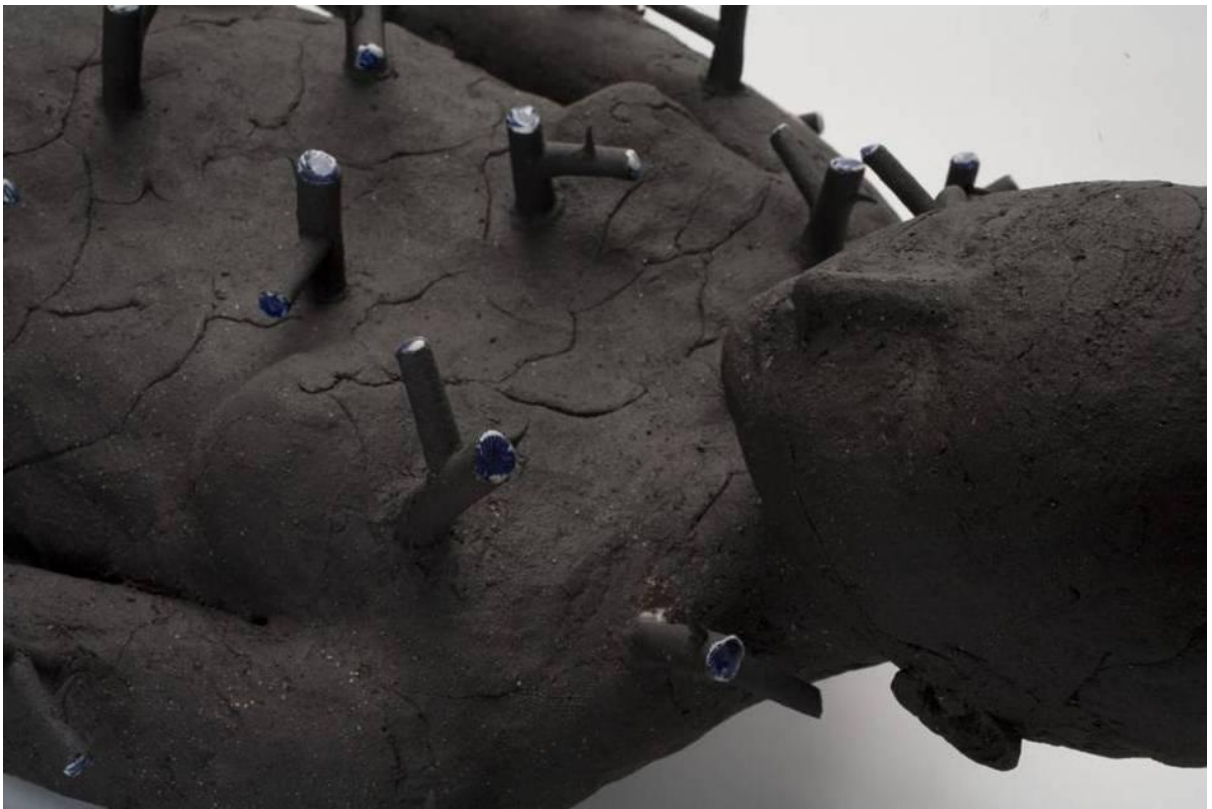
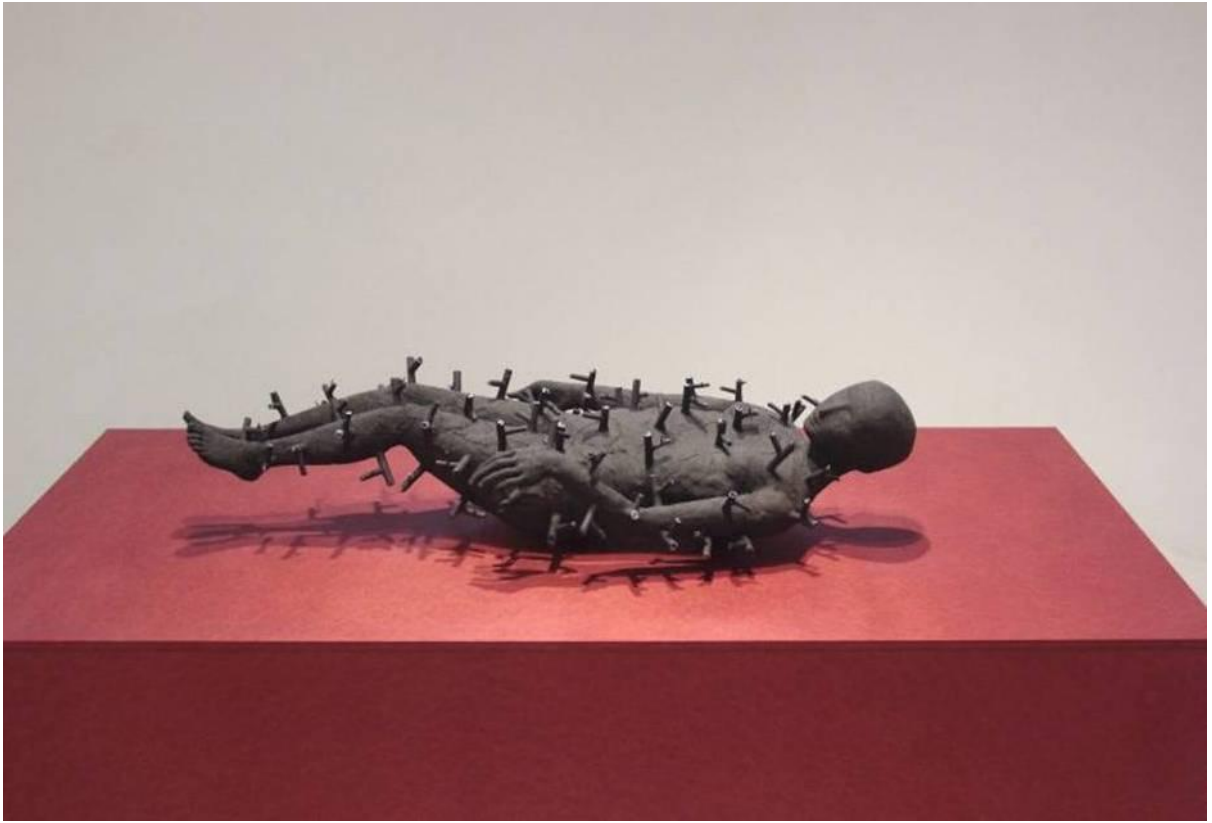


The exhibition, **To this I put my name**, opened at Mission Gallery Swansea in January 2014. The title is taken from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: the words appear as the last line of Henchard's final will, a pretty gloomy document.



These images capture details from my exhibition in Mission Gallery. The pieces in that exhibition evolved out of my exploration of the museum objects. Materiality lies at the heart of what I do: it would be hard to think of these figures as anything else but clay. There is metaphor in the making.



















Background note

Claire Curneen is Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Ceramic Studies, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Ruthin Craft Centre in collaboration with Mission Gallery has produced a publication about Claire Curneen's *To this I put my name*, with essays by Audrey Whitty, Elizabeth Moignard and Teleri Lloyd-Jones (ISBN 978-1-905865-64-2).

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