

Basic Detail Report



Environment/Waiting

Date

1982

Primary Maker

Deborah Brown

Medium

Paper and wire

Description

Deborah Brown is one of the most interesting and avant-garde artist/sculptors of her generation in Ireland. Influenced by a sense of place and atmosphere, the inspiration of the magnificent scenery of her native Northern Ireland can be discerned through all of her oeuvre. In her early career the landscape painter Humbert Craig was an inspiration. She went on to paint in a highly original abstract style that brought her to the favourable notice of critics and collectors. In the mid sixties, she began to move away from the two-dimensional surface to more sculptural forms. Inspired by Lucio Fontana, she started to cut through the canvas building the surface of the painting with papier-maché superimposed on the surface. During the 1970s the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland particularly influenced her work as she had a studio in Donegall Street that was a primary focus of unrest with the surrounding areas secured by miles of barbed wire. Her barbed wire and fibre-glass sculptures are a poignant and sobering reflection on her encounters and impressions of that period. In 1980, chancing on a small figure sitting under a tree in Chicago set in motion one of the most productive periods of her career. Recalling small figures made of wire she had made when she designed stage sets in the fifties for the Lyric Theatre in Belfast, she began to experiment with wire. Her resulting wire and papier-maché sculptures were critically acclaimed and in 1984 she was selected for inclusion in ROSC. Environment /Waiting is a sculptured audience waiting for a Punch and Judy show to begin. The tension between the slightly grotesque subjects totally indifferent to each other and suggestion of forthcoming entertainment is both comical and unsettling. In 1982 a major retrospective of her work was held at the Ormeau Baths, Belfast, the Orchard Gallery, Derry and Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane.