

ART

**Age of Christ
moves to
Farmleigh**

CASTLEKNOCK artist Michelle Maher is taking her hugely successful exhibition, The Age of Christ, to Farmleigh House in the Phoenix Park.

The Gazette featured Michelle's work last week but unfortunately we incorrectly referred to her as Michelle Mahon, not Maher. We are happy to clear up the misunderstanding.

The business woman turned ceramic artist won the Sculpture in Context Award for a Work of Distinction in any medium, recently, and her installation was on show at the Botanic Gardens.

As well as the exhibitions, Michelle also works on private commissions and offers classes in ceramics. For more information, contact Michelle on 640 5614 or 087 2047695.

ART 'Age of Christ'

**Award for
'knock
woman's
sculpture**

CASTLEKNOCK artist Michelle Mahon has won a prestigious artists award for her ceramic installation which is currently exhibited at the Botanic Gardens in Dublin.

Michelle has won the Sculpture in Context Award for a Work of Distinction in any medium.

"The Age of Christ" was inspired by Thomas Kinsel-

la's Mirror In February and Michelle said she has had a long fascination with the poem.

The talented sculptor previously had a very different career as company director for supermarket chain Aldi, but turned her back on corporate life to pursue her dream.

"I left my job in 2000 and retrained as a ceramic artist.

' in Botanic Gardens



'The Age of Christ': exhibited at the Botanic Gardens

I just thought 'I'm going to go for it' as I've always been quite creative," Michelle told the Gazette.

However, she admits that leaving her high powered job and pursuing her art was a huge step: "I was leaving a steady job with steady income to go into a field where it is difficult to make money and is very slow to progress, so to win an award so quickly is quite something. A lot of people thought I was bananas for giving up my business career."

The artist says she draws much of her inspiration from literature and much of her work is based on the writings of Patrick Kavanagh.

"Twentieth century Irish poets and their ability to

describe everyday experiences and to capture the spirit of the human condition so succinctly, compels me to explore these issues in clay. The sentiments of the ordinary and the banal, and yet how these things shape our lives and make us who we are, is resonate in my forms," points out Michelle.

Love of clay

Michelle works in a purpose built studio, which was completed earlier this year. "I thought the hours at my old job were long, but now I find myself in the studio for 100 hours a week, but I absolutely love the work. I love clay and now I'm teaching from my studio and it's good to see

other people's enthusiasm" said Michelle.

The sculptures are made from stoneware clay and are fired in an electric kiln at temperatures up to 1260 degrees Celsius. Michelle decorates her pieces using a wide palette of textures and colour, tailoring the glazes to each individual piece.

As well as teaching and carrying out private commissions, she is working towards a new body of work for a two-person show next summer.

"I want to show people that pottery is about more than just making a bowl or a plate, you can sculpt anything from clay and I want to explore the boundaries," Michelle concluded.