

# COMMUNITY VOICE

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## Craft bonanza at Draíocht

Dublin 15 artists are well represented in the second of what is now Draíocht's annual celebration of artistic talent in the Fingal area. The free exhibition – entitled *Amharc Fhine Gall II* – will be held in the Ground Floor Gallery of the Arts Centre between February 3rd and March 27th.

In all, a total of nine craft artists, working in a variety of media including ceramic, jewellery, wood, lace, and felt, will be showcased. Generously funded by Fingal County Council, the whole of the county as far as Skerries, Rush and Balbriggan is represented, including several from the Dublin 15 area.

Elizabeth Bonnar lives in Castleknock and has been making felt for the past seven years. She has attended workshops in many parts of the world, and has a particular interest in Nuno felt, which incorporates an existing fabric, often silk, into the felt making process. Exotic yarns both natural and man made also inspire many of her pieces. Her work has been exhibited in Ireland, the UK, Finland and Hungary.

Michelle Maher is a self taught Ceramic Artist who also lives and works in Castleknock. She graduated from NUI Maynooth in 1996 with a Masters degree, having studied English and History, two subjects which have strongly influenced her work in clay. She received a 'Sculpture in Context' Award



*A burr oak platter from the Amharc Fhine Gball exhibition*

in September 2004 for her outdoor ceramic installation *The Age of Christ*.

John Bonnar also resides in Dublin 15 but for many years has enjoyed fishing on Lough Corrib, coming to appreciate the native woodlands of hazel and birch. When he discovered that unseasoned or "green" wood can be made into furniture within days of being cut, he decided to try his hand. Using the mortice and tenon method, he now makes rustic chairs, mainly of hazel, with seats of seasoned elm.

"The programming of *Amharc Fhine Gall* as an integral part of our exhibition calendar, is an indication of our commitment in supporting locally-based professional artists," says Winnie Ryan, Draíocht's Visual Arts Administrator. "The materials and techniques used vary

from traditional, functional and decorative pieces to the more sculptural and modern forms. The quality and uniqueness of the work is consistent throughout. This exhibition features artists who are passionate about their craft and Draíocht is delighted to exhibit the work of these skilled and talented craftspeople."

This is a sentiment echoed by Rory O'Byrne, Arts Officer with Fingal County Council. "We are well aware of the part that culture plays in helping develop vibrant communities, and the crucial role that craftworkers play in this process," he states. "The work in this exhibition is proof of the rich and varied perspectives of craft workers from all parts of Fingal. It serves as a celebration of their combined visions and indicates the wealth of creative talent in the county."