

Afternoon Tea

Exhibition by Betty Brown MA PPRUA

Sunburst Gallery, Ards Arts Centre

3 – 31 March 2022

"It was much pleasanter at home," thought poor Alice, "when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole ----- and yet---and yet---it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life!"

Taking inspiration from Lewis Carroll's Alice books with their bold and nonsensical imagery, my idea was to make a new artwork that responded to my recent experience of being President of the RUA during Lockdown. I also wanted to press the restart button on my creative career and a successful application to the ACNI CIRP before Christmas, has enabled that process. Having travelled to see the popular "Curiouser and Curiouser" exhibition at the V&A in London, I was inspired by the many interpretations of this well-known story. Meeting friends for tea was a normal scene that became strangely forbidden during government restrictions. My new sculpture installation features characters from the chapter "A Mad Tea-Party" the White rabbit and the March Hare with the Dormouse being pulled from his top hat by the Hatter. The composition of the characters is focused on the Caravaggio painting in the National Gallery, "Salome with the head of John the Baptist". It also became important to make a painting of the tableaux in situ. "How dreadfully savage" exclaimed Alice!" became the title of both sculpture and painting.

Works in the Exhibition

1. Alice in Wonderland book frontispiece, 42cms x 52cms NFS
2. "Through the Looking Glass", Acrylic on canvas, 59cms x 49cms £950
3. "House Party" Alice in the White Rabbit's House, interactive, 61cms x 51cms x 15cms, £900
4. "Tell us a story!" said the March Hare, On circular base, 20cms x 20cms x h27cms, £200
5. "How Dreadfully Savage!", Acrylic on Board, 117cms x 92cms, £1,500
6. "Any Other Business", (Birthday party) on base, 39cms x 36cms x h23cms, £400
7. "Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!", (Tea party) on base, 27cms x 27cms x h30cms, £400
8. "How dreadfully savage!" exclaimed Alice, Mixed media installation, 160cms x 120cms x 90cms, NFS
9. "Silver Service", Pencil on Paper, Framed, 52cms x 42cms, POA
10. "Head of the March Hare", interactive, sings "My Girl", 30cms x 40cms x 35cms, POA