



Arts Office  
Kilkenny County Council

A programme  
to celebrate the  
power of women

04.08.22 - 17.08.22

Various venues citywide  
part of Kilkenny Arts Festival

# MATRIARCH



# TIMETABLE

*MATRIARCH* is supplemented with an array of engagements to reach the expanded community.

## **Sara R. Phillips - quiescent**

*4<sup>th</sup> August, 3 - 4pm  
Kyteler's Inn, St. Kieran's St, Gardens, Kilkenny*

Sara R. Phillips will be performing "quiescent", an enchanting reading of her works including 'the quiet girl' and the similarities between Alice Kyteler, witchcraft, Infamy, rebellion, and trans women.

## **Na Cailleacha - Spellbound**

*5<sup>th</sup> August, 1 - 2 pm  
Rothe House, 16 Parliament St, Gardens, Kilkenny*

Come join us for a magical engagement with the all-female powerhouse collective - Na Cailleacha.

## **Lorna Corrigan - Clonmel Billboard**

*4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August, College Rd Junction of Circular Rd, from Kilkenny to Callan Circular Road opposite the Kilkenny Hotel*  
A large-scale billboard of Corrigan's beguiling mixed media work *Clonmel* (2022).

## **Pauline Cummins - Bare Bones**

*11<sup>th</sup> August 6- 7 pm  
Medieval Room, Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny*

A haunting fine art performance dealing with Irish societies hidden past from one of Ireland's leading performance artists.

## **Kilkenny Women's Group response exhibition**

*4<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> of August, Window Gallery at John's Green House, Johns Green, R95 YH61, Kilkenny*

An empowered exhibition of artists from the Kilkenny Women's Group at the Window Gallery at John's Green House responding to the themes of the programme.

## **Online audio tour**

*4<sup>th</sup> August onwards, online at [kilkennyartsoffice.ie](http://kilkennyartsoffice.ie)*

An free audio tour of the programme artists talking about their work accompanied by the curator's introduction.

# CURATOR STATEMENT

*A homage to women who live unapologetically, striding powerfully throughout time and space with all the powers of this world and forces of the ether...*

A touch of magic, a dollop of feminism and a large helping of confidence. *MATRIARCH* is a programme designed to celebrate women artists over 65 who have practiced much of their lives. The purpose of the exhibition is to place women artists at the forefront in powerfully shaping the arts landscape in which they operate. Each event is site specific to sites of symbolic significance and placement of power. The sites are important to situate the sense of place in Kilkenny where powerful women in it's history dominated, and to make connections between these historical figures, local women and the programmes artists.

Take for example our first artist, writer Sara R. Phillips, who will be performing a reading of her work in Kyteler's Inn, the home of the first woman accused of witchcraft in Ireland, Alice Kyteler. Phillip's is preparing a piece in response to the site that links witchcraft and persecution of women to transness and her own trans identity. Witchcraft and magic run through this programme with an artist talk by the all female collective Na Cailleacha (meaning "the witches" as Gaeilge). The 8 women strong collective will be giving a talk entitled *Spellbound* on their motives, their collective work and why it is important to be visible as older women artists making work. This will materialise in Rothe House (built between 1594 - 1610) one of Kilkenny's oldest and most prominent buildings. We will also be discussing The Anchorites with Na Cailleacha who were female hermits who withdrew from the world to live in an underground cell in St. Canice's Cathedral. As she entered the cell, the

Bishop intoned the prayer for the Dead before closing and sealing the door. The slabs on the Cathedral floor date from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and show the hermits praying with hands raised aloft. The Anchorites were highly regarded as intellectuals as Na Cailleacha are. As audiences, we will also be treated to a performance from internationally renowned feminist performance artist Pauline Cummins. Cummins will perform *Bare Bones*, a site responsive piece in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Medieval Room of Kilkenny Castle. Uncovering Ireland's dark past, this performance is sure to leave a lasting impression. Lorna Corrigan often speaks of how images come to her in dreams, a place of the unknown. An example of this is *Clonmel*, a celebration of the natural world and an old ruin. This work will be featured prominently in the cultural landscape on a billboard in Kilkenny City for the duration of the arts festival. Finally, I am very honoured to work with Kilkenny Women's Group on a mixed media exhibition in response to the themes of the exhibition in The Window Gallery of John's Green House. You are all very welcome to these events and I hope that you find the magic in *MATRIARCH*.

I would like to thank Kilkenny County Council and the Arts Council for their support of the Kilkenny Arts Office Emerging Curator Development Programme and *MATRIARCH*. I also wish to thank my mentor Kate Strain, Siobhán Fitzsimons, Róisín Murphy O Sullivan, Damian Swida, JD and the team at Kyteler's Inn, Kilkenny Castle, Valerie and the team at Rothe House, Daniel and the team at JC Decaux, Olga Barry and the team at Kilkenny Arts Festival and the artists Na Cailleacha (Catherine Marshall, Helen Comerford, Therry Rudin, Patricia Hurl, Gerda Teljuer, Barbara Freeman, Carole Nelson and Rachel Parry), Pauline Cummins, Sara R. Phillips, Lorna Corrigan, The NCBI and Catherine Duff with Kilkenny Women' Group for their engagements. Additional thanks to the Kilkenny Arts Office team Deirdre Southey, Bernadette Roberts and Kilkenny Arts Officer Mary Butler.

*MATRIARCH* is also supported by Marion Acreman, Donna Byrne and everyone at MacDonagh Junction. Thank you all for your kindness and support.

The Kilkenny County Council Arts Office Emerging Curator Programme is pleased to collaborate with our charity partner Amber Women's Refuge for 2022. The mission of Amber Women's Refuge is to empower women and children, of all cultures and backgrounds, to achieve their rights to live abuse-free lives.

- Sinéad Keogh Kilkenny Arts Office Emerging Curator Development Programme recipient 2022.



Twitter @ltransArchive and @salarphillips  
Facebook @irishtransarchive

## SARA R. PHILIPS

*quiescent, poetry/short story reading*

**4<sup>th</sup> August, 3 - 4pm**

Kyteler's Inn,  
St. Kieran's St,  
Gardens

Sara R. Phillips is a global trans activist working with TENI, Transgender Europe, International Trans Fund and the National Women's Council of Ireland. *quiescent* weaves a theme through Sara's poetry, examining misunderstanding, marginalisation, witchcraft, rebellion, and transition. Exploring the stories of three women, Alice, Eliza and Sara, *quiescent* includes Sara's poem *The Quiet Girl* and spans 900+ years.

No booking is required for this event.

### Artist Bio

Sara R. Phillips is a Trans activist. Sara is the founder, researcher and archivist for the Irish Trans Archive. She is the former Chair of Transgender Equality Network Ireland and the founder and curator of the annual Trans Arts and Performance festival Trans-Fusion. Sara is also a member of the National Women's Council Board.



[nacailleacha.weebly.com](http://nacailleacha.weebly.com)

## NA CAILLEACHA

*Spellbound – an artist talk with Na Cailleacha*

**5<sup>th</sup> August, 1 - 2pm**

Rothe House,  
16 Parliament St,  
Gardens

Come join us for a magical conversation with the all female powerhouse collective - Na Cailleacha. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the groups origins, their upcoming work at the Hugh Lane and the connections between feminism, art and witchcraft. The discussion will be followed by a Q&A with you, our audience.

No booking is required for this event.

### Collective Bio

We are Na Cailleacha, from the Irish word 'cailleach' meaning a witch or a divine hag. We want to explore what it means to be women who are getting older and arguably becoming invisible and what strategies we devise to overcome the challenges of ageing. Between us we share well over 500 years of experience of being women, as artists, as curator/writer/historian and as composer. We want to make art that allows us to explore this collective experience, our attitudes to ageing, our bodies, our place in the artworld, and how we relate to a different culture and heritage. Central to this developmental opportunity in this phase of our careers is working collaboratively, enabling us to do what women have always done – mentored, supported and argued with each other - so that we can share the fruits of this time together with other people in Ireland. We work and explore ideas and issues that are relevant to us now and as they arise out of collective meetings and residencies. Our concerns embrace the processes of aging, loss and stereotypes of the witch or hag in society and we hope to work across generations, gender, race and class identities to make socially committed art with and for the community.



[paulinecummins.com](http://paulinecummins.com)

## PAULINE CUMMINS

*Bare Bones*, performance art event

**11<sup>th</sup> August 6 - 7 pm**

Medieval Room,  
Kilkenny Castle

A fine art performance dealing with Irish societies hidden past from one of Ireland's leading performance artists.

No booking is required for this event.

### Artist Bio

Pauline Cummins' performance and video work examines the human condition from a feminist perspective. Research driven themes of the political body, activism, human rights and gender are often explored in the artists practice. Cummins likes to collaborate with artists and communities in public sites and situations; including within prisons as a visiting artist and was the founding chairperson of the Women's Artist Action Group, (WAAG). Cummins lectured at the National College of Art and Design from 1994 – 2014. Her work is in both national and international collections including The Irish Museum of Modern Art and the National Maternity Hospital. Commissions include the Newgrange Interpretative Centre, New St. Park (Dublin) and the National Maternity Hospital.



[kcat.ie/studio/lorna-corrigan](http://kcat.ie/studio/lorna-corrigan)

## LORNA CORRIGAN

*Clonmel*, Billboard

**4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August**

College Rd Junction of Circular Rd,  
from Kilkenny to Callan Circular Road opposite the Kilkenny Hotel

A stunning large-scale billboard of Corrigan's mixed media work *Clonmel* (2022).

### Artist Bio

Moving from Camphill Duffcarrig, Gorey, Lorna spent six years studying and developing her own style and technique at Ormonde College in Kilkenny. In 2004 she joined the KCAT Studio and her work continues to flourish. Though working largely on canvas with paint, she also sensitively handles ink and pastel on paper. Lorna embraces a range of subjects, often taken from her memory or travels to Australia and France. Since the age of five, when she poured a can of bright red paint over herself and a dull grey tractor, Lorna has considered herself an artist. Her work is well sought after and is exhibited widely.



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Image on cover:  
*Pauline Cummins, No bones about it..... (2018)*  
live at Kilmainham Goal.

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