

Press Release 26.09.17

WHITE GOLD
Handthrown Porcelain 75th Birthday Ceramic Celebration by Helena Brennan

When the long-held secrets of Chinese porcelain, known as '**white gold**', were shared with the west, only some of its mysteries were revealed. Helena Brennan's pioneering exhibition (with her late husband Peter) of native hand-thrown porcelain in 1968 was the first Irish attempt to explore the enigmatic translucent material. This work went on to be exhibited in Osaka Japan, a homecoming of sorts for techniques and philosophies garnered through Peter Brennan's time spent in Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada's studio in St.Ives in the 1940s. Helena maintained this connection to **hand-throwing in the oriental tradition** by training with Bernard Leach's son, David, in the early 1960s.

Helena has spent the 50 years since on a path of disciplined practice, evolving both her skill and understanding of this expressive material, while also fine-tuning her ability to expose the delicate, **colourful secrets of high fired molten glass glaze**.

WHITE GOLD speaks of a lifetime of making bearing fruit; incorporating glazes made from the ashes of sycamore trees from her **home and studio in Avoca**, Brennan's fine porcelain ware has a textural depth that depicts these very surroundings, drawing the viewer into her world. These modest objects tell remarkable stories of their evolution, from the alchemical preparation of the clay and glazes, to the subtle breath-like marks left by the maker.

Tradition and its tenets are adhered to; her finished work retains its functional purpose and simplicity. The exhibition comprises of a series of drinking vessels, hand thrown in Irish porcelain. Groupings of **useful objects, such as cups, beakers and decanters**, are presented as expressive still lives.

The exhibition finds a natural home in **The Vintage Teapot Gallery**; a sanctuary of authentic Chinese culture less than 100 metres from Dublin's Spire.

In 2014, the International Academy of Ceramics awarded **Helena Brennan** with honorary membership in recognition of her contribution to ceramics; the first Irish citizen to receive such an honour. Her work is held in the state collections in Ireland (Collins Barracks Museum), in Japan by the royal family and in private collections worldwide. She first exhibited hand-thrown stoneware in the Irish Times Gallery in 1966. Two years later, she exhibited porcelain in Osaka, Japan and at the World Crafts meeting in Lima, Peru. She has maintained an impressive history of exhibitions, awards and residencies since. Helena Brennan is a founder member of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, Institute of Designers in Ireland and Ceramics Ireland.

White Gold

Friday 13th to Sunday 22nd October

Daily, 10am to 7pm : Late opening Thursday 19th until 9pm

The Vintage Teapot

8 Cathedral Street

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Ireland

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