

**PROFILE**

**VIVIENNE BOGAN**

**Poor financial input from Government towards EVA**

"THERE is no doubt that in its first decade EVA has fulfilled its original aim - to stimulate an awareness of the visual arts but we still have a long way to go", claimed chairwoman of EVA, Vivienne Bogan, this week.

"In comparison to our European counterparts we are so very deprived people living in Ireland just don't have an opportunity to see any visual art.

"And I just don't agree with the fact that people are not interested in the visual arts - judging by the crowds that have attended EVA in recent years this theory has been refuted.

"The last two years in particular have seen a large increase in the number of people visiting the exhibition - people visited EVA and this year the committee is confident of increasing that record.

**Upsurge**

"There is now an upsurge of interest in the visual arts - it's almost like a renaissance and its happening regardless of whether the money is there or not.

"It's sad there is such a poor financial input from the Government," said Vivienne.

But Vivienne believes that the lack of awareness with regard to the visual arts stems from our educational system - there is a big lacking in that area.

With cut-backs one of the first areas to suffer is the visual arts. We have a strong tradition where drama and literature is concerned but this is not carried through to the arts

- dance for example is completely forgotten about, and music is taught in so few schools.

An artist herself and a graduate of the Limerick School of Art and Design specialising in fine art, Vivienne said that while at secondary school at Laurel Hill, there was a good concentration on painting and drawing but I think I inherited my love of art from my grandmother and my family.

**Awareness**

Being a member of EVA and a member of the Arts Council, Vivienne has intensified her desire to do something about increasing this awareness of the visual arts among young people and to provide them with facilities to enjoy the arts.

Vivienne works from her own Studio in Birdhill and has a number of exhibitions in recent years - her last exhibition was held in Dublin in May and her last exhibition in Limerick was at the Belltable during the winter of '84.

Since 1982 Vivienne has been making all her own paper - "that's an inspiration in itself as the texture of each sheet is different."

**Natural**

And for this Vivienne uses all natural materials, particularly nettles as they have a lot of fibre - the paper is made up in batches, usually in summer as it takes so long to dry, but making paper has now become popular among artists.

For painting, Vivienne uses water colours and she also makes use of feathers and bones to form part of the story

she wishes to portray.

Because she is now living in the country, social decay, city squalour, the destruction of our architecture and replacement with concrete slabs feature strongly in her paintings.

But she admits in the past year that her work is becoming more religious. A Bahai, Vivienne believes that just as religion has divided man in the past it will unite man in the future.

"As I'm getting older, my religion is becoming more

"We will also be inviting teachers to attend and we want them to go back to the art room and do some work with their pupils, which will have been influenced by EVA - we will have an exhibition of this work, titled Junior EVA.

"Emphasis will be placed on assisting the teachers to guide their students through the exhibition and encourage each student to explore and express verbally and visually their responses to the various aspects of a modern piece of

**By MARY HEENAN**

important and it is featuring strongly in my work."

A keen traveller in her youth, Vivienne has visited and worked in Australia, South America, Holland and the Far East.

**Husband**

She held a one-woman show in Soviet Armenia where her husband Andrew was teaching.

Most of her work here was Abstract "but I don't think they have developed an eye for abstract art yet."

Asked if her travelling influences her work Vivienne said yes but only in subtle way.

"My upbringing here in Limerick and my environment is what really has influenced me."

"We hope to encourage school groups to visit EVA and we have printed a junior catalogue.

art work."

During the final week of EVA there will be an exhibition of young people's art in the Gallery. It is hoped that the work shown will in some sense have been inspired by visits to the EVA exhibition.

This young people's exhibition is open to all students and work should be submitted to Paul O'Reilly, the administrator of the City Gallery not later than Wednesday, October 8.

A series of talks and seminars with leading Irish art critics will also take place in the City Gallery. This series is titled 'EVA 86 and the Contemporary Irish Art' and critics will include Dorothy Walker, Sean McCrum, Aidan Dunne and Joan Fowler.

Lunchtime tours will take place every Tuesday from 1.15 to 1.45.

But Vivienne believes that this year's exhibition should be very attractive as it is not too abstract - last year it was more difficult as there was a lot of new expressionism on show.

**Standard**

Since its inception EVA has been a genuinely national exhibition with a high standard of submissions from all over Ireland, North and South and even some from abroad. "We had 429 submissions this year and the exhibition has built up a reputation for its high standard," said Vivienne who has exhibited a number of times at EVA.

"It was certainly good insight on the original EVA committee in 1976 to organise such an exhibition - they felt then that the region was deprived of the visual arts.

"The Arts Council were fully behind the idea from the start and it wouldn't have been possible to stage such a show annually without their financial assistance - it cost over £10,000 to mount the exhibition and our prize money is very good.

"And much of the work is sold during the exhibition," she added.

And the future for EVA - it's open to review but it looks as if there will be a change in the format in the future - if the energy and enthusiasm which have always characterised EVA continue unabated, then we can look forward to EVA '87 and beyond.

"It would have been impossible to do all the work without the help of our dedicated committee - our catalogue has received a lot of praise and all the graphics for this were done by our secretary, Lorraine Wall.

But much of Vivienne's time is devoted to her work with the Arts Council.

"Lack of funds of course makes our job difficult. We receive less than £6m. a year of which £2m. goes towards drama - there is then very little left over for the visual arts and that has to be spread over a large area.

"It was a sad decision for us to cut our fundings for the festivals but from now on we



Vivienne Bogan chatting to Charles Haughey

will be considering them again for grants," said Vivienne, who believes that there is now a large concentration of the arts outside of Dublin.

**Further**

Vivienne welcomed the recent announcement by the chairman of the Arts Council to develop further the arts in the Mid-West area and in particular Limerick city - the Arts Council and Limerick city have agreed in principle to adopt a cultural agreement which will apply to the Limerick Corporation area from January 1987 until December 1988.

"This is the first such agreement between the Arts Council and a local authority," said Vivienne.

Limerick's rich cultural heritage, its strong high-tech industrial base, its planned urban re-development, the support demonstrated by the business community for arts activity and the enthusiasm demonstrated by the arts community in Limerick are just a few of the reasons why Limerick was selected for this

pilot project.

And now a number of projects have been planned for the next two years - a major sculpture project will take place in Limerick city which it is hoped will leave the city with a number of fine pieces of public sculpture.

A major river festival with art and music is being discussed for 1988 - the Shannon is a beautiful amenity and should really be a distinctive feature of the city, said Vivienne.

The Arts Council are also anxious to see that the city Art gallery achieves its true potential and we hope to see many first class exhibitions travelling to the gallery over the next two years.

"Of course the Belltable Arts Centre has done so much to enhance the image of Limerick as a cultural and thriving city and we in the Council have renewed our commitment to the Centre."

Despite her active role in the Arts Council, her work with EVA and her painting, Vivienne has two young children, Kolya (4½) and Robin Louise (1½).

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