

# Tommy hosts masterclass in Czech Republic

Dromore artist Tommy Barr has just returned from the Czech Republic following his participation in Festival Forfest, which was held in the UNESCO protected old town of Kromeriz.

This was a welcome return for Tommy, having previously participated in 2015.

The theme of the festival this year was "opportunities in international cooperation", a theme which Tommy appears to have taken to heart, with a series of impromptu collaborations alongside his programmed contributions.

For Tommy these unplanned interactions with friends are often where the magic happens.

Tommy presented his exhibition entitled "Un Beau Refuge", at Gallery U Artuse. This

is a well travelled exhibition which draws from the legacy of the Huguenot refugees who came to Ireland fleeing religious persecution in France during the 15th century.

He was joined on opening night by his friends Rebecca Rust and Friedrich Edelmann, principals/soloists with the Munich Philharmonic, Basel Symphony and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras.

They played Hans Gál's Divertimento for Bassoon and Violoncello. Gál was himself a refuge from Nazi Germany and went on to co-found the Edinburgh Festival, where Tommy has also exhibited previously.

The music complimented Tommy's paintings perfectly and in closing the event Michal Kucera of Gallery U

Artuse told guests that "something special happened here tonight".

Now in its twenty eight year Forfest has become one of the highlights of the Czech cultural calendar.

A central element is always the lecture series which seeks to disseminate learning and fuel new thinking.

Tommy's lecture discussed the value of perceived multiple legacies on the artist's work and the impact of creative refugees. He referenced imagery from his exhibition but also works from influential artists past and present.

This was a highly topical subject that generated great interest and discussion.

Tommy's lecture was particularly well attended, with students from the Archiepis-

copale School present by special invitation.

Following the lecture a gallery tour of his exhibition and an artist's masterclass were arranged for the students on the morning of the final day of the festival.

At the masterclass paints were made using pigment and binders in the school's faculty of science and later used as the class focused on techniques for surface and on paint manipulation.

Tommy is once again grateful to festival organisers Vaclav and Zdenka Vaculovicovi and to Michal at U Artuse for their generous invitation and help with the events. He is also currently putting the finishing touches to the paintings for his next exhibition in Romania this September.



Tommy relaxing with Rebecca Rust and Friedrich Edelmann in front of Titian's Apollo and Marsyas.