



## PRESS RELEASE

### Remembering 'Balbriggans'

#### ***Efflorescence* – a New Public Arts Project Commissioned by Fingal County Council**

Residents of and visitors to Balbriggan this March will be treated to the unusual sight of a silk bridge, with hand sewn beadwork, and illuminated at night with blue UV light at the site of the old Smyth & Co factory. The project, titled '***Efflorescence***', features a silk bridge, handcrafted by artist Martina Coyle, linking the old factory buildings above Railway Street, and is situated in the same location as an original factory buildings bridge structure.

Martina was commissioned by Fingal County Council in 2008, with funds allocated from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Per Cent For Art Scheme, and during her visits around the county was inspired by stories about the former Smyth & Co business and the impact it had on the town of Balbriggan for almost 250 years. She spoke with a number of local residents and former factory workers, and it was a surviving photo of a bridge above Railway Street that provided the final inspiration.

The title, ***Efflorescence***, is an attempt to evoke memories of a different time in Balbriggan, of a successful industry and highly skilled workforce which produced high quality silk stockings that were distributed all over the world. Martina has recreated the lost bridge in the form of a temporary sculptural installation using materials and beadwork patterns, completed by the artist in collaboration with members of an existing sewing factory, and associated with the factory's famous silk stockings, known universally as 'balbriggans'. In her essay on ***Efflorescence***, Gemma Tipton said "it marks both collaborative making and deeply personal labour; it is contemporary but hints at history; and, even though ephemeral, it marks a continuation of more than two centuries of life in Balbriggan."

***Efflorescence***, a new Fingal County Council groundbreaking public art project, will be officially launched by Balbriggan Town Council Cathaoirleach, Monica Harford, on Sunday **7<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm** and refreshments will be served at Trax Café after the event.

A new publication detailing the project and the history of the factory includes an essay by Irish Times critic Gemma Tipton. This publication will be available on the night and thereafter from the Fingal Arts Office.

**This temporary sculpture will remain in-situ from 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010, weather permitting.**

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**ENDS 25/02/10**