



Artwork of the Month

Over the last 20 years, University College Cork has developed a significant collection of modern and contemporary Irish art through a considered acquisitions policy and the generous donations of individual patrons. At present, the collection is displayed on a rotating basis around the campus. Works of art are sited in most university buildings and a number of external sculptures have become attractive features of the college grounds. For the next year, *UCC News* will feature an *Artwork of the Month*, accompanied by a short text that will hopefully guide your viewing of the work and perhaps foster a greater interest in the collection at large. Myself and Nora Hickey, Curator of Education & Collections, have asked a number of colleagues to approach works from professional and personal perspectives and you will have the opportunity to read their response over the coming months. We would of course be delighted to hear from colleagues with a particular interest in a given work and look forward to learning about the collection from you. The inaugural text is written by UCC's former Visual Arts Officer, William Gallagher, and provides an insight into one of the most popular works in the collection - *Figure Talking to a Quadruped* - by Cork artist, Michael Quane. The curiosity and sense of enquiry in the figure's gaze reminds me of our own constant questioning of our respective disciplines, the considered study that is integral to an academic environment. I hope that you will enjoy viewing and thinking about the works you encounter over the coming months.

Fiona Kearney, Director, Lewis Glucksman Gallery

Michael Quane

Figure Talking to a Quadruped

1994 Kilkenny

Limestone

Location: President's Garden, UCC

The sculpture by Michael Quane has stood consciously apart from the trends of his time - in subject, materials and associations. His art overtly retains values of tradition. But it is not a kind of historicism; his ability to reconsider forms of tradition distinguishes his work from some heritage ethos. The material and figurative forms of Quane's work are carried over from an age when public sculpture expressed clearly public or political ideas - authority, virtue or victory. But here the theme is ambiguous, even evasive, concerned more with tension than assertion. The tension of some potential relationship is expressed in the space between the figures, which, as much as the stone, becomes a key part of the sculpture. This capacity to invest inert stone with an implied potential owes something to Michelangelo, as does the unpolished surface showing the marks of the claw-chisel. But equally, practical considerations of the present affect the result, with the simple detailing and robust forms reflecting the accessibility of this work at ground level.

William Gallagher