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## **The Phoenix and the Owl are flying high in AIB's art gallery**

- **Louth schoolgirls' inspirational artwork displayed at bank headquarters**

Two dramatic bird sculptures, designed and created by a group of Secondary School Art students in Co Louth, have been put on exhibit at AIB Bankcentre in Dublin.

The works, entitled "The Phoenix and The Owl" and with a five foot wingspan, were made from hundreds of paper feathers and wire by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students of Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Drogheda, to provide a backdrop at the annual Christmas Carol Service in the town's Augustinian Church.

The students spent weeks working on creating the birds after class but were upset to discover that, given their size and scale, their prized art project had no home and was facing the possibility of being scrapped.

However, a local businessman and Managing Director of Irish Breeze, Edward McCloskey, learned that the birds had no storage space following their exhibition in the Church and contacted AIB's Head of Corporate Banking, Simon Scroope, who agreed to bring the works to the bank's headquarters.

"AIB was very pleased to step in and accept the wonderful sculptures. We have the space available to show the works and ensure they are not dismantled or destroyed. They are a credit to the creativity and artistry of these young people and we are proud to be able to assist – even on a short term basis", Simon said.

Arts teacher at the school, Aine Curran, explained that the girls were inspired by the Phoenix perched on the High Cross at Monasterboice and the depiction of an Owl at Holy Cross Abbey.

“We are very fortunate to have such a creative group of girls in Greenhills and even more fortunate that art is so strongly supported in the school”, she added.

Describing the birds as “remarkably beautiful and lifelike”, Edward McCloskey said he could not accept that the sculptures were facing the scrapheap for want of a home.

“The students of Greenhill College put so much care and detail into each one. I couldn’t allow them to be destroyed and believed they were certainly worthy of a place in an art gallery or appropriate building. In the short term, the birds will remain at AIB before returning to Drogheda in September”, he said.

The birds were transported from Drogheda to Bank Centre and reassembled there at the weekend. They remain on loan to the bank until August 2015 when they return to Drogheda for exhibition at Highlanes Gallery.

Ends

Note: Pictures supplied separately by Fennells Photography

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