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Celebrations, Congratulations and Carrie Bradshaw at MART

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The MART Studios Grand Opening
The MART Studios

On a perfect September evening an appreciative audience of admirers and well-wishers, warmed by the sun and a sense of celebration, attended the long awaited opening of The MART Studios on the Lower Rathmines Road. Housed in the iconic, old Firehouse, The MART Studios swelled with supporters who spilled onto the street, indulging in cake, a variety of refreshments and a host of conversations. Much of the talk focused on MART's excellent, premiere exhibition, *Curb Your Carrie Bradshawism*. Showcasing work by twenty eight artists, MARTS eclectic and egalitarian ethos was very much in evidence.

Each artist was given the same remit: to work within the constraints of a cardboard box. The resulting range of works on display was wonderfully diverse. A cardboard box hung suspended from the ceiling into which an audience member could step, another became a speaker through which dialogue set to music from *Sex and the City* was played. Innovation and originality were very much to the fore with performance artists Eleanor Lawler and Katerine Nolan, recently returned from a series of performance dates in the U.S., performing inside the constraints of a box. Lawler

meticulously cut strips from her clothes while Nolan, dressed in bikini and high heels, responded to a series of commands given by the audience. The exhibition had cohesion stronger than the sum of its parts ensuring *Curb You Carrie Bradshawism* functioned on many levels. In part a questioning of the fad of –isms, it also questioned the manner in which consumerism, excess and materialism purports to bring happiness and the role of the artist in collusion and in contrast with a culture and media that can often box them in.

The diversity on display was indicative of MART's deep sense of inclusiveness. In his welcoming speech curator, Matthew Nevin, spoke of MART's aspiration to develop strong, international connections, bringing together artists and curators from Ireland and abroad. The signs and omens strongly suggest they will succeed. To call The MART Studios a labour of love would be a serious understatement. Rather, it is a testament to the sheer determination and resilience of curators Matthew Nevin and Ciara Scanlon who waded through years of planning and pigeons to make this studio happen. Given their passion, hard work and commitment one can only expect that The MART Studios will open up exciting new horizons for both Irish and international artists.

Artists looking for studio or gallery space can follow this link. Similarly those looking for further information on MART, forthcoming exhibitions or details on *Curb Your Carrie Bradshawism*

<http://www.mart.ie/studios/>

Curb Your Carrie Bradshawism runs at The Mart Studios, September 5th – 8th.

Admission is free. Showings are 2.00p.m. to 6.00 p.m. daily.



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