



Niamh Ní Shúilleabháin, "Filleadh" (The Return), grogged clay, dry glaze, 35 x 23 x 19 cm, 1996.

"'Filleadh' is the return—the return of the salmon to the source, my return to the river (Blackwater) from whence I came, returning to the place of my creation, returning to create and produce, to fertile land. A coming home after a 15-year journey, a journey out to come back, a completion of a circle, a coming home to myself, a realization of all that I need is within, my own 'uisneach.'"

Niamh Ní Shúilleabháin has won numerous scholarships and awards for her work including the Henry Higgins Travelling Scholarship and the British Council Fellowship, one of five all-Ireland scholarships from the British Ambassador to study for an M.A. in Cardiff.

... A Foreword by Mary Robinson

This special issue of *Canadian Woman Studies* on "Women of Ireland/*Mná na hÉireann*" provides unique insights, from women's perspectives, into the complexities of Irish life—insights which are particularly valuable in that they are reflections of the individual experiences of women who are helping to shape the modern Ireland.

Ireland and Irish people today are buoyed up by a great sense of self-confidence and the dynamism which infuses the economy is also evident in cultural, political, and social life. The contributions to this issue show many of the forces at work in those dif-



"*Mná na hÉireann*," Courtesy of Anna Nielsen Publications.

ferent spheres, for example the role of women in the Northern Ireland peace process, the contribution of women outside formal employment, the resurgence in women's poetry, artistic achievement, spirituality, and the exploration of Celtic and pre-Christian cultures, the Irish Diaspora.

The diversity of the experiences of the women, who have so generously agreed to share them, promises an exciting publication and I congratulate all concerned.

Is it any wonder that I am so proud of *Mná na hÉireann* wherever they may live!

Mary Robinson,
President of Ireland,
August 1997

About the Guest Editors...

May Blood has worked in a mill and has done voluntary community work for the past 38 years. Currently, she is a full-time community worker for the Greater Shankill "Early Years Project," a member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, and chairperson of the Greater Shankill Women's Forum and Fair Play for Women.

Dana Hearne has written extensively on women in Irish society. She is co-ordinator of the Women's Studies Program at John Abbot College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Québec where she teaches women's studies and Irish studies.

Marion Lynn has been teaching courses in women's studies and family at colleges and universities for the past 25 years. Her current research is on rediscovering her Irish roots.

Mary Mahoney left her native Galway in her teens for London, England to start a nursing career. Soon after, she moved to Toronto where she has lived ever since. Over 25 years ago she embarked on her own special creative venture—the Irish Shop—which has become a successful, established business in downtown Toronto.

Kathy Murtha is the daughter of an Irish nurse whose journey around the world came to a halt in Lindsay, Ontario. Her interest in social justice issues has led her to work in the highlands of Papua New Guinea and Toronto's in-

ner city. She conducts workshops and retreats in Toronto.

Eimear O'Neill is a psychotherapist and community educator whose interest in social justice and women's studies started 30 years ago when she worked as a social worker on the Lower Falls and Shankill in West Belfast. She publishes, teaches, and trains in anti-violence work and short-term psychotherapy and is currently chair of the Violence Committee at the Centre for Feminist Research.

Ailbhe Smyth is an activist, writer, researcher, and director of the Women's Education, Research, and Resource Centre (WERRC) at University College Dublin, where she teaches women's studies. She has published widely on contemporary feminism, mainly in Ireland, and is active in feminist and lesbian politics.

Susan Storey, Managing Director of CIBC Wood Gundy, Vice President CIBC, began her career in international banking at the Bank of Ireland in Dublin. She is the chair of the Canadian Committee for Professionalism and was the first woman elected president of Forex Canada, an industry association representing more than 500 foreign exchange traders in Canada. She is currently chair of CIBC Wood Gundy Children's Miracle Foundation and sits on the fund-raising boards of many charities in Toronto dedicated to the well-being of women and children.