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SHIRT STORIES: FRESCOES BY BARBARA SULLIVAN



Organization: Waterville Creates

Venue: Ticonic Gallery

Date: November 15, 2021-February 11, 2022

A dual citizen of the United States and the Republic of Ireland, Barbara Sullivan was inspired by her paternal grandparents' migration to the United States in the late 19th century to find work as they sought new opportunities for themselves and their family. Barbara initiated the *Shirt Stories* series in 2018 at the Tyrone Guthrie Center, an artist residency program in County Monaghan, Ireland and later revisited this series during the summer of 2021 at The Ellis Bearegard Residency in Rockland, Maine.

Each shirt is made using the traditional technique of painting into wet plaster to honor the laborious fresco process and its longstanding history. While making these tiny shirts, Barbara carefully considers the origin of fabrics and the many ways they are constructed. The template patterns employed by the artist reflect the repetitive factory work as well as the presence of the hand.

Shirts are inherently and metaphorically intimate because they are worn next to our skin. When folded, they evoke anticipation of what is in store, and through this exhibition, they are intended to elicit "an unfolding" of our individual stories. *Shirt Stories* asks the viewer to consider the broader historical, social, and economic impact the Hathaway Shirt Factory has had in the Waterville community as well as its unique place in the history of New England textiles and the early labor movement, which provided countless jobs for new arrivals to the United States as well as many local Maine families.

Ticonic Gallery would like to thank exhibition sponsors, MaineGeneral Health and Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland for their support of this exhibition.



Barbara Sullivan, *Untitled*, 2021, shaped fresco, 4 1/2" x 3 3/4" x 3/4" (each). All work courtesy of the artist and Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, Maine.

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