

# At the coalface . . . .

WHEN the coal began to run out in mid-sixties, the inhabitants of German mining town Herne began leaving in their droves, vacating a large number of premises in what is the country's industrial heartland, *writes Michael Carr.*

In 1972, the administrative building of the mine Unser Fritz 2/3 fell into the lap of a collective of artists who, rather than see it fall into disuse and disrepair, moved in and began to give the location a more creative purpose. Over thirty years later, Cork's public will be offered a glimpse of the work emanating from the building's current inhabitants at an exhibition running at Tigh Fili (Mac Curtain St) titled 'Artists from the Coal Mine'.

*Inside Cork* spoke to Karsten Juergens, the exhibition's German facilitator and husband of one of the artists, Marie White, a former Crawford graduate. "Frances Murphy of Tigh Fili visited the collective in Germany by chance and invited the artists over to Cork for this

exhibition. Herne and the surrounding area has a wide variety of cultures to draw from as it is one of the country's most densely populated areas. The exhibition will give people a small sample of that."

Ten of the Zeche Unser Fritz 2/3 association's twelve members have contributed to Artists from the Coal Mine and their work is an interesting collection of styles and imagery. Werner Köntopp and Peter Buchwald are both respected photographers in Germany and Köntopp's industrial imagery contrasts hugely with Buchwald's lengthily exposed portraits.

White's interpretative work on the German mines suits its cavern-like space excellently and a similar mining backdrop can be found in Gitta Witzke's 'Gymnastik in Wanne-Eickel' series.

Interestingly the group received no funding from Cork 2005 to make the journey over the Cork despite the obvious

European cultural connection. Regardless, they have arrived with a suitably eye-catching array of work which can be found at the Mac Curtain St venue until the end of this month.

