

WORLDS

Cathryn Scott discovers how artist **Sarah Hope** is using the latest in technology to give a new lease of life to one of Wales' oldest treasures



ence is one which excites Hope. "The more people who see the work the better," she laughs before adding that the Mabinogion works have been well received outside Wales where people are fascinated by the myths.

The sketches she has so far produced relate to the first tale in the collection, that of Pwyll Prince Of Dyfed, but she hopes to create similar pieces based on some of the other stories.

Hope, who has lived in Wales all her life apart from the few years she spent studying for an art degree in Cheltenham, says this is the first Welsh-themed work she has produced. The artist has previously concentrated on paintings and still life, quite a lot of which has been abstract and some of which has been classed as rather risqué. She tells me when her Mabinogion collection was displayed in Swindon, she also included a selection of life drawings – male nudes. However, those in charge of the venue, which was hosting a pantomime at the same time said the works were unsuitable for the young children in the audience. A fair point, but perhaps the fact the works they used to replace Hope's included female torsos is an indication that the art world still has a lot to learn about equal opportunities. ■

www.sarahhope.com
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knows for certain who was the first to write the stories down. Close examination of a number of manuscripts suggest the tales changed and merged over the years and what has been passed down to us today is far different to the originals.

"I was fascinated with the exciting myths," says Hope, now 26. "I thought they would work well as pieces of art." Which they do – even more so when she explains the techniques used. "My approach to drawings is not precious. I will rub out and draw over things. The drawing process is suitable to the Mabinogion as it's actually like a story in itself." She says the different branches of her work have built up in a similar way to the stories themselves, where traces of the different layers added are still visible in the final piece.

After displaying her Mabinogion collection across the border in Swindon, Hope – whose twin sister Nicola is also an artist – has recently added her work to the art-from-wales.com website, an on-line gallery which specialises in work featuring the beauty of Wales and Welsh heritage, letting artists promote themselves free of charge.

The prospect of sharing this on-line gallery with over 100 works and being viewed by a potential world-wide audi-

Like many school children educated through the medium of Welsh, Cardiff-based artist Sarah Hope was introduced to the delights of the Mabinogion at an early age.

The collection of 12 folk stories date back as far as the sixth-century

and were passed down over the centuries by the *cyfarwydd*, or professional story teller, before being written down in manuscript form in the 13th-century. Part of the mystery surrounding the magical myths, which are generally considered one of the biggest treasures of Welsh literature, is no-one