THE CLAW: Jo Killalee’s painting based on her X-ray

ARTHRITIC patients attending Tallaght Hospital have discovered the world is at their finger tips – after one lady was selected as runner-up in the Art and Health Competition of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy.

Jo Killalee, a patient at the hospital’s Rheumatology Department, was invited to attend classes in the National Centre for Arts and Health which is based in the local health facility.

The art classes are a joint initiative between the Rheumatology Department and the National Centre and provide patients with the chance to try art for the first time, find a new interest and explore the benefits of art for people with arthritis.

The year-long programme saw patients studying the works of famous artists who also suffered from arthritis – such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Raoul Dufy and Paul Klee.

X-rays of the patients’ arthritic joints were also used as inspiration, with all pieces being hung in the Tallaght Community Arts centre.

Jo’s winning painting, entitled The Claw, was inspired and based on an X-ray of her arthritic hand and is a clear example of the creative work that people suffering with this inflammatory disease can produce.

Dr David Kane, Consultant Rheumatologist at Tallaght Hospital, said: “The outlet to creativity has positively enhanced general well being and a sense of worth in patients who believed their damaged joints were not fit for purpose.”

He added that Jo, whose work was exhibited in the World Congress in Amsterdam last week, is absolutely delighted to have achieved so much with her art and has gone on to attend further art classes since joining the first group.

One patient attending the class, said: “When I realised that I could make art with my hands, I thought ‘what next?’”

For further information, call the centre on 4142076.