

-UNFOLD-

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Venues

RUA RED, South Dublin Arts Centre Dublin

August 2014

Sean Hollywood Arts Centre Newry

September 2014

Parliament Buildings Stormont, Belfast

October 2014

The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, Co. Clare

December - January 2015



Simon Hamilton, MLA Minister for Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland Executive



Simon Harris, TD Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with responsibility for Office of Public Works

Foreword

Since 1997, the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in Northern Ireland have been collaborating on touring exhibitions that bring works of art from both collections to venues throughout the island. The exhibitions have developed into a successful cultural partnership that has led to the work of hundreds of artists being seen by thousands of visitors in arts centres, libraries, colleges, heritage properties and public buildings over the years.

OPW and DFP are delighted to collaborate with Tallaght based arts centre. RUA RED in the organisation of this year's exhibition. In 2013, RUA RED invited OPW and DFP to take part in its inaugural Young Curators project. The project involved inviting a small team of students from the Institute of Technology in Tallaght to select works from both public collections with the end result being the creation of an exhibition of contemporary art. The title of the exhibition unfolded as the process did the nine students spent time in both Dublin and Belfast, viewing artworks, discussing their personal choices, undertaking research and meeting with

staff from OPW and DFP before finally making their curatorial decisions which have become the *Unfold* exhibition. It has proven a most worthwhile project for OPW and DFP, opening up the collections to new possibilities for future exhibitions. It is evident from their comments that the students benefited from the experience and that projects which foster links between education and culture are worth pursuing.

The exhibition opens in RUA RED at the end of July, then travels to the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre in Newry in September, on to Stormont Parliament Buildings in October and finishes its tour in Ennistymon Courthouse Gallery in December.

We would like to acknowledge the participation of the Institute of Technology in Tallaght, the RUA RED team and all those involved in the various venues hosting this year's exhibition. We also wish to thank the artists for creating the art works that enable such exhibitions to take place, without your creativity and vision, such ventures would not be possible.

Enjoy the exhibition.

Margaret Arthur

Transition

Intaglio etching 31.5 x 43 cm 2003

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Bangor

Transition reflects a life change. The central image has three little birds flying up and away from a nest. On the left is a panel with microscopic patterns taken from brain cells at the beginning of life. This piece seems to represent the passing of time and unfolding of life.



Basil Blackshaw RUA, HRHA

Lough Neagh Winter

Oil on canvas 58 x 87.5 cm 1978

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Antrim

Blackshaw's work is known to embrace the animal figure and country landscape, the artist has a flair for creating an alluring atmosphere with simplistic and attractive brush strokes. Lough Neagh Winter is a flawless example of his remarkable technique. The artwork accomplishes an abstract but familiar aura to the observer.



Lawson Burch RUA

Church at Macharaviaya

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 46 cm Purchased 1983

Collection of DFP

Lived and worked in Belfast

This piece, both in terms of presentation and content appears to fit very well with On Your Own (pg 46) by Eddie Mallon. The colour and style is strikingly similar as is the sparse subject matter. It looks like another part of the same picture but taken from a different, slightly higher angle. This maybe offers a different viewpoint on the world. When the pictures are side by side it can suggest that these are thoughts of the lone person in On Your Own.



Andrew Butler

Diptych

Charcoal on paper 64 x 101 cm Purchased 1995

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Northern Ireland

It is a ruggedly sketched diptych portrait of a seemingly distressed man. Besides being a striking graphic, it illustrates the different personas needed in everyday life and the struggle to find your one true self. The dark visual and underlying theme of this sketch and the progression it portrays fits seamlessly into the exhibition.





Mathilde Corbineau

Self Transformation

Digital print 63 x 49 cm 2013

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Cork

When we saw this piece, a few of us, completely independently, likened the structures to white blood cells. Self Transformation expresses duality as well as symmetry. Is it about how one thing can be seen two different ways, or is it about the similarity between the two overlapping shapes, or is it about one shape splitting into two separate entities like cells? We all read it different ways, and maybe that was the point.



Dorothy Cross

After Thaddeus

Photo-etching 65 x 50 cm 1998

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Connemara

This etching is a reaction piece created in response to *The* Wounded Poacher by Harry Jones Thaddeus. In this work, the artist guides the viewer by selecting two small, specific parts of the canvas to show, and isolates them. This is an intense scene, and the cordoning off of the main points of focus maximises the impact, which gives the viewer some idea of the artist's response to the original piece. This piece is an interesting statement about interpretation and how even first-hand experience can be edited by vantage point and context.



Tom Dalton

Plode

Etching Collage on paper Watercolour and pencil on paper 32 x 21 cm, 22 x 21 cm, 21 x 13 cm 2011

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Cork

This is one of my favourite pieces of art. It ties in with the natural and human side of the exhibition with the etching of the human-like figure hanging upside down and the trees evoking a sense of calm and tranquillity. The artist describes it as being in between "coming into being and coming undone". It is visually stunning with an underlying meaning for the viewer to take away for themselves.

—Rachael Kennedy







Rita Duffy RUA

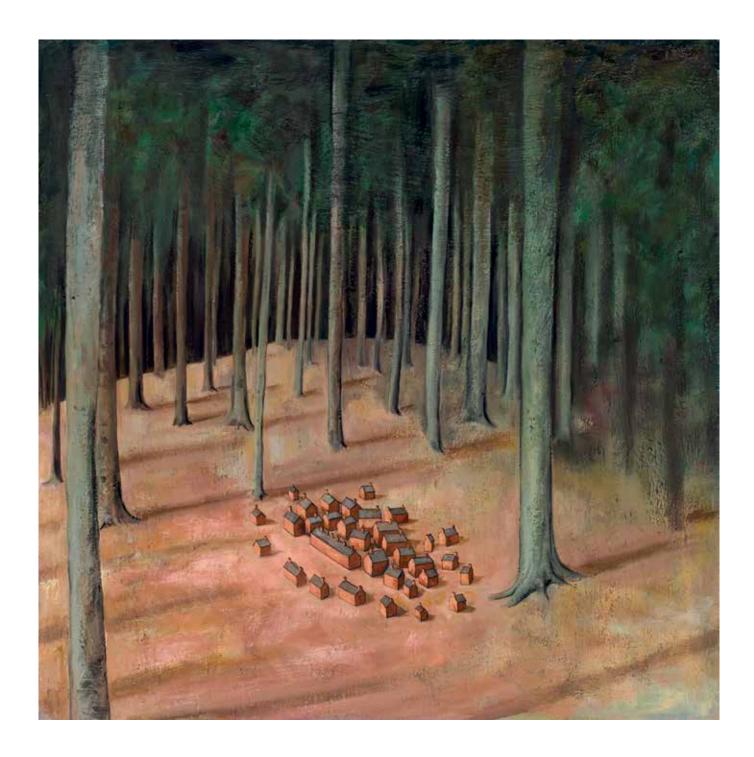
Clearing

Oil on canvas 121 x 121 cm 1998

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Belfast

It is said that the small things in life can be the things that count most. I feel this piece reflects that search for the little things, spotting what you wouldn't normally observe in what is maybe just an everyday situation. The village on the forest floor represents the animal kingdom living in their own metropolis all around us every day that sometimes we just don't notice as we go about living our own lives.



Jason Ellis

Luxembourg Rose

Italian limestone 23 x 46 x 15 cm 2013

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin and Sligo

Luxembourg Rose is an immaculate carving which displays a deep knowledge and appreciation of the medium. So beautifully executed in limestone, the desire to touch the sculpture is hard to fight. It is remarkable how Ellis captures the human form in its trueness.



Frank Eyre

Static

Oil on canvas 91 x 122 cm Purchased 1993

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Bangor

Static is an abstract piece that immediately stands out with its vibrant colours and vertical lines. The brush strokes and layers catch the eye and command attention. When looking at the painting it induces feelings of dream like memories, the colours are warm and inviting.



Brian Ferran

Girl with Birds

Oil on canvas 75 x 75 cm 1983

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Belfast and Donegal

The colour palette and inclusion of birds in flight in this piece mirrors the aesthetics of Margaret Arthur's *Transition* piece. The figure of a girl is contrasted with the darkness behind her, a darkness from which the birds emerge. Perhaps the darkness represents the subconscious or the identity of the girl, and the birds her emergence from that darkness, a change in her consciousness.



Philip Flanagan

Concrete Form with Pink

Acrylic on linen 50 x 61 cm 2006

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Belfast

Concrete Form with Pink is a painting that unfolds the more you stare at it. The vertical lines have a loneliness to them, a stillness that eventually starts to drip down the canvas. The colours used are striking yet partner together beautifully. There is a certain energy between the colours and textures that almost fight against each other whilst at the same time the lines and preciseness gives it a calming feeling.

—Gemma Butterly



Richard Gorman

Naama

Lithograph 66 x 48 cm 1991

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Milan

This piece is an abstract in earthy tones and I think what attracted us at first was the way that it breaks the frame, refusing to conform to straight lines, and also the abundance of shapes and designs that form the composition. It looks fluid and changeable, and combines so many different textures and tones that it welcomes the viewer to explore and it's easy to get lost in.



Helen Kerr

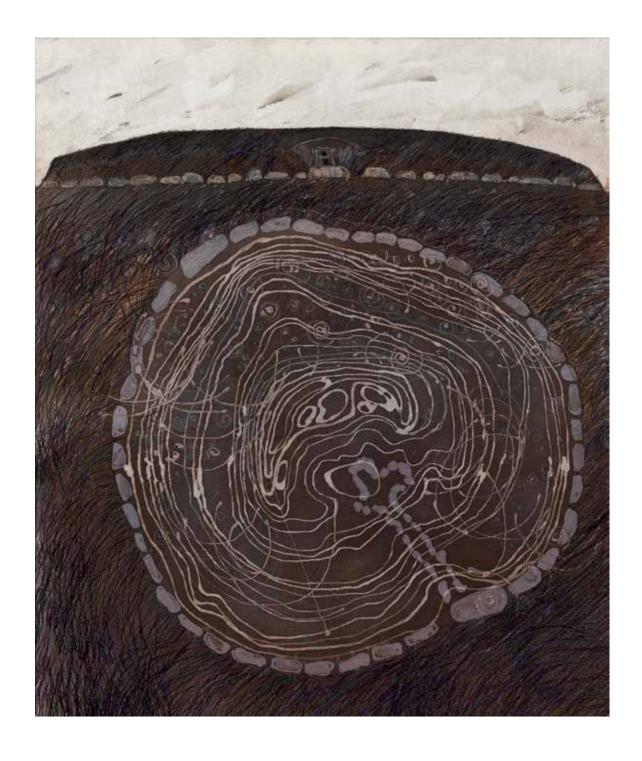
Stone Dream

Batik on cotton 66 x 61 cm Purchased 2002

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Down

Stone Dream is a response to the ancient site of Newgrange. Its timeless atmosphere fittingly resonates with history and the unfolding of time. It connects us to a civilization long gone but yet is still within us.



Caoimhe Kilfeather

Crest

Patinated perforated steel 159 x 71 cm 2013

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

Crest mixes a traditional craft with industrial material, and brings the two together in one hanging. The duality of this piece is what fascinated us; the organic form made from inorganic material. Opinion, context, and viewpoint dictate the meaning of the piece; are the two opposing ideas competing for visual space or combining harmoniously to create something new and beautiful?



Ciarán Lennon

Ground and Light X

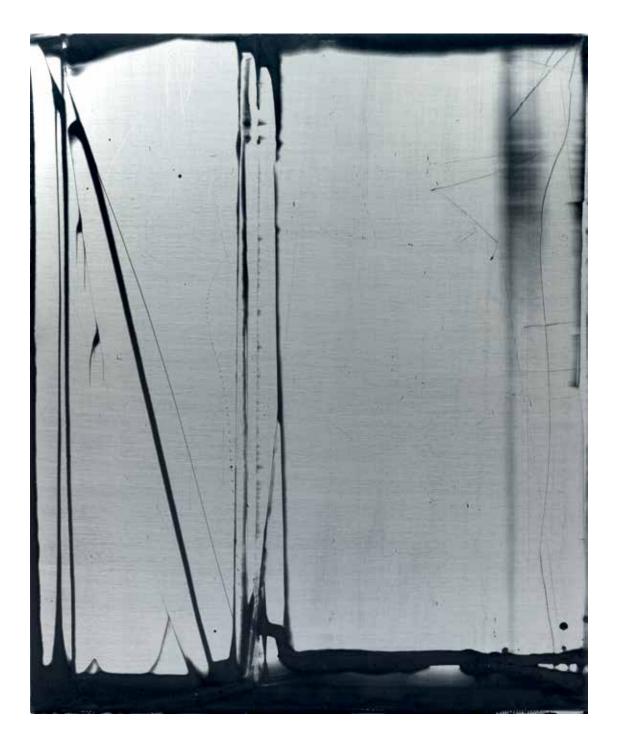
Aluminium block and acrylic pigment 48 x 40 cm 2014

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

This piece, for me, is a representation of hard work. We can see where Ciarán tried using many different colours on this but ended up scraping them off and trying again. It shows that things rarely work out perfectly for us on first attempt but that it is only from trying over and over again that we achieve an end result that we can be truly happy with.

—Kevin Agnew



Jane Fogarty

Young Curators Facilitator

Unfold is an exhibition curated by nine digital media students from the Institute of Technology Tallaght. Importantly, the exhibition is the culmination of many connections. individual. collective and artistic. The inaugural 'Young Curators' project has bound South Dublin Arts Centre, RUA RED. The Office of Public Works, The Department of Finance and Personnel of Northern Ireland. The Institute of Technology Tallaght and, of course, the nine curators together under the common goal of curation. Collaboration lies at the heart of this project. Collectively, the various contributors to the young curators project have demonstrated a determination towards the development of community engaged cultural practices.

To curate an exhibition is to bring people together, it is the meeting of people with art and each other. The importance of engaging an audience with contemporary art should not be underestimated. Contemporary art is a tool for connecting with the world around us, it deals

laterally with human, scientific, social, political, economical and global concerns. Through contemporary art there is the potential for the development of ideas and change in our society. Art is for everyone and therefore it is important for the public to feel a sense of place within our cultural institutions. The young curators initiative is a new and exciting strategy for engaging the wider community with contemporary art. This project directly highlights questions of taste, the importance of the audience and the responsibility of art. It is through this engagement that the students have come to consider the role of art within our communities. The experience has contributed to demystifying the curatorial process and has increased familiarity with various artistic practices.

The opportunity for nine students to direct and develop an exhibition according to their own agenda is a huge responsibility and a brave step on behalf of the OPW and DFP. Each of the nine curators involved brought their

own interests, experiences and opinions to the process. It is these diverse influences which have provided a fresh approach to engaging with the respective public art collections. This intersection of people with varying interests and ideas has provided a fruitful experience of shared learning. The ambition of the collaboration with the OPW and DFP is to bring new audiences into our galleries and to engage with the artworks from both public collections. Through this experience the group has been exposed to some of the most important art that Ireland and Northern Ireland has to offer and have pushed the boundaries of their expectations.

Rather than following a prescribed theme, *Unfold* is a selection by the students of artworks according to their own tastes and interconnected logics. They themselves provide the link between individual pieces. Therefore, the exhibition can be seen as idiosyncratic to the nine individuals who were involved in discussing and debating the value of specific artworks by

leading contemporary artists. The title itself sums up their experience of engaging with the vast collections of art. The process has unfolded through dialogue, debate and collaboration. Links were made between pieces based on material or content and the selection of works can be read as a reflection of human relationships. To unfold something is to open it out, to reveal, to disclose. The act of curation has been unfolded: the experience of creating an exhibition has been revealed and the journey along the way has been disclosed.

Young Curators Selections



Young Curators

Denis Burke

Nos. 3,8,18

I initially took up this project because I thought it would be a great opportunity to gain a better experience and understanding of art, as well as how exhibitions are created and produced. I learnt a lot on this project. So much was covered, from starting with just the seed of an idea, deciding a theme, going through art collections to deciding on the final layout. The project promoted teamwork and discipline, giving us deadlines to work towards, a skill that I would say is invaluable to success in not just business, but life also. From participating in this project, I will never look at an exhibition or a gallery the same way again. To an outsider an exhibition might seem fairly straightforward, like you just hang pictures on a wall but it's not, it's so much more. I developed skills on this project that will stay, and be useful to me for a long time to come.

Sinead Byrne

Nos. 2,19 I had found that this project was of interest to me because I have always held an interest in art and design during secondary school and had contemplated pursuing the subject though college and a career. I also had an interest in visiting art galleries and exhibitions and also the course that I am studying in college is called Creative Digital Media which has various modules that interlink with various mediums in the world of art. The prospect of being part of a group that creates a theme for the exhibition with the roles of choosing the artworks to present to the public and to plan the layout of the exhibition was highly enticing to me, as I have a great interest in photography and the two fields would overlap with one another. To be part of an exhibition and learn curating skills is a great benefit to young and budding photographers, as it highlights the aspects that are crucial when laying out the floor plan along with what lighting will best suit the artworks but also the theme. There is always a chance that the photographer could end up curating their own exhibition or be in the position to work with a curator to organise their own exhibition. I am grateful for what I have learned through the project as it has given light to the vast amount of work that needs to be put in to curating an exhibition. The selecting of artworks can be quite cut-throat which proves to be quite difficult but the overall experience has been thoroughly enjoyable and informative.

Gemma Butterly

Nos. 9,10,12,25

My experience in the process of curating an exhibition from start to finish with this project is extremely fortunate as a student and a unique experience. The knowledge I have gained in this practice will benefit me greatly in the future. It has sparked a love of art that I will carry on for the rest of my life.

Also working with a large team of creative people and making decisions as a group is a great skill. An important part for me personally would be the practice in this type of industry, to have this on my résumé is a huge plus. It is hard work but I am excited to see the end result and the exhibition. It is by far one of my best experiences with college. Simply viewing these beautiful pieces of art, in itself, is a wonderful practice and opportunity.

Kevin Agnew

Nos. 16,23

Coming to this Young Curators project I had no idea what to expect, had never seen or heard anything about curating an exhibition so I didn't really know what I was getting myself into. After our first meeting however, it became quite clear what was involved in curating this show and what was expected of us. At first it seemed like there was quite a lot of work for us to do but once we started viewing the art work and trying to come up with a theme I started to get quite into it and it became more fun than work.

It has been such a privilege to be involved in this project as it is something we would not of have had a chance to do elsewhere. I would love to see this carry on in the coming years and I would highly recommend the process to any young student.

Maline Campbell

Nos. 5,6,13,15,29,30

This Young Curators project was suggested to us by a college lecturer and we jumped at the chance. The OPW and DFP verv generously opened their doors to us and let us mull over the collection of works, helped us to see connections and relationships, and enabled us to express ourselves by contextualizing different pieces. We were guided by the most creative people I've ever met and exposed to many different artists and galleries, making this project a fascinating and enriching experience from the word 'go'. We've learned so much in such a short time, and I think this exhibition has shown us a side to ourselves as a group/generation that we weren't aware of before.

Rachael Kennedy

Nos. 7,22,28

My experience on this project has been nothing short of a pleasure. I am so privileged to have been given the chance to be involved in something like this. I have always been interested in art and art history and I have a new found interest in curating. I am so happy with the way the exhibition came together despite the ups and downs. Thank you to everyone who made this opportunity possible, I am truly grateful. I am hoping to do all I can to be involved in curating more exhibitions in the

Lisa Burke

Nos. 20,21,24

When I first heard about this project I was very excited as I have always had a passion for art and frequently attend exhibitions in my free time. Curating this exhibition has been a fantastic experience filled with fun and learning from day one. I think the overall experience has not only brought the group of curators closer together as friends but for me it has also opened my eyes up to the level of great work that goes into running exhibitions. It's been amazing to have had the opportunity to be a part of this project and what I've learned and the experiences I've had will stay with me for a long time.

Shane Kelleher

Nos. 4,17,27

I came to this project hoping to gain a better understanding of art. I have always enjoyed art, but I haven't always got the deeper meanings that some people might take away from a piece. I tend to be drawn to aesthetically pleasing pieces, but I don't really know why they're so captivating.

That is why I thought this project would be perfect to further my understanding of art. Up until now, experienced curators and art graduates curated this show together, but this year a group of nine 3rd year media students are getting the chance.

Martin Kennedy

Nos. 1,11,14,26

The Young Curators project has been an extremely interesting and worthwhile experience. It has re-engaged me with a personal interest in art that I had long since neglected. I am once again reinvigorated, seeking out art and attending galleries. The project has sparked many creative ideas that I will explore over the coming months, including video and audio documentary production.

Jane Locke

Following the Blue Fox

Mixed media 26 x 26 cm 2007

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

This piece intrigued me from the moment I saw it. It is quite small but the closer you look, the more you see. The clock presents a rotating blue fox surrounded by lush and shadowy landscapes. The piece fits into the progressive theme that *Unfold* attempts to portray.



Eddie Mallon

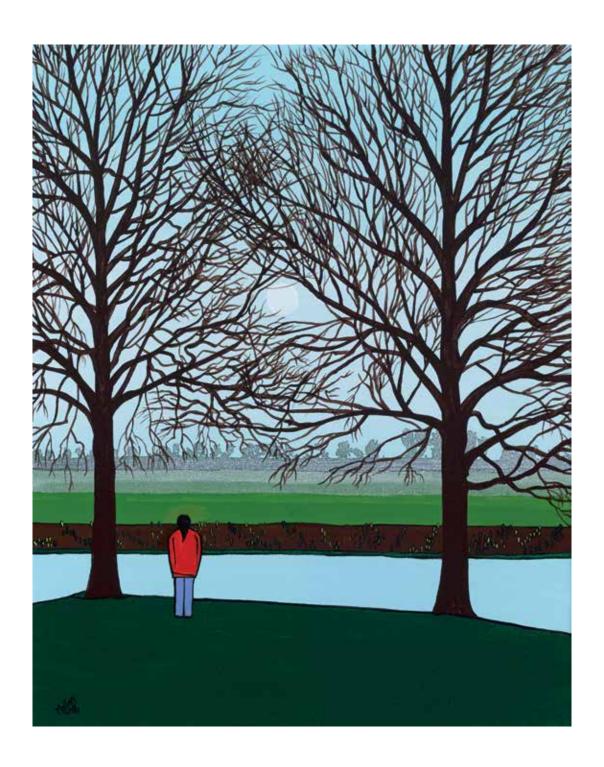
On Your Own

Acrylic on canvas 50 x 40 cm 1998

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Down

In a world that is ever busy, sometimes we need and don't always get time to ourselves, a time for our innermost thoughts and feelings. Especially with the interconnectivity of the internet, some people are afraid of being alone. Even a few minutes out of each hectic day to stop, think and observe the world around could lead to innermost peace, new ideas and creativity.



Ruth McHugh

Suite

Lambda print on dibond 4 panels, each 30 x 42 cm 2002

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

Suite is an interesting piece of work as it interlinks the worlds of architecture and dressmaking. The four images transfix the viewer by fabricating a sharp resemblance between the shadows created by the crevices of white satin and peelings of old stone. McHugh has attained a remarkable comparison between two man-made objects consisting of natural materials.









Mary McIntyre

Interior Landscape II

Photographic print 122 x 152 cm 2000

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Belfast

This piece reflects the dark side of human nature and emotions. The disconnected and sometimes melancholy ways of modern consumerist living are mirrored within the stark, lifeless disused office. This evokes certain emotions within the viewer. State of mind, anguish and despair can be seen throughout some of the pieces in this exhibition, McIntyre's photograph complements these darker items in the collection.

—Lisa Burke



Emma McMahon

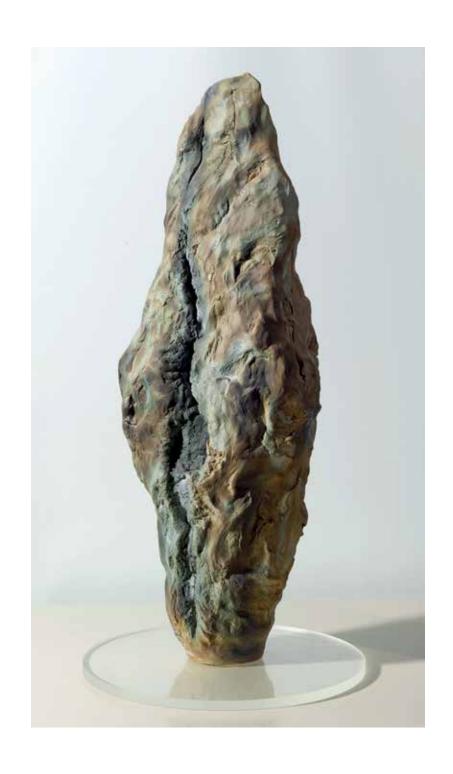
Standing Stone

Plaster 60 x 28 x 28 cm Purchased 1998

Collection of DFP

This ambiguous form is both thought-provoking and interesting, allowing the audience the freedom of interpretation. McMahon's excellent craftsmanship exhibits an aesthetically pleasing creative form. The organic nature of this sculpture was what first drew our attention to it, as there are many similar pieces that explore biological entities featured in this exhibition.

—Lisa Burke



Joseph McWilliams PPRUA

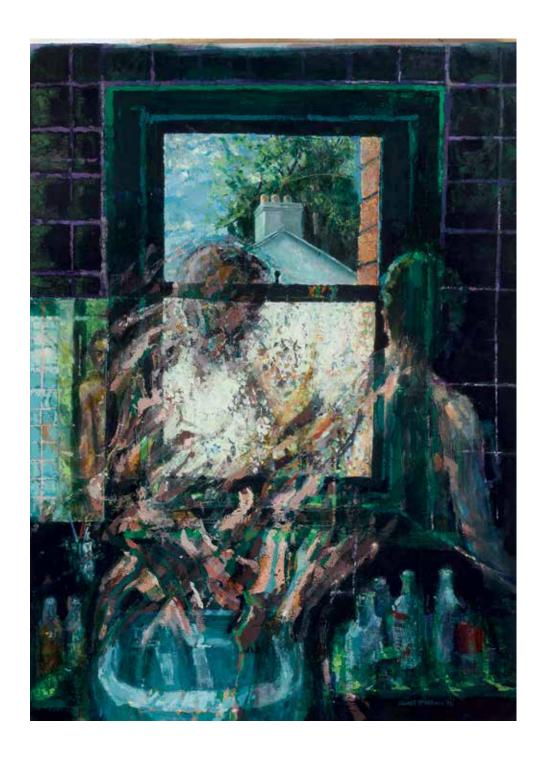
Self-Portrait in Bathroom

Oil paint on canvas 68 x 48 cm 1993

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Belfast

I was immediately drawn to this piece when I saw it. The colours and subject matter evoked a sense of depression and anxiety from the artist, showing a vulnerable side, a person at their most "human". I think because of this, it fits in with the human side of the exhibition, the human and the natural.



Seán Mulcahy

Placescape VII

Acrylic on paper 18 x 38 cm 2012

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

Mulcahy's Placescape VII, in my opinion, is a piece of symmetry, the two circles of colour are perfect prints of one another with the exception of the colour used. This piece has a very natural earthy feel to it, as though the two spheres are planets each with their own life-forms and ecosystems. The colour used is bright and inviting and the patterns it creates are completely unique like the veins running through a leaf. Each circle has its own patterns, showing that although on first glance things may seem similar, it is only if we take some time to look closely that we can see and appreciate the subtle differences.

—Kevin Agnew



Veronica Nicholson

Nature Morte—Road Kills

Colour photographs 24 panels, each 19 x 29 cm 1996—2002

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Offaly

This series of work was picked primarily because of the high contrast both visually and contextually in each piece. The juxtaposition between the living and dead elements within are highlighted using vibrant colours and striking imagery. Nicholson's unique representation of life brings opposite elements together in a complementary fusion. This series fits well within the exhibition following the predominant organic and natural processes.



Paul Nugent

Hypnosis

Acrylic and oil on canvas 40 x 30 cm 2009

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

This small painting in oil on canvas depicting a side altar of the Madonna in the hospital chapel alludes to a past when the meditative ritual of praying to a religious icon was seen as having the power to cure. This painting interested my eye, the striking colour on canvas and the dark blurry shadows reflects, to me, my feeling about religion: that religion is alluring in its mysteriousness yet eerie in its shadows and secrets.



Niamh O'Malley

Untitled

Oil on mirror with coloured glass 30 x 32 cm framed 2011

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

Untitled explores materials and illusion. Niamh's use of brass coloured glass and mirror creates a piece that morphs, unfolding many layers and depths depending on the angle and distance of perception.



Nigel Rolfe

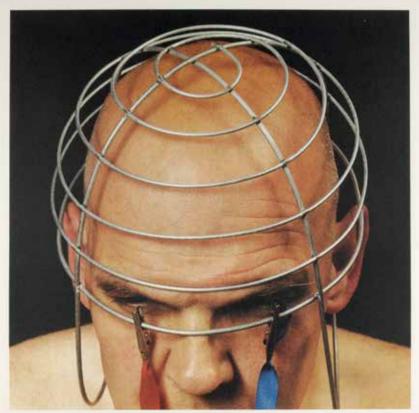
Self-Portrait in Despair – For those who confuse creativity with capitalism

Digital print 63 x 49 cm 1996

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Dublin

The piece is a portrait of a man wearing a wire basket on his head. The basket envelopes his head and there is a red crocodile clip attached beneath his right eye and a blue one beneath his left. It's quite a big piece with a beautiful wooden frame surrounding it giving just enough room to breathe. The title of the piece gives a good insight into its meaning. To me it shows a man held captive, not in a physical, but in a mental form. Living in a society where people think they are free but are really held captive by the greed and aspirations of capitalism. It shares the common human theme with many of the pieces in this exhibition.



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Karen Sloan

Dark Pool

Oil on canvas 130 x 100 cm 1995

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Ontario, Canada

Dark Pool is a large piece with beautiful heavy brushstrokes giving a mysterious effect. It triggers an interest in me for the unknown. The dark mysterious pool also resembles the vast unchartered areas of space. The heavy brushstrokes give this piece a nice flow which connect pieces either side perfectly.



Chris Wilson

Displacement

Bronze 31.5 x 15.5 x 15.5 cm 2012

Collection of OPW

Lives and works in Antrim

Displacement is a small-scale model of an enormous place, and seems to explore that place from all angles and perspectives, inviting the viewer to engage and change their vantage point to consider all aspects and planes of the sculpture. It's an interesting piece because it considers the subject-matter fully, and the care taken with every surface and angle is apparent. It almost seems to be showing a place from several viewpoints at once.



Ross Wilson

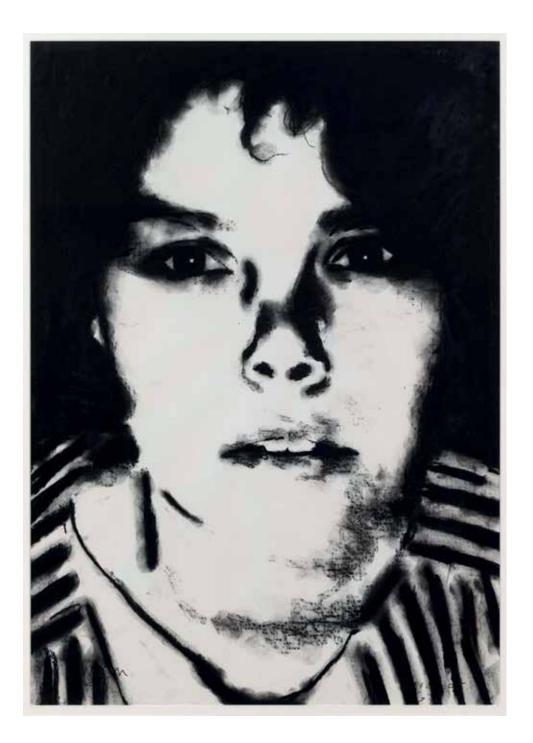
Study of CG

Charcoal on paper 84 x 60 cm Purchased 1984

Collection of DFP

Lives and works in Northern Ireland

We were struck by the directness of this piece; the frank gaze, the simplicity of its black-and-white nature. Everything about this piece is straightforward, but it portrays a face that expresses what is most complex; humanity, emotions, and grey areas. It's a shocking contrast that jumps out at you.



Acknowledgements

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Photography

OPW: Denis Mortell DFP: Bryan Rutledge Artist: Caoimhe Kilfeather

OPW Art Management Group

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