

draíocht

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The ladder is always there

Shell/Ter Artists Collective (S/TAC) with 10 Emerging Artists

Friday 08 December 2023 — Saturday 03 February 2024

Ground and First Floor Galleries



Shell/Ter Artist Collective (S/TAC): Diana Copperwhite, Allyson Keehan, Niamh McGuinne, Sharon Murphy, Geraldine O'Neill in association with ten emerging artists; Maya Brezing, Matthew Coll, Karen Ebbs, Spencer Glover, Ami Jackson, Mary Martin, Fiach McGuinne, Sorcha McNamara, Eileen Leonard Sealy and Catherine Ward.

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Open Mon-Sat 10am - 6pm



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Shell/ter Artist Collective

Shell/ter is made up of artists Diana Copperwhite, Allyson Keehan, Niamh McGuinne, Sharon Murphy, and Geraldine O’Neill.

The collective developed organically during the pandemic, initially through shared dialogue about the effects, both personal and professional, of a shifting and unpredictable world. The purpose was to create a space where members could explore, enrich and diversify their practice while supporting each other. The artists work in very different formats, yet their underlying reoccupations and the issues they address overlap.

“The word Shelter means to me what you care for and how you do that both physically and psychologically. The importance to me of the Shell/ter Artist Collective is that it is a dynamic space, one in which to experiment and find connections that you might not find on your own.

My hope is that it continues to change and adapt ... while remaining a form of shelter in itself.”

- Shell/ter Artist, Niamh McGuinne

Their most recent exhibition was *shelter*, curated by Anne Hodge (S/TAC artist’s Collective and invited artists and works from the NGI Collection), National Gallery of Ireland (Print and Drawing Galleries), July - November 2023. Forthcoming exhibitions include; *the ladder is always there* (S/TAC Shell/ter Artist Collective and invited emerging artists) at Draíocht Dublin, curated by S/TAC, December 2023 - Feb 2024; *in a dream in the happy house*, (S/TAC Shell/ter Artist Collective) at Limerick City Gallery, Curated by Una McCarthy, June-Sept 2024; *Visual Projections and other works*, (S/TAC Shell/ter Artist Collective) at GOMA, Waterford, curated by Jenna Whelan, October 2024.

Exhibiting Artists



Diana Copperwhite

Artist Bio

Diana Copperwhite (RHA) is a member of Aosdána. Recent solo exhibitions ONOMATOPOEIA at The Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda. Limerick City Gallery and touring to the Galway International Arts Festival (2023). Sounding of Silhouettes Kevin Kavanagh Gallery (2023). Recent group exhibitions with the Shelter Collective and It Took A Century a survey exhibition of the women members of the RHA at The National Gallery of Ireland (2023). Who do we say we are at the Snite Museum, Indiana (2022). In January 2024 she will have her first solo exhibition at Flowers Gallery, London.

Artist Statement

My paintings explore the relationship between colours, gestures, figuration, and representation. I give structure to the unseen world of atoms and molecules to examine the psychological and spatial interpretation of self. Layering fragmented sources that range from personal memory to science, media and internet, my canvases become worlds in which the real is unreal and this unreality is in a constant state of reforming.

Exhibition Works



Jenga, 2023

80 x 80 cm, Oil on canvas

Copperwhite's painting explores that relationship between colour, gestures, figuration, and the abstract representation of spaces where memories perception and optics create a painting language that gives structure to the unseen world of atoms and molecules to examine the psychological and spatial interpretation of self.



Paler Prisms 2, 2023

80 x 80 cm, Oil on canvas

Copperwhite's painting explores that relationship between colour, gestures, figuration, and the abstract representation of spaces where memories perception and optics create a painting language that gives structure to the unseen world of atoms and molecules to examine the psychological and spatial interpretation of self.



Allyson Keehan

Artist Bio

Allyson Keehan is an Irish visual artist based between Ireland and Scotland. She was awarded PhD in Fine Art from Glasgow School of Art in 2021 titled 'Painting and Materiality: Three Creative Strategies for Transformation', MA in Fine Art Byam Shaw School of Art UAL 2004, and BA Fine Art Painting Limerick School of Art and Design 2002. Her research is in the expanded field of painting and the use of drapery in art. Keehan regularly exhibits nationally and internationally and her work can be found in permanent collections including Arts Council of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin and the OPW. In 2023, Keehan was shortlisted for the Contemporary British Painting Prize, and in 2022, Keehan received the Time Space Money Artist Network Company Bursary, and shortlisted for BEEP Painting Prize. Other selected awards include: Bet Low Trust 2023, Wellcome Trust scholarship 2015, Merit Prize Golden Fleece Award 2012, and Arts Council's Bursary 2012. Also, she is a founding member of S/TAC: Shell/ter Artist Collective.

Artist Statement

My work stems from a 20-year inquiry into drapery in painting. In 2021, I completed a PhD on material transformations in expanded painting practices. This research considers relationships between material structure and surface, illusionary space and real space, internality and externality, and how these subjects meet and transform through the language of painting. By expanding the notion of painting, I produce three-dimensional hybrids that examine drapery and conventional painting parameters.

My exploratory practice involves experimentation with new and unconventional materials. At present, I'm exploring the potential of cardboard as a robust material to express vulnerability and emotion. Despite its connotations of practicality and utility, cardboard can be folded and draped to create evocative shapes. In addition to cardboard, I use velvet and satin, which are strongly associated with the human body, to create my work. Together, these materials form the core of my repertoire. The work I do with fabric gives material form to my inner world. Drapery is defined by what it does. It exposes relationships, tensions, spaces and forms. Embedded in female desire and womanhood, the work ignites personal beliefs and experiences. With it, I am able to express thoughts and feelings that are often difficult to articulate. This form of expression allows me to explore and make sense of my experiences of infertility, fertility treatment, and pregnancy. A familiarity with needles and bruising induced objectivity and detachment from my body. Over the years of treatment, intimacy was lost. In these intense feelings, textures and material relationships with the body play crucial roles. Drapery in this instance becomes a metaphor for the body, a skin-like organ that stretches, folds, creases, or that can retain beauty when active or fade with age. By painting the fabric in these states I can capture the moments and in-still within my experiences.

Exhibition Works



Strange Desire: Pink Satin, 2023

32 x 64cm, Oil on panel with artist frame and chain

This work is part of a series of works that explores pink satin as a metaphor for the artist's skin. Folds and creases make up the shallow picture plane, and one drip of fluid trickles down



Red/Abject, 2018

20 x 23cm, Oil on panel with artist frame and chain

This work is named after the abject quality of the painting. In the title, the term abject is in reference to Kristeva, 1980 and the association of the object to the female body. Its abjectness is in its rejection and discarded-ness, where the boundary of inside/outside is ill-defined, and borders are faint.



Cardboard Drape Fantasy No.1, 2023

40 x 105cm, Cardboard

In her practice, the artist researches and tests new materials to create her drapes paintings. The cardboard is a utilitarian material that echoes its abject qualities, a key concern in her work. Cardboard can be thought of, in this instance, as rooted in ideas of the abject, deemed common, inappropriate, or discarded



Niamh McGuinne

Artist Bio

Niamh McGuinne is a Dublin based visual artist and MFA graduate from NCAD (2020). She has an MA in Fine Art Conservation (1991) from Newcastle Polytechnic and is a part-time paper conservator in the National Gallery of Ireland.

As a member of STAC (Shell/Ter Artist Collective), she exhibited 'Shelter' in the National Gallery of Ireland (2023) and as 1/3 of MIDDEN Collective, she has exhibited in the Luan Gallery, Athlone, Takt Gallery Berlin and Lumen Gallery London. She recently exhibited her first major solo show 'Carapace', in the Highlanes Gallery Drogheda (2023). Recent group shows include 'Geomancy', IMPACT 22, Bristol (2022); 'you breathe differently down here', Draíocht (2022); 'City', Highlanes Gallery Drogheda (2021) and 'Woman in the Machine/Artworks', VISUAL Carlow (2021). She is currently 'Artist in Residence, Senge Group, Chair of Organic Chemistry, TCD'; supported by Science Foundation Ireland. She is a member of The Darkroom, is a recipient of an Arts Council Visual Arts Bursary Award for 2021 and has received a 2023 Centre Culturel Irlandais residency in Paris. A member of Graphic Studio Dublin since 2010, she currently serves on the board of directors.

Artist Statement

My practice combines print, film and installation. It is best described as expanded print and I regularly incorporate structures in metal and textile. The work has an element of the performative, either as a space or as costume in which to interact. My approach is rooted in the processes of making and materiality, which my background as a paper conservator informs. Characteristics associated with deterioration and ideas of perfection intermingle with questions regarding deviance, acceptance and distorted perception.

Exhibition Works



A word in the ear, 2023

600 x 34cm, Transferred monoprint and etching on polyester film

Responding to the title of the exhibition this work addresses the importance and value of encouragement. 'A word in the ear' could be a word of advice, a recommendation or alternatively a warning. The Figures themselves are nebulous, with blurred boundaries and lacking definition...in the process of being formed. Is the yellow that fills some figures honey or bile? As artists, especially emerging ones, the difference a word can make is more pronounced. With experience comes a certain hardening of the exterior, but while the interior may remain soft, rejection and success are perhaps a little easier to navigate.



Sharon Murphy

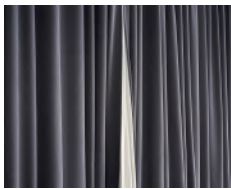
Artist Bio

Sharon Murphy is a visual artist whose practice incorporates photography, installation and text. She has BA degrees in Photography (IADT, 2014) and English Literature (NUI, 1985). She has a background in theatre and performance and holds a Masters degree in Drama (UCD, 1993). She recently received a diploma in the History of European Painting (TCD 2021). Since 2014 Murphy has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in galleries in Ireland, UK, Netherlands and Spain and her work is held in private and public collections. She is a member of the Shell/Ter Artists Collective whose inaugural exhibition, Shelter, was shown at National Gallery Ireland 2023. In 2022 she was recipient of an artist residency at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris where she will present a solo show in 2024.

Artist Statement

Sharon Murphy is a visual artist whose practice is lens-based incorporating photography, installation and writing. Her work investigates the boundaries between the seen / unseen, fictive / real, conscious / (sub)liminal. Drawing on a background in theatre and informed by concepts in magic realism and psychoanalysis, recurring motifs in her work include: theatre curtains; carousels; circus tents, performative sites; embodied / disembodied staged spaces. Her works address uncertainty, the uncanny, the 'there / not there', linked to an investigation, quintessential to both photography and performance) of what it is the viewer is shown or is seeing.

Exhibition Works



Interval, 2017

135 x 109 cm, Large format 5 x 4 photographic print on fine art barayta archival paper

Drawing on a background in theatre and informed by concepts in magic realism and psychoanalysis, recurring motifs in Murphy's work include theatre curtains, shuttered carousels, circus tents, empty staged spaces. This work is part of a editioned series that underlines the elusive nature of the theatre curtain: as a motif of liminality and as a material object; as a threshold between the seen / unseen, fictive / real, conscious / unconscious.



Sharon Murphy and Geraldine O'Neill

Doppelganger, Diptych 2022/2023

140 x 100 cm , Photographic print on Photo Rag archival paper with pencil, gouache and acrylic

This collaborative work alludes to the notion of doppelganger (double-goer) from German folklore referencing the alterego / identical-double / spiritual opposite / positive-negative. Such doubleness is found in the painted figure on the ride, the interior/exterior of the shuttered carousel, in the fictive/real nature of photography and, in the illusionary quality of painting.



Geraldine O'Neill



Artist Bio

Geraldine O'Neill (b.1971) is one of Ireland's most recognisable artists. She is a member of the RHA since (2013), Aosdána (2015) and the Artists Collective Shell/ter (S/TAC) which she co-founded in 2020. A graduate of NCAD, she completed her MFA in 2008. She has exhibited extensively in Ireland and abroad.

Recent solo and selected group exhibitions include Shelter, with the S/TAC collective, The Print Gallery, National Gallery of Ireland(2023), It Took a Century, women artists and the RHA, The National Gallery of Ireland, 2023, Portrait Lab, The Model Sligo, (2022-23,) Solastalgia, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, (2022,) Meat and Potatoes, Crawford

Art Gallery, Cork, (2022) Golden Fleece Award 21 Years, Solstice Arts Centre, Navan (2022), Ground_Zero_ 360, Museum of Biblical Art, Dallas, USA (2021), New Perspectives, National Gallery of Ireland (2021), Blue, Garterlane Waterford (2020), 21st Century Ireland in 21 Artworks, Glebe House and Gallery, Letterkenny (2019), MAKing Art PAINTing, Draíocht (2019), In This Brief Time, Art, Environment and Ecology, A Symposium curated by Dr Yvonne Scott, Trinity College Dublin (2018,) Many-Worlds Interpretation agus rudaí eile nach iad, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, (2017,) Many Worlds, Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris (2017), Hold To The Now, SLAG Gallery, New York (2015).

Upcoming shows include The Sunset Belongs To You, a socially engaged portrait project with Mick O'Dea, The Model, Sligo, (2023-2024), In a Dream in a Happy House, with the S/TAC collective, Limerick City Gallery of Art (2024).

O'Neill has given many guest lectures and is currently an external examiner with Atlantic Technological University, Sligo. O'Neill's work is collected by the country's leading cultural institutions including The National Gallery of Ireland, Irish Museum of Modern Art, The Model, Sligo, Crawford Gallery, Cork, OPW and The Arts Council.

Artist Statement

I have long responded to the increasing confrontation with human engagement and relationship with the ecosystem, in particular the Anthropocene whose traces are now embedded within the geological layers of the Earth's structure. I make what I call "Slow Art" mostly painting but sometimes expanded paint, sculpture and print using traditional materials that is counter cultural to this fast paced disposable world that we now inhabit.

With my distinctive painterly approach I make many layered and often very large compositions that quote past masters such as Patinir, Breugal, but I also appropriate new images, collected and gathered of the overlooked and fragmented, scientific formula and its diagrams and children's drawings devising my own distinctive visual language. Found objects also feature such as the delicate stilled bird cadavers, gathered by care and gifted to me. All these elements reach across time and space and feature in my robustly crafted multiverses.

Exhibition Works



Diminished Vision, 2022

Sculptural painting installation

Originally envisaged as a group of seven, these are hand cast, plaster portable televisions, an archaic technology, representing the pace of change in the technology of how we see, what we see and where we see. On the screens are fresco-like paintings of found and encountered images collected ironically enough on O'Neill's phone- a stilled bird cadaver, gathered with care, a five spotted burnet moth, once plentiful 10 years ago but now disappeared from a particular area in Mayo. These screens signify a shared yet diminished vision in our age of an accelerating Anthropocene.



Maya Brezing

Artist Bio

Maya Brezing is an emerging Irish artist working and living in Dublin. She graduated NCAD in 2022 with a BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Art specialising in printmaking. She was awarded the Black Church Print Studio Graduate Award 2022 and is currently a full-time member. In January of this year, she started the Fingal Recent Graduate Residency at MART Gallery and Studios and exhibited in the *MART Awards Show* in April. Brezings upcoming shows include, *Unlimiting the Edition* in The Library Project in January 2024 and a three-person show in Ardgillan Gallery in April 2024. Her work is held in the Office of Public Works, St. Vincent's University Hospital and the DCU Art Collection.

Artist Statement

Taking inspiration from derelict, overgrown spaces around Dublin, I look at how nature constantly renews itself and reclaims spaces and buildings that have been abandoned. New shoots push through cracks in concrete, vines scale dilapidated walls and trees emerge from the remnants of old houses. Ecosystems, born from abandonment, become shelters for species seeking refuge from urbanisation and human destruction. These spaces become living examples of renewal and rebirth and offer a sense of hope. They remind us that even with environmental challenges and human neglect, nature has the power to heal and restore itself. While the man-made physical world will deteriorate, nature is constant. My work encourages us to reflect on our relationship with the natural world, our responsibility to protect it and the potential to coincide with it for a more harmonious future. Found objects that have outlived their purpose play a role in my prints and assemblages. I admire the hand-made, therefore my work has an imperfect tactile quality. My printed pieces layer the mechanical process of photography with loose, fluid hand-made marks. These different processes manifest the man-made and organic forms in my work. Intertwining imagery of rubble and ruins with the fragility of new growth.

Exhibition Works



New Shoots, 2023

16 x 22cm, Photo-etching and acrylic paint on handmade paper

The fast paced urbanisation of Dublin city was the springboard for this piece. While new office blocks and hotels are being constructed daily, no space is left for natural parks and reserves. The scaffolded building acts as a shelter, protecting this delicate new shoot. What if we could nurture and foster plant life like we care for these new buildings.



Gutter Growth, 2023

18 x 23cm, Photo-etching and acrylic paint on handmade paper

Through her photographic images the artist looks at how nature is constantly renewing itself and pushing its way through man-made structures. This photopolymer print shows a cluster of bright green weeds emerging from the gaps of an untouched manhole in London. The paper is handmade using scrap newsprint from the workshop.



Matthew Coll

Artist Bio

Matthew Coll is an Irish artist and occasional curator based in Dublin. They recently graduated from NCAD's Fine Art Painting BA in 2022 and work predominantly in Painting, Sculpture and Installation. Their most recent show *A Glimmer of Light and A Parting Presence* was exhibited at The NCAD 2022 Graduate Showcase and they are currently working towards a new body of work to be shown next summer at Clancy Quay Studios. Their first curatorial project *Radiant Abyss* featured site-specific work by Day Magee, Fiona Somers and Tallon and was shown at the College Lane Gallery in Howth from May to July of this year. Their work is included in several private and public collections including the Office of Public Works, St. Vincent's University Hospital and Teeling Whiskey Distillery. They were recently awarded NCAD's Clancy Quay Studio Graduate Residency Award 2023/2024, The Arts Council's 2023 Agility Award & Fingal County Council's 2023 Artists' Support Scheme Bursary.

Artist Statement

The experience of "Being" and Memory are often key sites of interest within my practice. Recent work has explored both real and imagined crowds. Imagery of raves, riots, the paintings of old masters and AI-generated photos frequently act as a starting point for my work. Through the process of painting obscuring and distorting the image's origins. Dragging and scraping paint across the surface and occasionally deconstructing their structural components, pursuing a simultaneous harmony and conflict between points of representation and abstraction. Intertwining both real and unreal, inspired by how our attention tends to flicker between internal and external worlds. Aiming to capture the present as it transforms into memory. Creating a mesh of collective time where past, present and future become entangled. Often using damaged and discarded found materials such as Wood, Clothes, Paper, Cardboard and Packaging. Through repair and preparation transforming these materials into painting surfaces. An act of care that hopes to address the increasing wastefulness of our society. The tears, stains and scars exude a presence and influence throughout the process of making the work.

Exhibition Works



The Constraints of Time Travel, 2023

41.5 x 124.5cm, Triptych, Oil painting on canvas

This triptych was painted from an AI-generated image of a riot and distorted throughout the painting process by dragging paint across the surfaces and pouring paint and solvents over the painting. The work was made using oil paint on primed second-hand cotton T-shirts.



Dusty Sundays, 2023

70 x 120cm, Diptych, Oil painting on canvas

This diptych was painted from an AI-generated image of a mosh pit and distorted throughout the painting process by dragging paint across the surfaces and pouring paint and solvents over the painting.



Karen Ebbs

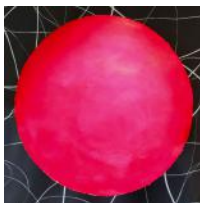
Artist Bio

Karen Ebbs is a Dublin based artist located at Pallas Studios in The Digital Hub. She studied at NCAD achieving first class honours degrees in both her MFA, 2023 and BA, 2021 in Fine Art, painting. She was short-listed for the 2023 RDS Visual Arts Awards and is an alumna of the RHA School. In 2022, she was awarded funding from the Arts Council of Ireland and DLR CoCo, and in 2021 she was granted the Clancy Quay Professional Development Award. Karen's selected solo exhibitions include Farnleigh OPW Cowshed Gallery and the Lab Gallery, both in 2022 and she has upcoming solo shows scheduled for 2024 at Rathfarnham Castle and for 2025 at the Municipal Gallery DLR Lexicon. Karen conceived and organised a series of talks at IMMA and The Complex, *We Need To Talk About Pain*, featuring curators, artists and educators, 2022. Following these talks, she wrote a piece for VAI, Visual Arts Newsletter 2023. She is involved in many group shows including the 193rd RHA Annual, 2023, the RCPI Climate & Health.

Artist Statement

Painting is central to my process-led practice where I probe new possibilities of 'seeing' and understanding the world around me. I make large-scale installations of paintings and sculptural objects. Here, I explore how everything is connected, how all things come into being through relationships and interactions. One form begets another as narratives unfold. My work begins with colour - with applications of translucent, opaque and gestural layers of oil paint - and colour gives life to the forms that grow on canvas, as three-dimensional sculptural elements and as written texts. I use a variety of materials including paint, porcelain and metals. As my work emerges, I am constantly shimmying the boundaries between the 'seen' and as yet 'unseen' worlds of many possibilities. A core area of my research is how perception occurs - more often than not as a 'best guess' - and how a shift in an opinion of a particular reality has the power to greatly influence one's experiences of that reality. Science tells us that we are primed to see the world as we do, primed that is, by our accumulated life experiences, our conditioning and by our conscious and unconscious biases. We "see" what we expect to 'see'!

Exhibition Works



Magenta Moon, 2022

100 x 100 cm, Tondo, inks on handmade paper

Magenta Moon alludes to the subtle forces at play which determine how we perceive, construct and engage with our realities. This artwork forms part of a larger installation exhibited at Farnleigh Cowshed Gallery, August/September 2023.



Becoming, 2023

30 X 25 cm, Diptych, Oils on birchwood

Everything is in a state of "becoming". This painting alludes to the uncertain and temporary nature of much of what we regard as reality.



Becoming II, 2023

30 X 25 cm, Oils on birchwood

Everything is in a state of "becoming". This painting alludes to the uncertain and temporary nature of much of what we regard as reality.



Becoming III, 2023

30 X 25 cm, Diptych, Oils on birchwood

Everything is in a state of "becoming". This painting alludes to the uncertain and temporary nature of much of what we regard as reality.



Spencer Glover

Artist Bio

Born and now back living in Dublin, Ireland, he has lived in the UK, Italy, the US, and Middle East. Spencer had a career as a publisher before returning to his art practice. He has a Fine Art degree and post-grad qualification from NCAD in Dublin.

His prints are strict limited editions - with only 12 copies of each photograph made. His work is held in public and private collections in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

Recent Awards include; Early Career Artist Award Shortlist, PhotoMuseum Ireland, 2023; Judge's Pick, Prof. Steve McLeod, Open Doors Gallery, UK, 2023; Image Award , Rotterdam Photo Festival, The Netherlands, 2023; Graduate Selection, Sebah Chaudry, Source Magazine, 2023; RADAR Award Shortlist, PhotoIreland, 2023.

Artist Statement

My work is about photography itself - why we believe the camera never lies and the vernacular expectations within that. All my images are constructed truths, looking at the boundaries of photographic reality. Although a lot of the work is constructed, and arguably fake, it exists in the real world and in real time - with real people and things, in real places, doing real and often ordinary things, but maybe in places we might not expect. This contradiction of what's real and not real, creates an uncertainty that should disconcert the viewer. The aim is to play with the assumptions of fact, fiction and fake, giving me the opportunity to weave in issues such as identity, race, nationality, and control.

Exhibition Works



Made in China 35, 2023

60 x 44cm, Photograph on Photo Rag

Still life, constructed photographs made exclusively with items made in China. These are cheaply manufactured goods, made in Chinese factories and bought online, or from shops such as Dealz. They are however influenced by painting – primarily Dutch and Flemish genre painting. Though produced as a series, each image is self contained and can operate alone



Made in China 29, 2022

60 x 44cm, Photograph on Photo Rag

Made in China wonders whether as we reach the end of this pandemic, is our supposed, new found appreciation of the simpler things and social equality happening, or instead will our approach to China, to economic globalisation, mass consumerism, corporate tax-avoidance and drive for individual wealth, remain the same



Made in China 26, 2022

60 x 44cm, Photograph on Photo Rag

Dutch Still Life paintings were regarded as parables of time, illustrating rotting fruit and flowers and presenting moral lessons about vanity, the pursuit of worldly goods, and the certainty of death. Glover's still life photographs show objects that do not age, they are plastic; stuffed animals; fake flowers and foods. They question contemporary values placed on popular goods, as well as the economy of overseas manufacture and import.



Ami Jackson

Artist Bio

Ami Jackson is a Japanese/Irish artist, based in Dublin. She received her honours degree in Fine Art Print from the National College of Art and Design, is the recipient of the Black Church Cabinet Award, 2020, and a member of The Graphic Studio Dublin. Having lived in Japan, Ireland, and the U.K, Ami's work draws on her varied cultural backgrounds, focusing on what it means to belong. She uses printmaking, painting, collage, assemblage, drawing and collected objects to understand the fragile realities of home and mind. Digital manipulation, projection and layering images are central to her process. By playing with traditional figures and colours in a contemporary context, Ami fuses cultural and supernatural elements in invented settings.

Artist Statement

My work is informed by the physical and immaterial sanctuaries that surround us. Home, environment, and identity are recurring themes. I am currently focused on finding intersections between Irish and Japanese folklore and mythology. I have enjoyed investigating shared oral traditions and narratives that bind us to our surroundings. Having mixed background, I have never related to a strong sense of national identity, and through discovering cultural crossovers, I am interested in forging a personal aesthetic, exploring my domestic surroundings and subconscious topography.

Exhibition Works



bighug, 2023

65 x 90 cm, Oil on canvas, acrylic, collage elements, sumi ink

bighug belongs to a new series of larger mixed media paintings that blend collage elements with monochromatic layers of paint. Built up in the way a memory forms, with shapes receding and coming forward, the artist aims to evoke the feeling of recalling something, by weaving together fragments from everyday experiences.



bubble, 2023

65 x 90 cm, Oil on canvas, acrylic, collage elements, sumi ink

This work incorporates various textures, text and everyday elements and is a sort of map or backdrop where connections between elements can emerge. Fragmented elements of home are suspended within this piece, and the blue-green hue is achieved using Japanese sumi ink.



Photographer : Niamh Barry

Mary Martin

Artist Bio

Mary Martin is an Irish visual artist and a 2021 Fine Art graduate of Brighton School of Art. Through paint and collage, Martin constructs an alternate reality; a heterotopia. Her playful approach to language and interpretation together with her vibrant and surreal compositions belie a serious reflection on the Anthropocene where she presents a future evolutionary state where it is unclear if humanity still exists. While Martin's paintings appear playful and theatrical, their serious undertones address the growing disconnection between hyper capitalist society and the natural and liminal worlds, with fish forms mutating into mermaid-like hybrids, secretly advancing in the natural world without our knowledge. Recent shows *Deorad*, Herman's Auctioneers, Dublin, 2023, solo show, *ALLTAR*, Takt, Berlin, 2023 and *TOOTH*, DIVA Gallery, Dublin, 2022 show Martin's confidence in paint and print; these and her recent residency at Takt Berlin, 2023 and Agility Award 2022, reflect an exciting emerging artist with her finger on the pulse of a reality in crisis.

Artist Statement

Myth and folklore provide me with inspiration in their references to metamorphosis, liminal worlds and their ability to approach life's moralistic questions through the lens of surrealism. These tales can be enormously cruel yet virtuous, but what appeals most is that there are endless possibilities for the fantastical. While my paintings appear playful and theatrical, this belies sinister undertones which address disconnection, indigenous story and the Anthropocene. In my paintings I try to subversively address these issues in a purposely deceptive way. Such ambiguity appeals to me as a liminal space in itself where what I say and what I mean can be open to interpretation. My theory, a case study of an undocumented species, encompasses the premise of fish forms mutating into mermaid-like hybrids, secretly advancing in the natural world without our knowledge. This fabrication of evolution could be post human race, pre human race or in fact hidden in the depths of a modern epoch, waiting to emerge from the midden. My work, whether a spotlight for protest or a eulogy for the damned, creates a realm for dialogue, an homage to metamorphosis and the power of story-telling.

Exhibition Works



ALLTAR 3, 2023

120 x 80 cm, Acrylic and collage on canvas

This painting from the artist's recent Berlin portfolio bears the title, ALLTAR, which translates from Irish (Gaeilge) as the other side, the afterlife or otherworld. It depicts a lone figure where it is unclear whether their emotive stature expresses a dance or protest to humanity's overlooking of their kind. The hybrid explores surrealscape where perspective is warped and beings need not occupy space in a traditional manner.



Péarla, 2022

80 x 60 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Péarla, translating as the Irish word for pearl, depicts a marine beastial hybrid looming in a vibrant, barren landscape with oyster shells dancing upon its body. This nondescript entity with a mask-like face has developed the physical characteristics to survive on land, evolving to walk and inhabit a world that seems so similar to ours, yet distorted and surreal. On an earth of muted tones of mud and sand speaking to a future changed; where climate disaster has played out, and here we are as humanity, or are not, in this post Anthropocene Domscape



ALLTAR 4, 2023

60 x 40 cm, Acrylic and collage on canvas

This painting from the artist's recent Berlin portfolio bears the title ALLTAR, which translates from Irish (Gaeilge) as the other side, the afterlife or otherworld. It depicts an otherworldly being, a banshee, relating more to a homocentric figure, juxtaposing the frequent presence of its aquatic neighbours. The soft yet sinister spectre floats in a nondescript landscape and where they stand is ambiguous as they quietly exist amongst the visceral noise of the surrounding figures within the ALLTAR series.



Fiach McGuinne

Artist Bio

Born in 2001, Fiach McGuinne is an artist working mainly in paint, but sometimes in expanded paint and print. Fiach has exhibited in many exhibitions and has been shortlisted for several major art awards.

Recent group exhibitions include *The Ladder is Always There*, with the S/TAC Collective, *Draíocht, 2023*, *Connections*, Boyle Arts Festival, 2023, *Zurich Portrait Prize*, The National Gallery of Ireland and travelling to The Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny 2022-2024, *Hennessy Craig Award Exhibition*, RHA Gallery, 2022, *RHA Annual Exhibition*, 2022, 2021. Recipient of the K&M Evans Painting Prize 2021.

Upcoming exhibitions include *The Hennessy Craig and Homan Potterton Award Exhibition*, RHA Gallery, 2024, and BFA degree show, NCAD, 2024.

Artist Statement

My work is process based and often intuitive. I mostly make paintings, a slow process that is counter to the fast paced world we inhabit. This can be very intuitive and I think through making throughout the process. I place objects in and on top of other objects. I critically and carefully place objects in haphazard ways if they have been thrown together with little thought yet create a sense of a larger constructed object. I document it and deconstruct it just to reconstruct it in a new form. By doing something, standing back, looking at it and doing more I create a dialogue between my hands, manually and my brain, mentally until eventually selecting a composition. These constructions are always depopulated, echoing the hostility of the urban landscape. Conversely when painting nature I often have a human presence to emphasise the impact of human activity and the mark the anthropocene has left on the world. Often places that seem green, verdant and natural are constructed and commodified landscapes.

Exhibition Works



MacDara, 2021

60 x 80 cm, Oil on satin

Historically, portrait paintings depicted the rich and powerful, often clothed or surrounded by luxurious fabric. The artist was thinking of that when he painted MacDara. He bought beautiful fabric, extended it over stretcher, sized and gessoed it. The excess fabric flows over the edge of the stretcher. MacDara, his little brother, is neither rich nor powerful. He's just a young boy walking through an ancient oak forest in Mayo (his name, aptly, means 'son of oak'). He has turned to look back at the artist who has recorded a moment in his time in the slow technology of paint.



Sanitary Construction, 2021

140 x 100cm, Oil and acrylic on canvas

This painting is of the aftermath of a construction site of a bathroom filled with porcelain and sanitary objects left out in the dirt with no purpose anymore. McGuinne built large tower-like structures with the remains of the bathroom placed on top of each other creating a larger object. They are placed in a haphazard way with a warning sign of a bright orange cone beside the remains of the deconstructed bathroom. This industrial scene is a direct result of the anthropocene humans have created.



Sorcha McNamara

Artist Bio

Sorcha McNamara is a visual artist living and working in Mayo, Ireland. She holds a BA in Fine Art – Painting from Limerick School of Art & Design, 2019 and is currently completing her MA in Art + Research Collaboration at IADT Dun Laoghaire, 2024. Her work has been exhibited both in Ireland and internationally, in London, Lisbon and Tokyo. Recent solo exhibitions include *Fathomless Arms* at Ballina Arts Centre, Mayo, 2023, *(dis)attachments* at The Hyde Bridge Gallery, Sligo, 2022, and Oonagh Young Gallery, Dublin, 2022. Her practice is supported by both the Arts Council of Ireland Agility Award, 2023, 2022, 2021 and the Mayo County Council Artist Bursary Award, 2023, 2022. She has previously been selected for residencies at Totaldobze Art Centre, Riga (supported by Ormston House, Limerick and Artist-Run Network Europe), 2022; Joya AiR, Almeria, 2022; Tangent Projects, Barcelona, 2021; and PADA Studios, Lisbon, 2020. Collections include the Office of Public Works and The Hunt Museum, Limerick.

Artist Statement

I work as a painter; or more accurately as a maker of things. But even 'maker' isn't really the right word. It's too organic, too suggestive of the handmade, or the nobility of a craft. Instead, I am more of a composer, a conductor – the person in front of the orchestra waving their arms about, whose function and purpose you may question, but you know they are important for the stability of the whole piece. My practice explores transgressive possibilities of painting, specifically looking to dismantle how painting is framed, structured and positioned in any given space. Highly led by process and site-situation, my work frequently responds to found objects, architectural nuance, and certain conditions of light. My research is in perpetual pursuit of how painting can enter networks outside of itself. How it can move, change, transform its material potential, and infiltrate alternative systems of thought.

Exhibition Works



(Nonesuch) Ensemble, 2023

166 x 97 cm, Mixed media installation/assemblage

A cotton sheet – stained and smeared in parts with residues of oil paint – droops laxly over a gessoed wooden frame, with the frame's reverse side facing outwards. The sheet conceals part of an abstract oil, charcoal and chalk sketch on slim cardboard, slotted inside the frame. Beneath this is a metal implement -resembling part of a ladder - that was once used as a conduit for electrical cables and wiring.



Aloft, Adrift, 2022

76 x 20 cm, Oil and glue, recycled wood

A curved offcut of wood hangs suspended from the beam of a slim stretcher bar; horizontal. There is oil paint and a patina of PVA glue on its surface, visible in a centered segment of the wood.



Lazy Eye/Minty, 2021

19 x 17.5 cm, Oil painting, perspex, recycled laminate wood

Several strokes of oil paint gather on the surface of a small perspex window, a device formerly used to hold labels in place on the shelves of hardware shops. This window is attached to a painted laminate flooring offcut by means of strategically placed pieces of plywood. The original colour of the laminate is still visible along the edge.



Eileen Leonard Sealy

Artist Bio

Eileen Leonard Sealy is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Fingal, graduating from NCAD in 2023 with a First Class Honours degree in Painting. Having previously worked as artist in residence in a natural burial ground in the Netherlands in 2020 for a five month period Eileen has gone on to develop her research into different approaches to mourning, grief and burial. She has recently returned from a research trip to the highlands of Sulawesi, Indonesia, funded by the Thomas Dammann Junior Memorial Trust Award. Eileen's work has been exhibited in group exhibitions including the *RHA 193rd Annual Exhibition, 2023*, The College Lane Gallery as a part of a residency, 2020 and The Chocolate Factory Exhibition, 2019. Eileen's work has been published in Bloomers Magazine HYPERTEXT issue 06 (2020), and Beware Magazine, 2019. Upcoming events include a residency in The College Lane Gallery and work included in *Racht*, Hermans survey of Irish contemporary art.

Artist Statement

This work leads on from my Degree Show *Chance Growths of Desire, and Colder*, and further develops themes of disgust and decay. The project entailed entering a 1970s disused hotel, ominously looming over an idyllic strand in Donegal. I designed and made costumes inspired by 18th and 19th century opulence, which appears in sharp contrast to the dereliction of the surroundings. This extreme contrast is redolent of the times when decadent appearances coincided with open sewers and poor hygiene. My work is concerned with capturing the complexities of the human disgust response, understanding the emotional and psychological reactions that it evokes, often inviting the viewer to consider the ways in which disgust is personally and culturally constructed. My concerns regarding disgust and decay are sustained by primary research but also by the debates surrounding the historical, sociopolitical, and moral standpoints of placing the response. *Chance Growths of Desire, and Colder* utilised often foul or forgotten materials such as rotten wood, tinned foods, discarded fabrics, urine and glass. As the works themselves were of no real harm, i.e. unsanitary or contaminating, the work seeks to capture the sometimes nonsensical nature of disgust.

Exhibition Works



Windows full of sea light, 2023

100 x 100 cm, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas

A former bedroom has begun to rot. Damp and mildew envelop the 1970s bedclothes which lay heaped around a figure dressed for a different occasion, from another era.



Remembering old wars, 2023

50 x 100 cm, Diptych, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas

This painting depicts two tins of fruit dating back to the 70s, one of which has exploded and has begun to rot, which usually tins are not expected to do. It is a portrait capturing the inevitable breakdown of all things, and time's grip on organic matter. The title 'Remembering old wars' serves as a reminder that man's invention of tinned food enabled armies to commit to longer campaigns at war.



Catherine Ward

Artist Bio

Catherine Ward is an Irish artist based in Dublin, Ireland. She graduated from the National College of Art and Design in 2023 with a first-class honours BA in Fine Art Painting. In 2022, she completed her Erasmus studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig, Germany.

Recent exhibitions include *Strange Signals*, a two-person exhibition at the Ardgillan Castle Gallery, 2023; *Collective Residue*, Pallas Projects/Studios, 2023; and *Twenty One: Selected Works*, Mermaid Arts Centre, 2023. Ward has received awards such as the Fingal County Council Artists' Support Scheme, 2022, 2023 and the Arts Council Agility Award, 2023. In 2023 she was honoured with the Thomas Dammann Junior Memorial Trust Award.

Artist Statement

My practice includes painting, photography and video with my current interests rooted in the many old, disused quarry sites of North County Dublin. My work is inspired by landscapes marked by human intervention. I often approach sites that have a juxtaposition between being formerly industrialised and rewilded from the aerial view. Drawing from photographic material, on-site sketches and archival film material I combine fragments from different sources to create the basis for my paintings.

Exhibition Works



Looking Downwards, 2023

80 x 100cm, Oil and acrylic on canvas

This work takes a top-down perspective of a quarry in South Dublin. Using a drone image as a reference source, the intersection between human interventions in the landscape and nature are captured on a large scale.



Loughshinny (Drumanagh), 2023

20 x 20cm, Oil on canvas

Loughshinny beach is in North County Dublin. Its shape has been transformed down through the centuries by copper mining which has since ceased. In the center of the headland Drumanagh is a Martello tower. The human interventions in the landscape are contrasted against the natural scenery of the beach and rock formations



Island, 2023

20 x 20cm, Oil on canvas

Bull Island off the coast of Dublin City was formed by the human intervention of the Bull Wall in the 19th Century. This painting captures the changing tides and formation of the island, the monochrome palette recalls the language of remote sensing technologies and archival photography.