

Resource Supporting Content Area 3: Today's World

Junior & Senior Cycle New Appreciating Art Visual Studies

Hammerheads

Marie Farrington, Sibyl Montague, Laura Ní Fhlaibhín, Liliane Puthod

Curated by Brenda McParland

1 July – 16 September

Hammerheads is a group exhibition by four dynamic Irish artists Marie Farrington, Sibyl Montague, Laura Ní Fhlaibhín and Liliane Puthod who explore diverse approaches to sculpture and expanded practice. The artists have produced predominantly new sculpture and site-specific installations featuring both handmade and industrial materials in response to the galleries and courtyard spaces at Solstice.

The artists' interest in the materiality of sculpture is evident throughout this exhibition. Using a broad range of materials, the works explore themes such as the intersections between landscape and memory, consumerism, politics of care, biodiversity and the temporality of contemporary consumption in a globalised world.

Sat. 9 September, 2:00-3:30pm

In Conversation with Marie Farrington, Sibyl Montague, Laura Ní Fhlaibhín & Liliane Puthod. Join us in the gallery to hear about the processes, and influences of the artists in this exhibition.



Hammerheads

A group exhibition with Liliane Puthod, Marie Farrington, Sibyl Montague,
& Laura Ní Fhlaibhín.

Curated by Brenda McParland

01 July-16 September 2023



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022



Engagement & resources for students & teachers

Using cross-curricular links, and learning through art, this resource supports students completing their Junior and Senior Cycle studies. Designed to assist teachers and students in how to assess and evaluate an exhibition in our gallery, it includes:

- Background information on Solstice Arts Centre and its functions;
- The technical and curatorial requirements of the exhibition, and the gallery's role in interpreting the exhibition for visitors.
- An in-depth look at the exhibition, the artists, and a selection of artworks.
- Questions to consider and discuss in relation to the artists and their artworks.
- A glossary of words **highlighted in bold italic font** to aid students understanding.

Describing the artworks in Section 3, each short description is divided into the following:

- **Theme:** the "story" behind an artwork in a particular genre or style.
- **Subject matter:** what the work is actually "about".
- **Description:** a statement or account of the specific artwork.
- **Process & media:** the techniques and materials used by the artist to create the artwork.
- **Composition & layout:** the arrangement or placement of visual elements within the gallery.

In addition, to help students understand and analyse professional artists work, place it in context, and assist in their own development of imaginative and innovative ideas, we encourage students and teachers to combine this resource with our associated Learning & Engagement events:

- **In Conversation with exhibiting artists, Sat 9 Sept:**
Join this dynamic group of young *contemporary artists* in the gallery to discuss their subject matter such as landscape, architecture, folklore and *contemporary* consumerism, behind each of their practices.
This event is free to attend, and a unique opportunity to engage and question the artists directly:
<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/in-conversation-with-marie-farrington-sibyl-montague-laura-ni-fhlaibhin-and-liliane-puthod>
- **A Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) class tour** of the artworks in the gallery. Booking required:
<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/school-gallery-tours-primary-and-secondary>

Assisting Senior Cycle students to investigate, analyse and reflect on multiple perspectives, this information in conjunction with our associated events, embraces the three strands – Research, Create and Respond, focusing on Content Area 3: Today's World Leaving Certificate curriculum.

Please note: Links within this document may change once an exhibition ends. If accessing this resource and links at a later date, get in touch and we can share the information with you.

We encourage feedback from schools and teachers to assist us in developing these documents and events to best meet your needs, so please do get in touch with suggestions or if you have any questions.

Best of luck to all students in their creative studies.

Yours,

Deirdre Rogers

Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator

deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie

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Visiting Solstice

Section 1: Information about Solstice Arts Centre

Solstice Arts Centre, Railway Street, Navan, Co. Meath C15 KWP1

+353 (0)46 909 2300

www.solsticeartscentre.ie

Function

Solstice is a **multi-disciplinary arts centre** hosting a number of art forms including visual art, music, film and theatre. The building functions as a space for people to access and celebrate life, art and culture in the county, supporting artists and communities to engage in artistically rich experiences together.

Solstice facilitates theatre shows, music performances, visual art exhibitions and films. It also has a vast programme of participatory activities such as workshops, talks and events. It caters for all ages and capabilities, including children, young people, families, adults, schools, youth groups, and the elderly.

History & Architecture

Designed by World-renowned Irish Architectural firm Grafton Architects, Solstice opened in April 2006 as a **purpose-built** arts centre. Over four levels, Solstice consists of a 320-seat tiered theatre, a three-roomed gallery space, a workshop/studio, and café. Solstice presents and produces over 300 arts events per year, welcoming over 60,000 visitors and audience members annually.

The name 'Solstice' references the ancient rituals associated with the county and the cultural 'light' the arts brings to the community.

Solstice Gallery - opening times Tues - Sat 11:00 – 4:00pm

Solstice gallery is a **contemporary art** gallery that hosts five major exhibitions per year. Solstice does not have a **permanent collection** of artworks but exhibits artwork from local, national and international artists. Exhibitions are usually **thematic** group shows or large-scale solo exhibitions by one artist. The Director, resident **Curator** or an invited **curator**, selects the artworks for each exhibition.

Gallery location & layout

The main Solstice gallery is located on the third floor, with some artworks hung on the café wall at ground level. You can access the gallery by stairs or lift. The main gallery has three large rooms and three enclosed courtyards for displaying artwork. There is also an engagement area for children in the gallery foyer.

Exhibition information for visitors

Leaflets, information and text is especially important in the gallery space. It helps explain or interpret the exhibitions and artworks for visitors. The **curator** decides what type of wall labels and printed material to produce for the public. Each exhibition usually includes:

- Vinyl text on the café and gallery entrance walls providing a brief overview of the exhibition.
- Wall labels beside each artwork, a gallery essay and floor plan.
- A Virtual Gallery Tour on Solstice website.
- Learning Resources for visitors, students and teachers to understand and interact with the exhibition.

Visual Arts Learning & Engagement Programme

Exhibitions are accompanied by associated events; workshops, talks, seminars and tours throughout the year. Public gallery engagement enables audiences of all ages to connect directly with professional artists and the artwork, and engage in new artistic and creative experiences. Full details of current exhibitions and accompanying learning and engagement events are available on Solstice Arts Centre's website and advertised on Solstice social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Section 2: The Exhibition *Hammerheads*



A group exhibition with Liliane Puthod, Marie Farrington, Sibyl Montague, & Laura Ni Fhlaibhín.

Curated by Brenda McParland

Opened Sat 1 July, until Sat 16 Sept 2023

Hammerheads is a group exhibition by four dynamic Irish artists who explore the *materiality of contemporary sculpture* and *expanded practice*. In response to the galleries and courtyard spaces at Solstice on level 3, the exhibition features predominantly new works and *site-specific installations* using multiple components, handmade and industrial materials.

Exhibition title - A starting point of conversation, the exhibition title **Hammerheads** is an invitation to consider the artists' energy, insights and attitude to making in the *contemporary* world, and makes abstract reference to each artists approach to their sculpture work e.g. using the striking part of a hammer.

Subject matter & mediums - The artists wish to create new dialogues between their works, audience and artist. Here they explore *intersections* between landscape and memory, consumerism, politics of care, biodiversity and the temporality of *contemporary* consumption in a globalised world. Materials used include wax, volcanic olivine sand, acid-etched glass, cast ink, archaeological drafting film, steel, stone, bronze, found objects, and consumer products, recycled fabric, medicinal healing plants and distilled herb oil.

Curation & selection of artworks - Through research and studio visits, the exhibition *curator*, Brenda McParland is responsible for inviting the four artists to exhibit in the gallery, and *collaboratively* selected artworks and *installation* formats to display. It is the *curators* roll to make sure all the works 'sit' together in an aesthetically pleasing manner, the type of lighting required, and different display areas necessary.

About the curator - An independent *curator*, Brenda McParland is Project *Curator* at Solstice Arts Centre and Gallery Producer at Municipal Gallery, dlrLexicon, Dun Laoghaire. A former Senior *Curator*, Head of Exhibitions, IMMA (Irish Museum of Modern Art), she has extensive experience curating in Ireland and UK. Exhibitions include Kathy Prendergast, Willie Doherty, Andy Warhol, Sol le Witt, Kiki Smith, Rebecca Horn, Marina Abramovic, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov and Louise Bourgeois.

Exhibition location, display & layout

Displayed in the three gallery spaces and courtyard areas on level 3, the artist's *contemporary* sculptural practices required careful consideration as each responded to the space. Creating works on-site, they were mindful of displaying and complementing the multiple structures and *installations*. *Contemporary* in nature, layout is sparse, with large areas of space for visitors to interact and view the works.

Artist Laura Ni Fhlaibhín has also placed living *installations* in the outside gallery courtyards.

Exhibition lighting

There is a combination of natural and spot lighting throughout this exhibition. However, the spot lighting is at a minimum.

Gallery plan & information for visitors

Displayed on the wall at the entrance to the Centre, and in the gallery foyer on level 3, a brief overview introduces visitors to the exhibition. There is no wall labelling or numbering beside the artworks. To help audiences navigate the work, a gallery map and A5 information leaflet written by the *curator*, is available. These give the artists names, title, and medium of each artwork. Information is also available to download from the Solstice website <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/hammerheads>

The *gallery invigilator* is available to assist visitors navigate the exhibition, share information about the artists and their work and ensure 'house rules', such as no touching the artworks.

On your gallery visit, consider and inquire about the following:

- The positioning of the artworks within each space;
- How a visitor might be self-guided through the exhibition with the gallery map;
- The information available to you from the *gallery invigilator* about the artist and artworks.

Learning & Engagement for the public

Programming a wide range of associated events for each exhibition to assist the public in learning and understanding the work on display, this exhibition includes:

- Exhibition opening, free to attend on Sat. 1 July.
- Gallery tours.
- A one-day workshop with Liliane Puthod during Solstice Children's Summer Camp.
- A free artist's talk in the gallery on Sat. 9 September, 2-3:30pm <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/in-conversation-with-marie-farrington-sibyl-montague-laura-ni-fhlaibhin-and-liliane-puthod>

A Creative Engagement area for families is located in the gallery foyer. This includes self-directed activities for young children. Materials given by the artists and connected to their work in the gallery allows visitors to engage with the artworks through sensory and hands-on making experiences.

Section 3: Artworks in detail

Artwork 1: *Dream Up* by Liliane Puthod



Medium: Emulsion paint

Scale: Dimension variable - wall dimension 13x4metres

Theme: An *installation* and performance artist, Liliane Puthod makes sculptures and large-scale interventions of objects, images, and texts using both industrial materials and handmade processes. Manipulating some of societies existing modes of production and *dissemination* to investigate the concept of time and consumption of everyday life, she explores the fabrication of desire and its perceived value within our globalised world.

Subject matter: Puthod investigates the relationship between labour, use-value, time and function to question how the artist's studio echoes/differs from commonly held productive workspaces and galleries.

Process & media: Using black emulsion, a composition of *onomatopoeia* depicts words Puthod associates with her studio. 'Bang', 'Driiing, Driiing', and 'Oooops', relate to a state, emotion or action during her making process. Having studied advertising, words are very much part of her work, while bringing humour with her choice of sounds and painted style.

Composition & layout: Spanning the whole of the left wall as you enter the gallery, the large scale, comic like composition is a surprise to the viewer. Creating a visual impact in their scale and colour, the black text evokes curiosity and humour.

About the artist: Liliane Puthod (b. 1986, France) lives and works in Dublin. Graduating with a Masters in Fine Arts at HEAD Geneva in 2013, awards include; Arts Council of Ireland Visual Arts Bursary (2019); Summer Studio Residency, TUD, Dublin (2019); <https://www.lilianeputhod.net/>

Artwork 2: (x) *An exercise in closeness: plot in quarters* by Marie Farrington



Medium: Gouache on linen, acid-etched glass, anthracite clay, cast ink, cold-bent steel, thread offcuts, modelling wax.
Scale: 220 x 250cm

Theme: Exploring how matter is coded and transformed over time, Farrington's practice expresses *intersections* between sculptures, images, and architectural forms. Presenting new *site-specific* work, she responds directly to the architecture of the gallery space, performing a subtle mapping of its *schematics*.

Subject matter: This site responsive work explores the relationship between landscape and memory. Informed by geological field sampling and imaging, these *installations* use the x(vertical), y (horizontal) and z-axis (3-dimensional) of the space, acting as testing grounds that feel both *diagrammatic* and *ephemeral*.

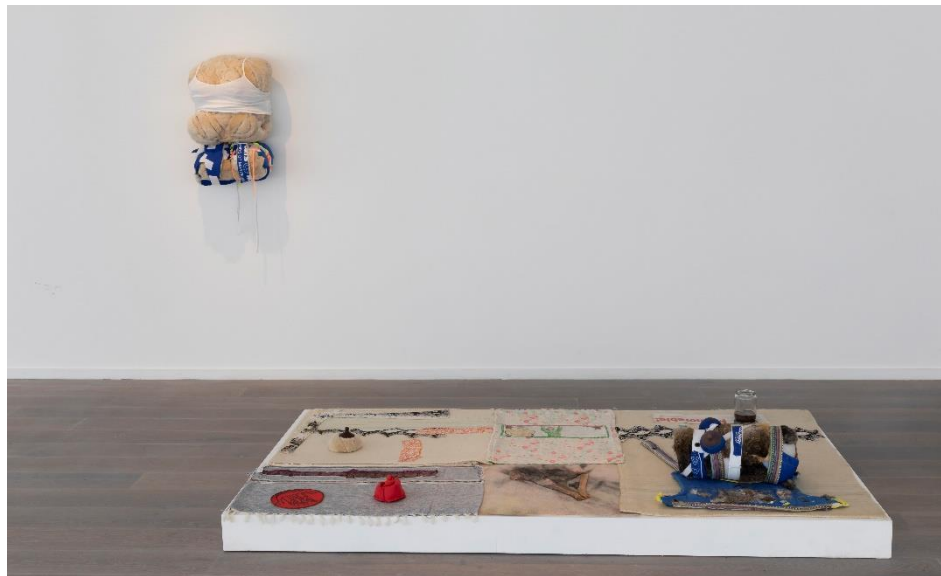
Description: (x) *An exercise in closeness: plot in quarters* is a black, floor-based *installation*. Assembled in a series of grind-like clusters on a large piece of hand painted linen, the materials such as anthracite, wax and etched glass, allow Farrington to explore how landscapes can become *implicit* in their own representation.

Process & media: Exploring *casting* as a sculptural process, Farrington creates material archives that capture the essence of the Solstice gallery space. Using geological methods of making, such as layering, moulding, compressing, and stacking, she has placed a sheet of linen, hand painted in a grid like pattern, to 'contain' elements. Strips of anthracite clay depicting layers within the earth's core; an anthracite cast bowl lying on a sheet of honeycomb-patterned ink and resin, and four blocks of etched cast glass mirror the grid like formation.

Composition and layout: The premise of this work is to 'sample' the space through various material-lead gestures. Using graph orientations to plot a diagram of the space this floor-based work lies in Gallery 2. Its grid-like formation and muted tones, give a 'quiet' feel to the work, while combining hard and soft materials in its composition.

About the artist: Marie Farrington is currently *artist-in-residence* at Dublin City Council's Residential Spaces, Albert Cottages (2023), a 2023-25 Research Associate at CCA Derry-Londonderry, and preparing for her solo exhibition at PuntWG, Amsterdam, NL (2024). <https://www.mariefarrington.com/>

Artwork 3: *Blanket 02 'The Eclipse'* by Sibyl Montague



Medium: Used & found textiles, silicone **Scale:** 154 x 115 cm (Blanket) / 78 x 48 x 28cm (Sculpture)

Theme: Presented as 'tools' or series of assembled objects of use, Sibyl Montague's *multidisciplinary practice* focuses on disruptive, *intimate* and *generative* processes of making. Through sculptural assemblages, she explores how we regard, hold and consume objects, experiences within a politics of care.

Subject matter: Montague's work is instinctive and interconnected. Driven to make work within her domestic environment during the pandemic, her material resources centered on that of low value, and accessible processes within her home, returning to practices of our female ancestors. Her use of textural elements describe a *contemporary* picture or unfolding story over time.

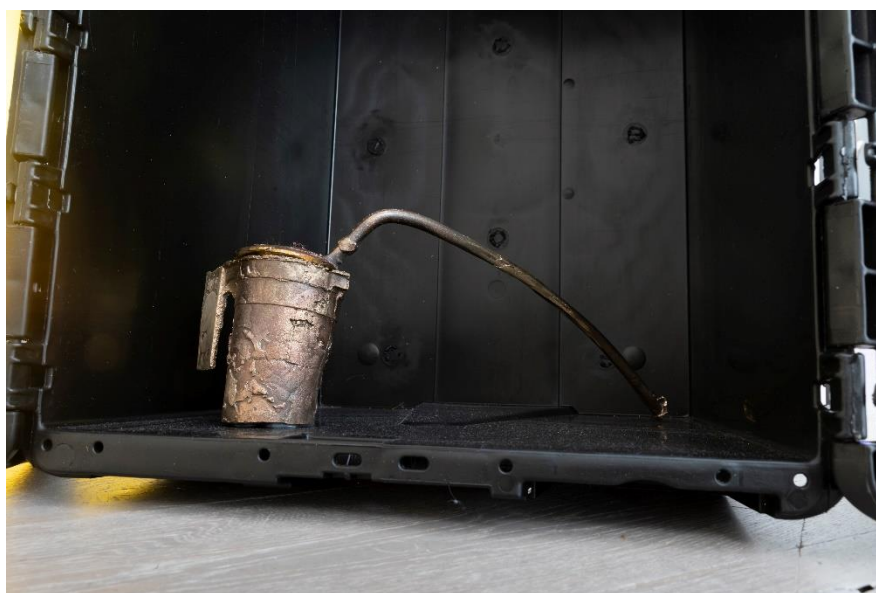
Description: Here Montague exhibits new and recent works from her 'Blanket' series; sculptural and patchwork assemblages made from used and found textiles. Her varied practice plays with systems of value and worth, where the taking apart and reassembling of found material, reveals the economies of labour and extraction embedded within them. Three 'Blankets' are displayed here on low plinths, in total. Reconstituted, a shearling coat, sports gear and faux furs are bound and bundled together into an arm-held parcel or backpack displayed on the wall in Gallery 1, part of *Blanket 02 'The Eclipse'*.

Process & media: Made chronologically since 2020, each blanket is cut, dyed or stained. Boiled with tobacco or painted in rainbow bleeds, the worn and patched surfaces are appliquéd and embroidered by hand. Rags and cut offs gathered from fast fashion outlets, sales and thrift shops are interwoven with French lace, table linen, dish cloths and GAA tops.

Composition & layout: Montague's practice of mixing and layering of image and text distorts them beyond context, interweaving corporate logos, tourist memorabilia with high street fashions and slogans into mosaic DIY patchworks. Exhibited on a low plinth, the pale wool blankets and other materials are familiar. Assembled on-site, they form a dialogue with the viewer, interspersed with snakeskin prints, silicone and coiled textile objects that raise it off the flat surface, and connect to the textile elements on the wall. This 3-dimensional assemblage transforms the blanket form into an object to be held or carried.

About the artist: Completed a MFA from Chelsea College of Art, London in 2012, recent exhibitions include *Claí na Péiste* (Worm's Ditch), Temple Bar Gallery +_ Studio, Dublin, (solo 2022); *Fashion Show: Clothing Art and Activism*, Glucksman Gallery, Cork (2022). <http://sibylmontague.com/>

Artwork 4: *oil for the ride* (right image, detail) and *I wish for dementia research to be gifted obscene sums* (left image) by Laura Ní Fhlaibhín



Medium: mixed media including plant oils, plastic boxes, charred plywood, candle, water, wire mesh and bronze casts of healthcare feeder cup. **Scale:** varying in size (black boxes in cm 60x40wx36h for scale)

Theme: Laura Ní Fhlaibhín works with materials related to healing and nourishment. Sifting stories, and materials associated with site, memory, myth, narratives of care and the casting of spells, she creates sculptural and formal gatherings of elements which serve as ritual artefacts and *talismans*.

Subject matter: For *Hammerheads*, Ní Fhlaibhín's works explore current scientific research and inherited knowledge into the therapeutic potential of medicinal plants in the treatment of dementia. A series of reclaimed plastic medical boxes arranged in the Gallery courtyards, Gallery 2 and 3, house objects such as bronze cast beakers, scientific apparatus, plants, oils and water fountain.

Description: In the gallery, Ní Fhlaibhín's works operate within a *circulatory* system and sculptural assemblage. Medicinal plants to guard against memory loss occupy the courtyard areas, the source of the oils for medical research. A series of reclaimed plastic medical boxes arranged in a spatial constellation of matter in the gallery hold plants, scientific apparatus, metals, oils and water.

Process & media: Ní Fhlaibhín uses open-ended processes and media, allowing materials to react to different spaces. In a performance manner, she combines reclaimed objects, scientific apparatus and natural materials to explore the act of growing, extraction and burning of oils. Cast bronze medical drinking beakers hold the oils and water, serving as both functionary containers and *amulets*.

Composition & layout: Forming a relationship between the space, objects and their materiality, Ní Fhlaibhín's work circulates Gallery 2 and 3, forming the ritual act of drying, extracting and burning the extracted oils from the lemon balm, sage and lavender growing in the courtyard spaces.

About the artist: Living and working between London and Ireland, Laura Ní Fhlaibhín completed her MFA at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2019 and BA at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin 2013. A recipient of Next Generation Award 2020, ACE Developing Creative Practice Award 2021 and shortlisted for Mark Tanner Sculpture Award 2023. <http://www.lauranifhlaibhin.com/>

Section 5: Glossary

Amulet is an object believed to have positive properties that can be magically bestowed upon its owner.

Casting, the process of melting a material such as metal or glass into a mould, creating a sculptural form.

Circulatory means something that is going round and round in a circle or loop.

Collaboratively is a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose.

Contemporary art is art of the present time, usually attributed to the periods from the 1970s to today.

Curator oversees the organisation and presentation of exhibitions to inform, educate & inspire the public.

Diagrammatic means of or in the form of a diagram.

Dissemination is the action or fact of spreading something, especially information, widely.

Ephemeral means lasting for a very short time.

Expanded practice is a change to include areas of practice that had not previously been explored.

Gallery invigilator sits in the gallery, looks after the work, and speaks to the public about the exhibits.

Generative, relating to or capable of production or reproduction.

Implicit describes things in which a meaning is implied or hinted at rather than expressed directly.

Installation art is large-scale, mixed media constructions, often designed for a specific place.

Intersections, criss-cross, or converge; here the artists explore where, for them areas of interest overlap or share similarities.

Intimate means closely acquainted; familiar; private or personal.

Materiality of contemporary sculpture involves that which makes up the matter of that artwork. In other words, the entities involved in the creation or formation of artwork form its materiality.

Multidisciplinary practice is an artist who combines a variety of disciplines together such as sculpture, installation, drawing, video and sound.

Multi-disciplinary Arts Centre hosts, supports and displays different artforms. Multidisciplinary art is often experimental, seeking new forms of expression.

Onomatopoeia is a word that sounds like the noise it makes e.g. roar, bang, splat.

Purpose-built is something that is designed with one purpose in mind, in this case an arts centre.

Schematics means relating to, or forming a scheme, plan, or diagram.

Site-specific or site responsive installation is designed for a specific location, if removed from that location it loses all or a substantial part of its meaning.

Talismans, an object, typically inscribed, is thought to have magic powers and to bring good

Thematic exhibitions are organised in terms of themes e.g. the theme of light or recurring ideas or motifs.

Section 6: Questions to consider & discuss

- The exhibition title **Hammerheads** is an invitation to consider the artists' energy, insights and attitude to making in the contemporary world. How important do you think the title of an exhibition is for the artists and audience?
- The exhibition features new *site-specific* or *site responsive artworks and installations*. Each artist has responded differently to the gallery spaces using a wide range of media, and formats. As a class group, compare two of the artworks in relation to the visual art elements, composition and context within the space.
- When visiting the gallery or taking the virtual tour, take a close look at the different processes and media used. Using the theme, and subject matter description, consider the artists theory and thinking behind its creation. You can view the virtual tour here:
<https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/hammerheads>
- Choose an artist that interests you, and find out more about them. Look at their websites, follow them on social media, and gain additional insight into their artistic career and practice. Links to the artists' website in **Section 3 Artworks in detail**.

Visiting Solstice:



Solstice Gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday 11am-4pm.

Individual students and teachers can visit the gallery during opening times.

Facilitated by qualified, experienced artists and educators, Solstice offers a number of curriculum linked workshops and events for schools during each exhibition <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/whats-on/>

Class and group gallery tours must be booked in advance.

To arrange a visit, tour or book a workshop, please contact Deirdre Rogers, Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Curator at deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie or 046 909 2308.

If you, your school or individual teacher wishes to be contacted directly about upcoming events and opportunities, please let Deirdre know and we can add you to our mailing list.

NOTES: