

Resource & engagement for second level students & teachers supporting
Content Area 3: Today's World

SURVEYOR 2025



SURVEYOR

2025

Visual Arts Open Exhibition

**15 November –
20 December 2025**

**Selected by Patrick Murphy,
Director of the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts**

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Describing this group exhibition on page 3, we have highlighted:

- **Criteria for consideration:** who can apply and how.
- **Selection process:** How the external adjudicator selected the artworks.
- **Composition & layout:** the arrangement or placement of the artworks within the gallery spaces.

A glossary of words highlighted in *bold italic font* to aid your understanding is on page 9.

Designed to assist you in an inquiry-based exploration of the artworks, this resource includes questions to consider & discuss on pages 5-8, for you to explore the works of four artists relating to:

Artists Theory & Thinking

- motivations behind the work.

Processes & Media

- techniques & materials to create the work.

Art & the Environment

- a source of inspiration.

Art as Social Commentary or Commentator

- raising awareness through art.

Combine this resource with our associated learning & engagement events below:

Exhibition opening

Saturday 15 September at 2:30pm

Join us in the gallery and meet the artists.

Gallery Tours for Junior & Senior Cycle using Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS).

Throughout the exhibition

Free, booking essential.

About the exhibition *SURVEYOR 2025*



In a unique extension of its annual selected survey of local professional arts practice, Solstice Arts Centre has partnered with fellow North East Network members **Droichead Arts Centre**, Drogheda and **An Táin Arts Centre**, Dundalk. Inviting artists living in or from Counties Meath or Louth Solstice Arts Centre's fourteenth open exhibition *SURVEYOR 2025* was simultaneously opened in the three venues.

Supporting, valuing, and encouraging artists in the development of their practices and creative careers, the exhibitions present an overview of contemporary visual arts practice within the northeast of the country.

Solstice Visual Arts Award for a work of distinction in any medium was announced at the opening of the exhibition on Saturday 15 November. On the eve of the Arts Centre's 20th birthday year, two new awards have been established: **Meath County Council Arts Office Going Solo Award 2025** to a recent graduate and/or emerging artist living in or originally from Meath only, and the **Newgrange Gold Award**, for a work of destination in any medium that connects to the natural environment.

Criteria for consideration: Artists could apply to any of the three participating venues, choosing just one venue when submitting their work. All artistic disciplines were considered including painting, film, photography, sculpture, mixed media, performance and *installation*.

Selection process: An external adjudicator/*curator* is invited to select the work annually. This year Patrick Murphy, Director of the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, selected the 95 artworks to exhibit in *Surveyor 2025* at Solstice.

Composition & layout: Displaying artworks by a large number of artists in a wide range of media including paint, textiles, marble, ceramics and photography, careful consideration is given to how the works 'sit' together in the gallery spaces. Giving each artwork equal space for viewing by the public, one piece must not dominate another. Work of a similar themes are placed together, giving the viewer a sense of *cohesion* and flow throughout the gallery.

The Artists

Of the 134 artists who applied through an *open-call*, 67 were selected to exhibit in SURVEYOR 2025.

Each artist submitted between one and three artworks for consideration.

Of the 332 artworks received, 95 were selected for this exhibition.

The artists selected are at various stages in their artistic careers; students, emerging, mid-career and established.

Exhibiting artists:

Adrian + Shane, Tommy Brennan, Caitlin Brown, Harriet Casey, Christopher Clarke, Mary Clarke, Megan Colfer, June Connell, Abigail Connell, Kevin Cosgrove, Patrick Dillon, Moira Dineen, Anna Doggett, Sarah Doheny, Orla Donovan, Olga Duka, Nuala Early, Aidan Flanagan, Jo Gore, Brian Hegarty, Jackie Hudson Lalor, Anne Kenna, Fiona Kerbey, Theresa King, Penelope Monaghan Lacey, Àjàó Babátúndé Lawal, Paula Lynch, Christie Magdalena
Martin Maguire, Garry Maguire, Ben McCabe, John McCarthy, Robert McCormack, Emily McCormack, Shelly McDonnell, Sadhbh McElveen, Henry McGrane, Fiona McGrath, Peter McKenna, Eileen McNulty, Alan Monahan, Emma Moran, David Newton, Aoife Nolan, Lesley-Ann O'Connell, Carol O'Connor, Gwen O'Sullivan, Jennifer O'Brien, Sharon O'Brien, Clare O'Connor, Ina Olohan, William O'Neill, Annabel Potterton, Sinead Reilly, Mette Sofie Roche
Beth Royds, Anna Marie Savage, Joy Scully, James Sherlock, Jenny Slater, Rachael Smith, Annette Smyth, Elaine Stephens, Nadia Tamerji, Dee Walsh, Nathan Wheeler, Suella Wynne.

For this resource, we have chosen four of the artists to explore in more detail on pages 5 - 8.

Solstice Surveyor Awards 2025:

- **Solstice Visual Arts Award** for a work of distinction in any medium is awarded to Dee Walsh.
- **Meath County Council Arts Office "Going Solo Award 2025"** to a recent graduate and/or emerging artist living in or originally from Meath is awarded to Harriet Casey.
- **Newgrange Gold Award** for a work of destination in any medium that connects to the natural environment, is awarded to Anna Marie Savage.

Visit each exhibition in Solstice, Droichead Arts Centre and An Táin Arts Centre. Compare the gallery spaces, type of artworks displayed and layout in each space:

Solstice Arts Centre, Navan

15 Nov. - 20 Dec. / Tue. – Sat 11am – 4pm

Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda

15 Nov. – 10 Jan. / Tue. – Sat 10am – 4pm

An Táin Arts Centre, Dundalk

15 Nov. - 20 Dec. / Tue. – Sat 10am – 4pm



Questions to consider & discuss

Artists Theory & Thinking – Dee Walsh, awarded Solstice Visual Arts Award 2025



Left: *Echoes of E-1027*, 2025. Right: *Cap Moderne*, 2025. Both oil and acrylic paint on Birch panel, 80 x 60cm.

Winner of the Solstice Visual Art Award 2025

Part of a new series of works in which Dee Walsh explores architectural structures designed by selected female architects, these pieces focus on Eileen Gray's modernist architectural creation E-1027. Through these paintings, Walsh examines and responds to various architectural elements of the building, layering and constructing the compositions in a way that reflects on the original design.

Walsh's work has always been rooted in her deep fascination with architecture and the re-imagining of the structures and infrastructures that shape our lives. Driven by **improvisation**, where each decision is a response to architectural forms—be it a particular angle, structure, or spatial arrangement, Walsh aims to create dynamic compositions that invite reconsideration of how we experience built environments.

'By playing with form and spatial relationships, I aim to create a visual environment that invites the viewer to engage and explore. Through painting and drawing, I explore and challenge the boundaries of perceived space.'

- In your opinion, how does Walsh achieve this in her paintings. Pay particular attention to the composition and layout of elements and objects within these two artworks.

Explore the movement of *modernist architecture* and Eileen Gray's first architectural creation villa E-1027. Note Gray's attention to detail of the design, externally and internally, including the fixed and free-standing furniture, lamps and decorations within.

Compare and contrast Eileen Grey's 'villa E-1027' with the artworks by Dee Walsh.

- List similarities in style and **composition**.

Questions to consider & discuss

Processes & Media – Abigail Connell



Navan Shopping Centre, 2025. oil on MDF board, 90 x 60

A third year studying painting at the National College of Art and Design, in this painting Abigail Connell aimed to present a reflection of her home town of Navan. Working part-time in the shopping centre, sometimes on a closing shift, she witnesses the last lights left on.

Connell's recent paintings consider the depiction of time, sequence and their disruption; distance from a moment as it unfolds, visualising days as a grid, a map laid out like a system of time, *'impossibly, every detail in the reality of a split second to be held whole.'*

Her painting process sees a necessity in the paint's weight, laying it down heavily onto the canvas or board, with particular attention to the brushstrokes and their placement, imagining them suspended in layers, disconnected from each other.

'I built the colour up in layers, attempting to compose light - liminal, vivid and fleeting.'

- Discuss this painting together as a class group.
What emotions does it raise e.g. warm, curious, frightened, familiar, removed etc.

Do you agree there is an element of movement in this artwork.

- How do you think the artist achieves this?

'It is a challenge to hold the conflicted feelings of home. Through this work, I wanted to be honest.'

- What do you think the artist means by this statement?
- What 'conflicted feelings of home' could she be referring to?

Experimenting with paint or photography, create an atmospheric night scene of an area in your home town.

- What atmosphere are you trying to capture, and with your chosen media, how have you achieved this?

Questions to consider & discuss

Art & the Environment – Anna Marie Savage



Left: *Uisce Salach I (Series)*, 2025.
Oil paint, oil bar on canvas, 100 x 70



Right: *Uisce Salach IV (Series)*, 2025.
Oil paint, oil bar on Linen, 73cm x 92cm

Winner of the Newgrange Gold Award

Anna Marie Savage **interdisciplinary** practice combines art and environmental research. Based in Omeath, Co. Louth, she explores the hidden realities of fragile ecosystems, focusing on polluted waterways and the impacts of illegal human activity. A three-year collaboration with Leeds University, this work investigates the environmental consequences of illicit fuel dumping, with a particular focus on the River Fane in Co. Louth. Collecting water samples from the river, and captured through high-magnification photography, she translates them into layered **abstract** paintings, each work mirroring the act of looking through a microscope: surfaces and marks build like magnified 'slides,' revealing **strata** of information usually invisible to the naked eye.

These microscopic investigations form the foundation of her practice. Translating the polluted waters into striking, **tangible forms**, Savage aims to make the invisible visible, highlighting the contamination of the river but also the broader consequences for aquatic ecosystems and the communities that rely on them.

'By transforming unseen ecological trauma into visual narratives, my work sparks dialogue around fragility, resilience and human responsibility.'

By using art and science, Uisce Salach (Dirty Water) seeks to engage viewers emotionally and intellectually, and encourage reflection on our environmental responsibilities.

Anna Marie Savage transforms scientific observation into visual expression.

- Do you think art is a powerful tool in which to raise environment issues?
- Consider environmental issues in your community, and how you could highlight them through art and creative expression.

Questions to consider & discuss

Art as Social Commentary or Commentator – Anne Kenna



I miss my friends, I miss my bicycle, I miss Taekwondo, 2025.

Irish Linen, Embroidered Organza, mouliné embroidery floss, embroidered graph, 'Internet and mobile services resume in Afghanistan', RTE, Thursday, 2 October 2025, 07:41. Accreditation: Reuters. Quotations, Internet sources.

Anne Kenna experiments with materials to convey what is concealed, overlooked, or suppressed. Her interest in making tactile sculpture is amplified in the Irish Linen Burqa expressing the desire to encounter and uncover a veiled story. The title of poignant losses, embroidered on the artwork, captures the isolation, denial of education, and the loss of a pleasurable social life experienced by the women and girls of Afghanistan since the return of the Taliban.

The Burqa, a garment of contested meaning, is handstitched, every stitch a tiny gesture of resistance and solidarity by the artist with the women and girls of Afghanistan. In a noisy world the cream linen conveys the silencing of their voices and innocence. Irish linen also evokes the idea of shrouding and death. The artwork features the recognizable blue of traditional Burqa fabrics using blue thread to stitch a graph representing the Taliban's internet blackout, and quotations that reflect the experiences of loss shared by a young woman, a girl, and a 16-year-old teenager.

Breaches of human rights and social justice are conveyed by the artist in this artwork.

Do you agree the artist conveys feelings of restriction, isolation and loss and does the title assist in your understanding of the work?

As a class group, discuss how the artist links women and young girls of Afghanistan to those in Ireland?

- Include the use of symbolism and materials in your answer.

What object would you create that conveys a societal issue you feel is important to highlight?

- List reasons for your choice.

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Glossary

Abstract (art), when an artist has either removed (abstracted) elements from an object to create a more simplified form or produced something which has no source at all in external reality.

Composition in art is the way in which different elements of an artwork are combined. In general, this refers to the key subjects of the artwork and how they are arranged in relation to each other.

Cohesion, the action or fact of forming a united whole.

Curator, selects, organises and displays artworks in a gallery or museum.

Improvisation, to make something up on the spot, or figure it out as you go.

Installation art is usually mixed media constructions, often designed for a specific place, for a temporary period.

Eileen Gray was an Irish interior designer, furniture designer and architect who became a pioneer of the Modern Movement in architecture.

Interdisciplinary involves the combination of multiple disciplines into one activity e.g. art and science.

Liminal, occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

Strata are layers of rock, or sometimes soil. In nature, strata come in many layers.

Modernist architecture, also called modern architecture, or the modern movement, is an architectural movement and style that was prominent in the 20th century, between the earlier Art Deco and later postmodern movements.

Open-call exhibitions involves publicly inviting artists to contribute or submit works for consideration.

Tangible forms able to be touched or felt.

Visiting Solstice:

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

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



Class and group gallery tours must be booked in advance.

To book a tour, workshop or event please contact:

Deirdre Rogers, Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator at 046 909 2308 or by emailing

deirdre.rogers@solsticeartscentre.ie

If you wish to be contacted directly about upcoming events and opportunities, please let us know and we can add you to our mailing list.

We encourage feedback to assist us in developing these resources and events to best meet your needs. Please get in touch with suggestions or any questions about our programme.

Best of luck to all students in their creative studies.

Deirdre Rogers

Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator