

Resource Supporting Content Area 3: Today's World
Junior & Senior Cycle New Appreciating Art Visual Studies



SURVEYOR 2022

Solstice Arts Centre's Annual Group Exhibition

Selected & Curated by Davey Moor

Sat 5 Nov – Wed 21 Dec 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 including display, layout, lighting, signage, and the gallery's role in interpreting the exhibition for visitors.
- An in-depth look at the current exhibition and three of the artworks and artists;

Assisting Senior Cycle students to investigate, analyse and reflect on multiple perspectives, this information embraces the three strands – Research, Create and Respond, with particular focus on Unit 14 in Content Area 3: Today's World of the New Appreciating Art Visual Studies for Leaving Certificate curriculum.

To help students understand and analyse the work of other artists and assist in their development of imaginative and innovative ideas, we encourage students and teachers to combine this resource with -

- A Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) tour of the artworks in the gallery. Booking required <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/school-gallery-tours-primary-and-secondary>
- Viewing the individual artworks on our website <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/surveyor-2022>

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.

We hope you find this resource, your gallery tour and information on our website helpful and if you have any questions, please let me know.

Best of luck to all the students in their studies,

Yours,

Deirdre Rogers

Visual Arts Facilitation & Public Engagement Coordinator

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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 - 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 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

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 on the ground floor. You can access the gallery by stairs or lift. The main gallery has three large rooms and three enclosed courtyards for displaying artwork and 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 and is also available on our website. The **curator** decides what type of wall labels and printed material to produce for the public. Each exhibition includes:

- Vinyl text on the café and gallery entrance walls provides a brief overview of the exhibition.
- Wall labels within the exhibition, a gallery essay and floor plan written by the curator for visitors.
- A Virtual Gallery Tour on our website.
- Learning Resources for students and teachers to understand, learn 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



SURVEYOR 2022

Showing 98 artworks by 64 artists from or living in Co. Meath
Artworks selected and curated by Davey Moor

Opened on Saturday Sat 5 Nov and continues until Thur 21 Dec 2022
Gallery opening times Tues - Sat 11:00am – 4:00pm

Representing an overview of living visual arts practice throughout Meath, this annual exhibition is the largest of its kind in the northeast region. In its eleventh year at Solstice, SURVEYOR serves to support value and encourage artists in the county, in the development of their practices and creative careers, giving them the opportunity to exhibit, and sell their work to the public.

The annual Solstice Visual Arts Award to the value of €2,000 is presented to a work of distinction in any medium within Surveyor submissions. Selected by the curator and commended for combining domesticity and architecture with artistry and skill, Hazel O'Sullivan is this year's recipient. O'Sullivan will use the award of €2,000 to help in the development of her practice, for materials and housekeeping while currently a student in London. See Section 4, page 7 for more details on the winning artist and her work.

Full details of the exhibition, listing of all artists, artworks and prices of works for sale are available at <https://solsticeartscentre.ie/event/surveyor-2022>

Selection process and curation

In October, Solstice advertised an **open-call** to artists living in or from County Meath, each submitting up to three artworks of any discipline for consideration. An external adjudicator, independent curator and Registrar for the OPW (Office of Public Works) Irish state Collection Davey Moor was invited to access, select and curate the artworks for Surveyor 2022.

Of the 249 artworks submitted, 98 were selected for the show. Exhibiting 64 artists work together, the curator planned carefully, where and how to display them within the gallery spaces, hanging paintings together that complement each other in colour or **subject matter**.

The curator officially opened the exhibition to the public, detailing his experience of curating the show. He also selected and announced Hazel O'Sullivan as the winner of the annual Solstice Visual Arts Award at the opening ceremony.

About the curator

[Davey Moor](#) is an independent curator, writer, and lecturer on art. Registrar for the OPW Irish State Art Collection since 2010, he has been curating both freelance and for organisations such as Epoch, One Gallery, Monster Truck, Kevin Kavanagh, and the OPW since 2004. He was the director of Kevin Kavanagh gallery from 2008 - 2010.

Display & layout of the exhibition

The exhibition begins on the ground floor, with 25 artworks and information about the exhibition on display. This gives visitors a taste of what is upstairs in the main gallery.

The curator must consider how all the artworks will look together within the gallery spaces. They work with the gallery technicians and can take up to two days deciding on the positioning of the work.

On your gallery visit, consider the following:

- The positioning of the artworks within each space;
- How a visitor might be guided through the gallery spaces;
- The information displayed and available to tell you about the artworks.

What do you think the curator, and technicians had to consider when planning the layout of this exhibition?

There are nine sculptural works on stand-alone plinths, one textile piece hanging from the ceiling, a video work displayed on a wall mounted TV and a slide projector artwork against a wall, on a plinth. The remaining 86 works are on the walls.

For a group show of this scale, all artworks are numbered. The numbering coincides with printed material available to the public from the gallery foyer desk. The listing is also available through a QR Code and on our website to download.

Exhibition lighting

With 98 artworks to light, the curator requested the main 'strip lights' to be on, with smaller spotlights to highlight particular artworks or the sculptural works on plinths.

Exhibition sound

There are two audio pieces in Gallery 3. The video piece, no.87 *Waspish Tendencies* by Simon McDermott is a 4 minute looped video artwork with background noise, the low hum of bees interspersed with indistinct sounds from a cattle mart. No. 89, *Knife and Fork* by Penelope Lacey is an installation piece with audio that resonates from underneath a table. A male voice recites a 'game' that was played at wakes. A print out of this audio is available at the gallery foyer desk for those with a hearing impairment.

Section 3: Artworks in detail

Artwork 1: *Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3* by Hazel O'Sullivan



Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3

Winner of the Solstice Visual Arts Award 2022

Artist: Hazel O'Sullivan

Year: 2022

Medium: Wood stain, veneer, fabric on birch plywood **Size:** 70 x 90cm each **Price:** €900 each

Winner of the Solstice Visual Arts Award 2022, this work challenges the boundaries between painting and sculpture, design and fine art.

Artist Statement about this work: 'My practice explores domesticity and architecture through sculpture and painting, and investigates the relationship between taste, design and **socio-economics**. Here, with soft furnishings and veneers, I look at class taste through the lens of **minimalism**', creating 'new' spaces that explore our perception of architecture, domesticity and art.

Process & media: Using woodworking skills, wood stains and wood veneers applied to thin plywood sheets, O'Sullivan simulates perspective space, incorporating **minimalism** and **tromp l'oeil painting**. Made from birch plywood sheets shaped using a jigsaw, wood stain is applied alongside wood veneers that are adhered with an iron with ruminants of fabric.

Subject matter & composition: This series of 'Units' challenge the boundary between painting and sculpture, depicting an object with depth on a flat painted surface. Inspired by materials and forms in everyday spaces, the use of space, object, utility, architecture and design in different environments, O'Sullivan tries to capture form, shape and the illusion of perspective and space in her composition. Aware of her socio-economic surroundings when planning the composition, O'Sullivan considers 'what is removed', and 'what is added' to space, combining elements of old and new into the work. This develops into hybrid forms of architecture and furniture, confusing the visitor's experience with space and object, painting and sculpture.

O'Sullivan grew up in Dunshaughlin and studied in NCAD, Dublin. Currently based in London, she is studying a Master's Degree in Fine Art at the Chelsea College of Arts. Find out more at: <https://hazelosullivan.com/>

Display & Layout: These three artworks hang together in Gallery 2 using a **French cleat** attachment.

Artwork 2: *Protea spoke to the shadows* by Annabel Potterton



Protea spoke to the shadows

Artist: Annabel Potterton

Year: 2021

Medium: Oil on canvas

Size: 100 x 80cm

Price: €2100

This artwork is one of three paintings by Annabel Potterton in this exhibition. Potterton is a mature artist, winning the Solstice Visual Arts Award in 2019.

Artist statement about this artwork: 'I begin a painting with a walk around the garden selecting and discarding. Connecting with shape and colour and taking the forms elsewhere, perhaps to somewhere a little unreal. This is the part that I find interesting. The clinical benefits of being close to nature are so important'.

Process & media: Describing it as 'a process of indulgence; combining the joy of growing a garden and a compulsion to paint', Potterton focuses extensively in the preparation and execution of the painting process. Through her daily practice of "doing", painting becomes habitual. Meticulously preparing the canvas and gathering materials to paint in her home studio, she applies an acrylic background of burnt sienna, sometimes adding alizarin crimson. Using raw umber, she paints a layout of shapes directly onto the canvas. The result is an abstraction, still-life configuration of organic matter as her focus shifts while painting from meaning and narrative, to the language of paint in terms of colour and shape.

Subject matter & composition: Inspired by the natural world, Potterton uses materials found in her local environment, allowing their colour and shape to determine her 'feeling' of subject matter. Small creatures, pond life and strange objects spark her curiosity to capture them in paint. Years of painting experience have allowed Potterton to abandon the need to plan the composition of each canvas. Always using the portrait format, pattern is paramount, finding **spatial play** on the surface, adding depth and tension to the finished artwork.

Display & layout: Displayed in three different locations throughout the exhibition, this artwork is located in Gallery 3.

Theme: Organic still-life compositions, focusing on pattern, colour and shape often made abstract.

Artwork 3: *Six of the seven herbs that nothing natural or supernatural could injure* by Joanna Hopkins



Six of the seven herbs that nothing natural or supernatural could injure

Artist: Joanna Hopkins

Year: 2021

Medium: Yarrow, speedwell, mallow, vervain, eyebright, self-heal, St. John's-wort, reclaimed glass & wood

Size: 20 x 60 x 72cm

Price: €800

This sculpture is one of three artworks in the exhibition by Joanna Hopkins. Her two framed pieces, using watercolour, pencil and collage are in the background, hung on the wall.

Artist Statement about this artwork: 'My three artworks are part of an ongoing body of work surrounding the natural world, cycles, Irish plants, mythology and the female body. The works utilise found or reclaimed materials, foraged plants and wildflowers'.

Process & media: Hopkins is a multi-disciplinary visual artist. She works between video, installation, drawing, collage and sculpture. Her **research-based practice** culminates in **ephemeral installations**, often **site-specific**. Interested in merging technology with the natural world, she makes abstract, hybrid connections between non-human entities and our human selves to explore identity, the rural and the urban, empathy for our natural environment and to attempt to understand the human condition.

Subject matter & composition: Working with native plants & local histories as a subject matter, she combines plants, flowers, folklore and psychology. 'I am exploring new work & plants, merging and **anthropomorphizing** the landscape as a living, breathing entity'. Chosen from Lady Wilde's recordings of Irish Folklore from 1888, Hopkins foraged the plant life in this artwork between Dublin, Mayo and Fingal. The seven herbs that the ancient druids used, and believed nothing natural or super-natural could harm, represent healing and are presented here as specimens, or artefacts within recycled materials.

Find out more at: <https://www.joannahopkins.com/>
<https://platform31.localartsireland.ie/2022-artists/joanna-hopkins>

Display & layout: Displayed on a white plinth, this artwork stands alone in close proximity to the drawings on the wall behind, also by the artist. This sculptural work is spot lit from above.

Theme: Research based practice focusing on human identity and form, merging folklore and connection to the natural world.

Section 4: Glossary

Artefact is an object made by a human being, typically of historic or cultural interest.

Anthropomorphizing is to attribute human characteristics or behaviour to an animal, or object.

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

Curator: The exhibition curator oversees the organisation and presentation of an exhibition in order to inform, educate and inspire the public. They make a series of choices on how they will display the artworks.

Ephemeral installations are designed to exist for a short period and then disappear, providing a fleeting experience and leaving behind a memory.

French cleat is a way of securing a cabinet, mirror, artwork or other object to a wall. It is a moulding with a 30–45 degree slope used to hang cabinets or other objects.

Interpret is to translate or explain something for another person.

Minimalism is an art movement that began in post–World War II Western art, most strongly associated with American visual arts in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Multi-disciplinary artists combine different artforms. Multidisciplinary art is often experimental, seeking new forms of expression.

Open-call is an opportunity that is open to any artist who has interest in submitting their work for consideration.

Permanent collections consist of objects, artifacts, or pieces of art collected and owned by a museum or gallery.

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

Research-based practice in art is the process of experiencing or studying areas of interest often within science and using that knowledge in artistic processes to communicate a particular message.

Site-specific art is designed for and often made within a specific location.

Spatial play involves reasoning about qualities of space (e.g., distance, proportion), and observing the positions of physical objects.

Subject matter is the topic dealt with or the subject represented in an artwork.

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

Tromp l'oeil is French for “to deceive the eye”. A type of optical illusion, it is used to trick the eye into thinking that a flat surface is three-dimensional.

Section 5: Questions to consider

Why do you think it is important for Meath based artists to exhibit in the annual Surveyor exhibition?

How important is the curators' role in an exhibition?

Do you think the annual Solstice Visual Arts Award is important for artists and their practice and why?

Hazel O'Sullivan's work combines art, craft, and architecture. How does she achieve this?

Consider the medium, composition, and scale in your answer.

Both Annabel Potterton and Joanna Hopkins use native Irish plants within their art practices.

Compare and contrast their different approaches, use of materials and techniques.

Using their environment as a source of inspiration, the three artists do this in very different ways.

As a group, discuss this further in relation to context, art elements and design principles, materials and techniques.

Read more about the artists' work on their websites, follow them on social media and gain additional insight into their art practices.

When visiting the gallery consider the theory and thinking behind the artist's work as well as the processes and media used.

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.

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

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 an 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:

