



KERRY
VISUAL ARTISTS'
SHOWCASE

2015

Cover Image: *Earth*, Oil on Perspex, 30" x 30", 2012
Roisín McGuigan

FOREWORD

It was my great pleasure to be invited to participate in the selection of artwork for the Kerry Visual Artists' Showcase 2015 and 2016. County Kerry is a haven for artists and the selection process was not an easy one. We have, however, selected work which is of high quality, illustrating a range of styles and approaches, and which will be enjoyed by many who come to see the work.

I want to congratulate all participating artists for the time and effort that was involved in the submission process. I also want to commend the Kerry County Council Arts Office for an unrelenting commitment to supporting the visual arts in Kerry. A thriving and vibrant cultural scene is deeply important to life in the region, and not just from a tourism perspective. Hopefully, the Visual Artists' Showcase of 2015 and 2016 will go some way towards highlighting and supporting the work of these Kerry-based artists, and be positioned alongside other events which nurture the arts across the region.

Orla Flynn

Head of CIT Crawford College of Art & Design

Kerry has a strong tradition of being a source of inspiration to visual artists. Both the people and the place provide an abundance of raw material to the creative mind. Kerry County Council is aware of the value visual artists bring to their county, that their work is seen in the county and appreciated by people locally, nationally and internationally.

It is extremely important that artists work is showcased. Providing a selected show in 2015, opening at the gallery in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, has given a new opportunity for the wider public to engage with some of the best art work in Kerry today. The Arts Office, in consultation with the arts sector identified the need for a curated show of work from Kerry artists. This project is co-funded by Kerry County Council and the Arts Council, and aims to promote the variety of work and styles, all of such a high standard, that exist in Kerry today.

I would like to thank Orla Flynn, of CIT who curated the show, the Arts Office staff for their work in bringing this to fruition, and to all the artists who applied for the exhibition. I hope this showcase will prove effective in promoting awareness of the actual standard of visual art in Kerry, the variety of work and the sheer skill of artists across the county. We are proud to have so many talented artists living in Kerry and wish all concerned continued success in their careers.

Le gach dea ghuí,

Kate Kennelly

Arts Officer, Kerry County Council

Kerry has scenery and people that have long inspired artists. These artists bring great benefits to the county, both economically and culturally. As part of the public consultation process for the Kerry Arts Strategy 2016 – 2021, the need for exhibition opportunities for visual artists was identified.

The Kerry Visual Artists Showcase is Kerry County Council's first response to this identified need. The number and quality of applications for inclusion in the showcase necessitated another exhibition in 2016. Both events will show the work of some the best artists living and working in Kerry today.

The artists included in this 2015 showcase are working in a wide range of artistic media; this reflects the best in contemporary practice and is a testament to the depth of talent in the county. Dervla O'Flaherty, Sandra Hickey, Mieke Vanmechelen, Syra Larkin, Patsy Farr, Roisín McGuigan, Lisa Fingleton, Julie Lovett and Barbara Reen all strive, in their own unique and individual styles, to celebrate, challenge and provoke.

I would like to thank Orla Flynn who curated this exhibition, the Arts Office for organising this showcase and the Arts Council for their financial support.

Moira Murrell

Chief Executive, Kerry County Council

The Kerry Visual Artists' Showcase is a landmark event in the visual arts sector here in Kerry.

The limited availability of exhibition opportunities open to local artists has shown that there is a long term need for a dedicated visual arts event and a place where local artists can exhibit their work within the community that has inspired and nurtured its making. Kerry County Council is delighted to be answering this need through this newly established opportunity at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in Killarney.

The artists included in this showcase represent contemporary visual arts practice from across the whole county, from Ballybunion to Ballinskelligs, and from Tralee to Kenmare, they illustrate just how alive the visual arts sector is in the county.

The range of work included here is most certainly as wide and breathtaking as any scenic view in Kerry, and I hope that the public will take this opportunity to experience, enjoy and celebrate the great visual arts talent that exists right here in our county.

Cllr Pat McCarthy

Mayor of Kerry

ARTISTS

Patsy Farr

Lisa Fingleton

Sandra Hickey

Barbara Hopkins Reen

Syra Larkin

Julie Lovett

Roisín McGuigan

Dervla O'Flaherty

Mieke Vanmechelen

PATSY FARR

Patsy Farr has been exhibiting nationally and internationally since 1989, with her most recent exhibition taking place in the Blasket Centre in Dunquin. She was awarded the Frank Herring Award by the Pastel Society in London in 1991, and her work is included in the collection of the National Museum of Ireland.

I am an oil painter. My work is about what you see, and not what you know. My subject is drawn from my life, in all its diversity. Painting is alchemy, from light into pigment, no recipe, no rules and no guarantees... Since moving to the west of Ireland in 2000 my work has been influenced to a great extent by the landscape, the sea, the weather and the potent combination of these 3 elements. I try to paint what I see and not what I know about a subject so that my eyes do the work, and not my intellect. My work is always a visual response to a subject and I revel in the sensuality of paint.

Fomhar - Cruach Mharthain, Autumn - Cruach Mharthain
Oil on canvas, 60cm x 60cm, 2015



LISA FINGLETON

Lisa Fingleton is an award winning multimedia artist whose practice incorporates drawings, found objects, collaborative projects, documentary and immersive installations. Much of her work deals with socio-political and environmental concerns. Fingleton recently completed an MA in documentary film at Goldsmiths College London and previously studied Fine Art at NCAD. In May this year the Irish Film Institute hosted a special retrospective screening of her work entitled "The Power of The Personal Story". She is currently Filmmaker in Residence with Kerry County Council.

I am fascinated with the process of creativity and the transformation of ideas into art. I am usually more interested in the message than any rigid adherence to a medium. Thus my practice flows between moving lens based image making, to collaborative and participative projects, to drawing and installation based work. Most recently I find myself farming, drawing and filming. I like this fluidity even if it defies easy categorisation.

I believe the feminist slogan that says the personal is political, or in my case that the revolution starts in my front field. I want to explore the connections between art and farming in search of a more sustainable way to live and practice.

In an attempt to connect with our garden and farm (and to escape the computer and invasion of technological devices in my studio), I started a simple drawing project last year. I created at least three drawings a day with thick black markers and A3 sheets. I found it stilled my mind and following the black line became a form of meditation.

I enjoy observing the slow but constant cycles of nature. I am drawn to clutter and struck by how growth often evolves from chaos.

*In the Stillness Something Moves, Ink on Paper
29cm x 42cm, 2014*



SANDRA HICKEY

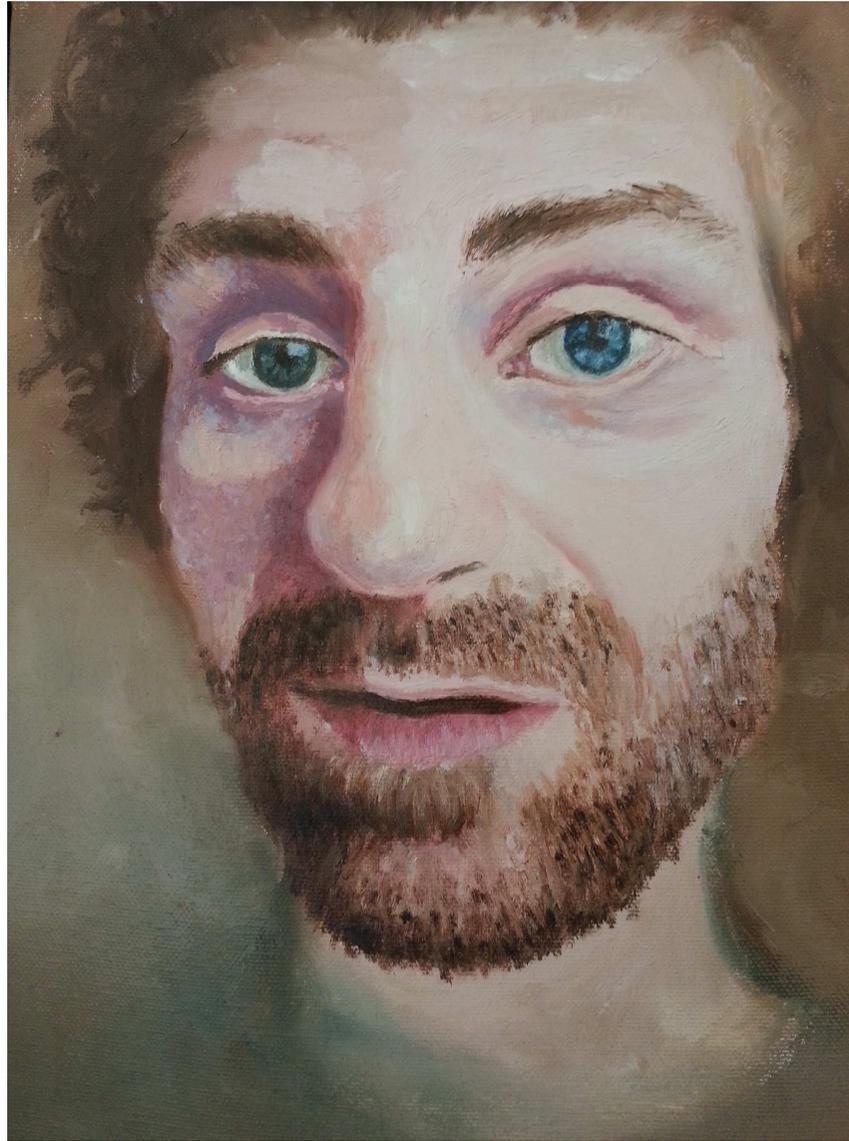
Sandra Hickey studied Fine Art in the Limerick School of Art and Design, where she specialised in Painting. She received a BA honours degree in 2010 and completed a Masters in Fine Art at the National College of Art and Design in 2013. Sandra's work has been exhibited both national and internationally.

I find people to be an interesting subject matter. In my previous work, I dealt with aspects of the unconscious mind. I used the human body to portray aspects of the twisted nature of the mind: distorting the body and portraying it as an unfamiliar creature that has components recognisable as human.

These new works build on this concept while deviating in a new and alternative direction, portraying a different aspect of the human form, a side that is more aesthetically pleasing, warm and receptive; it is this side that we use to let people in or shut others out. In these pieces I want to make a reference to the great masters of the past and to the tradition of painting itself but with a modern twist.

Every face tells a story, every body speaks a silent language.

*Arthur, Oil on Canvas
12" x 10", 2015*

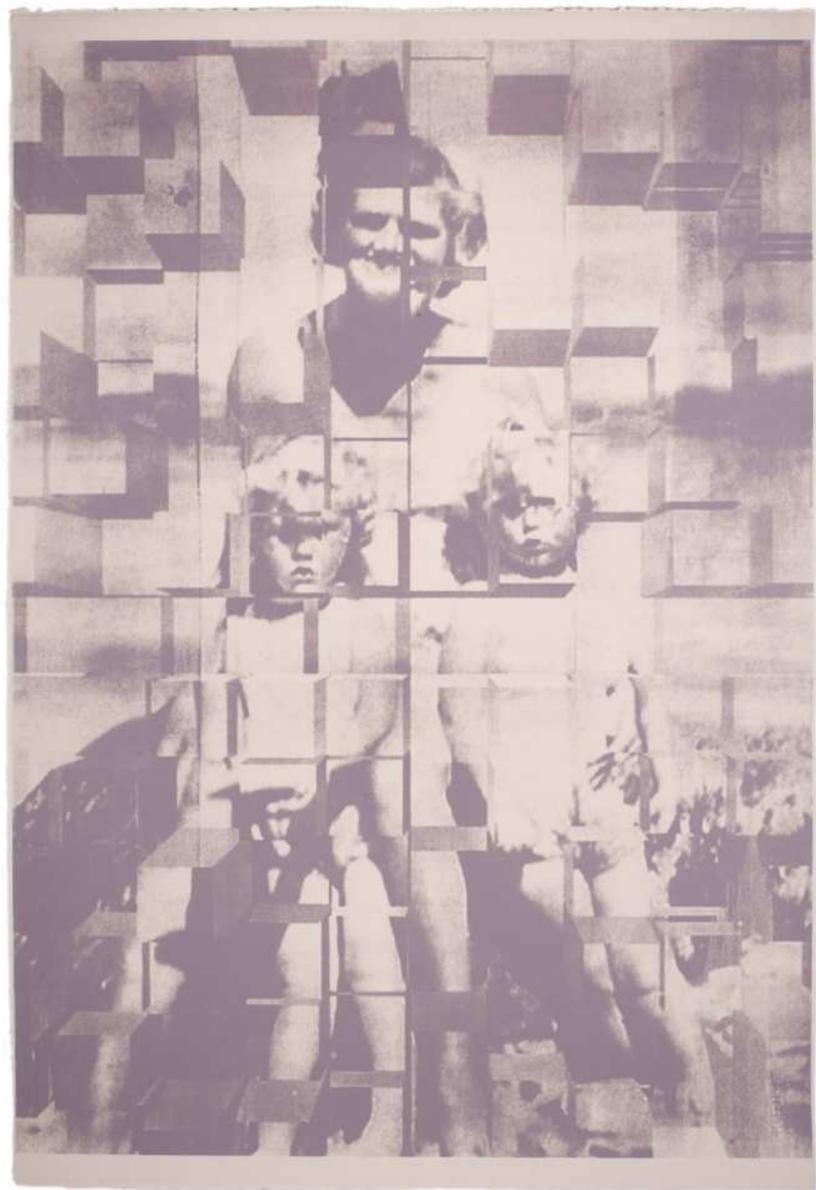


BARBARA HOPKINS REEN

Barbara Hopkins Reen is an emerging artist based in Tralee, Co. Kerry. In 2014 she attained a BA (Hons) in Visual Art at Dublin Institute of Technology and was also awarded a residency at Cill Rialaig in Co. Kerry. A member of Cork Printmakers, Cork Textile Network and Studio8-Kerry Contemporary, she continues to develop her skillset through exhibiting and seeking challenging new outlets for her work.

I am an artist concerned with identity, in both familial relationships and a sense of place. As an identical twin, I experience this as a complicated sense of oneness and duality. All is bound up with my shifting sense and degree of belongingness, while childhood holidays on a small off shore Irish island has heightened my sense of encapsulation. I seek to explore and interpret all of this through my artwork, in a way that is both accessible and holds meaning for everyone, promoting reflection on our long held perceptions of our place in the world.

Us Three, Screen Print on Fabriano Paper
76cm x 112cm, 2014



SYRA LARKIN

Syra Larkin studied at Hammersmith Art College before moving to Ireland in 1977 with the Irish luthier, Chris Larkin. Together they live and work on the Maharees Peninsula. Syra has exhibited in major open submission exhibitions and her work has also been exhibited in solo and group shows in Ireland, America and Europe.

I have been painting for at least 40 years. I am neither young, emerging or mid career or perhaps in some way I am all of those. I leave you to decide! I work mainly in a figurative style and describe my work as lyrical, figurative, symbolic, eclectic, allegorical and hopefully enduring.

The figures are often a representation of many of the emotions that are important to me, ones of love, sadness, sexuality, passion, motherhood, joy, loss. My work is not particularly radical or political in its expression, perhaps it should be! It is just a literal representation of my everyday existence.

*Under a Green Mantel. Oil on Linen
106cm x 116cm, 2015*



JULIE LOVETT

Julie Lovett is a visual artist. Born in County Kerry, she studied at the Limerick School of Art and Design (Degree) and the University of Ulster (Masters of Fine Art).

She uses painting, sculpture, film and collage as tools for exploring greater concerns in her practice. Lovett has exhibited her work in Germany, Belfast, Dublin, Limerick and Kerry.

The constant driving force that keeps my practice moving has been an attempt to develop the possibilities of what can happen in a space when two colliding objects are placed in it. I see these objects existing as physical objects in space but also as different mediums and approaches in space. Taking this as a starting point, my curiosity lies with the artists approach to such spatial challenges as installation and curatorial conflict.

The work itself is positioned in and around many different areas and mediums, using specific social, cultural and spatial concerns to push it into motion. These concerns often refer to something I've done or made in the past that become relevant yet again in the practice often for fresh and different reasons. My relationship with the activity of painting and sculpture revolves around this approach.



ROISÍN McGUIGAN

Originally from County Armagh and now based in County Kerry, McGuigan is a graduate of NCAD and Burren College of Art. She is represented in Ireland by The Paul Kane Gallery in Dublin and her work has been exhibited as part of Cork European City of Culture at the Crawford Gallery of Art, as well as at the Hun Gallery, New York, Emerge Art Fair in Washington DC, and the Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin.

Roisín has received bursaries from Kerry County Council and the Arts Council of Ireland, was shortlisted for the Tony O'Malley Studio Award in 2010, and was Artist in Residence at Institute of Technology, Tralee from 2012 – 2014.

My practice encompasses painting, drawing and digital media and uses the boundaries of landscape to reflect issues of identity and relationship with place.

More and more, not only the materiality of painting and its myriad processes, but the concept, the viewer relationship and the inspiration for the painting are becoming content in my work, stretching my practice and extending the reach of painting into broader contemporary practices and methodologies. The range of media therefore extends outwards from paint to encompass graphite, pen, digital video and found objects.



DERVLA O'FLAHERTY

Dervla O'Flaherty completed her BA in Fine Art Painting at NCAD, Dublin in 2012 and Post-Graduate studies at Cyprus College of Art in 2014, receiving several awards including 'RDS Student Art Awards and travelling exhibition'. Her work has been purchased for several public collections and was shown as part of the OPW 'Art of the State Exhibition 2013'. Dervla has had recent exhibitions in Dublin, Cyprus, Iceland, Edinburgh, Waterford and Kerry, and will have a residency and exhibition in Slovenia in November 2015.

I am an Irish artist, based in South Kerry, who works primarily with paint and wood. My recent work explores ideas of darkness, indeterminacy and the self. Within my painting, symbolic references and instinctual mark-making inhabit material places, wild imaginary landscapes and situations, as well as the underground world of the unconscious. Research into myth, folktale and philosophical investigations into ideas of the unknown and the indeterminate have played a key role in developing my practice. I am particularly interested in how motifs from myth and folktale were used to bridge an understanding of the unknown and unanswerable, darker aspects of being, and the imagery that can be bred from this. Starting in secret scribbled notebooks and sketches, each painting is a journey to a unknown place. Methods of coating and re-coating, removing and overlapping material reveal histories of the painting; decisions, desires, maps, mistakes, second guessing, wrong turns and resolve. This work seeks to encompass an experience without doing damage to its memory by attempting literal description or nailing it shut. My interest in the necessity of ambiguity to how the poetic image functions are apparent in these images; while giving us a sense of where we are, they are reluctant to direct us to any concrete landmark, person, place or thing. Anything could happen, says the poet CD Wright, in the



MIEKE VANMECHELEN

Born in Antwerp, Belgium, Mieke Vanmechelen moved to Co. Kerry in 1981. With a BA from Trinity College Dublin and an MA from Crawford College of Art & Design, Mieke most recently exhibited at Void Derry and at London South Bank University. Mieke is a recipient of the Thomas Dammann Junior Memorial Trust Award 2015.

With a background in painting, I work cross-disciplinary and am concerned with an exploration of the relationship between living beings and the natural world and the parts of our existence which we cannot formulate through words. I aim to indicate those aspects we intuitively sense, but do not ordinarily see.

My video piece 'Borderspace' was filmed along a leafy river bank and engages with the manifestation of the archetypal trickster and the embodiment of this in the 'female figure'. Represented by three generations of women tracing the steps of the feral fox, daughter, mother, grandmother, we each wear an initiation belt made from foxtails as a way of becoming anthropomorphised and unified. Wandering through a space where time is irrelevant the figure is linked to a place that goes above and beyond our concept of current existence and gives us a glimpse at something otherworldly.



Thanks to

Exhibition Curator, Orla Flynn
Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht

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An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht