



Acquisitions 2021-22

Arts Council of Northern Ireland Collection

#ACNICollection



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Foreword

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) grew its Collection in 2021-22 through the purchase of 35 new works by 22 artists. These acquisitions represent more recent practice of artists working in Northern Ireland today, at different stages in their careers from emerging to established, and work across a range of disciplines including painting, sculpture, craft, print, photography and video. The purchased artworks reflect artistic practice that is innovative and challenging and that contribute to the development of visual arts practice in Northern Ireland. Within this year's purchases we see a number of themes surface, including an interest in the spaces we inhabit in a physical and abstract sense, an exploration of process and materiality and a representation of past and present narratives.

ACNI recognises the importance of purchasing contemporary work as a vital support mechanism for artists, particularly in challenging, post-pandemic times for the sector. The work purchased has been largely drawn from a range of exhibitions that have taken place throughout the year, bringing emerging practice to the fore and recognising the valuable contribution of those with long-standing careers.

These new artworks will be accessible to diverse audiences both within and outside Northern Ireland as part of the ACNI Collection's Art Lending Scheme.

To find out more about our Art Collection and our Lending Scheme, please contact the Arts Council of Northern Ireland at: collection@artscouncil-ni.org

View our recent acquisitions on Instagram: [@artscouncilni_collection](https://www.instagram.com/artscouncilni_collection)
[#ACNICollection](https://www.instagram.com/artscouncilni_collection)

Dr Suzanne Lyle



Cover Image

Untitled (Calf II) Rwanda
by Paul Seawright



Graft by Mark Hanvey

Mark Hanvey

2022- Bleached sycamore (bowl) and oak twig

Mark Hanvey is a woodturner and furniture maker with over 25 years of practice as a maker working with wood, whose work is held in public and private collections including the National Museum of Ireland. His work embodies a deep respect for the material, as he strives to connect with the purist elements of wood. This piece is part of a larger series entitled 'Graft', which imagines how the timber of two different species of a tree would grow if they were grafted at the sapling stage. He uses unseasoned sycamore wood, which is turned to a fine wall thickness and then left to dry, allowing the natural tensions in the timber to pull and contort to realise the final form. The grafted form of the work is created through a twig (from a different tree) being cut into the side wall. The resulting piece is an example of exceptional craftsmanship and design.



Underwater Cavern' Halo Vessel (2020)
by Sinéad Fagan

Sinéad Fagan

2020 - White stoneware clay fired with seaweeds, wire & oxides

Sinéad Fagan is a ceramicist, who is based in Cork and shows her work regionally and internationally. This piece won the Sculpture Prize at the Royal Ulster Academy of Arts (RUA) in 2021. It has been crafted using an experimental approach, which adopts an ancient kiln firing method called 'saggar'. Colour is added to the vessel's surface, by soaking found objects in colouring oxides, which are then wrapped around the vessel and incorporated into the firing process, adding surface colour through the fumes released. The result is a multi-layered piece which evokes the Irish rural landscape and its ever-changing skylscapes.

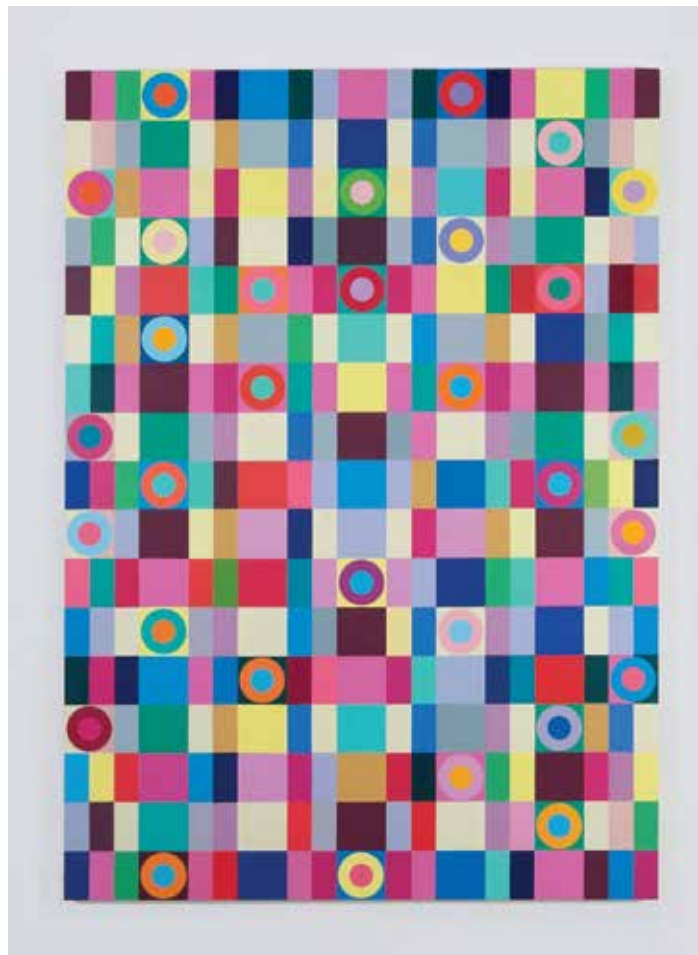


Uncle Dee by Lauren Gibson

Lauren Gibson

2021 - Oil on canvas

Lauren Gibson is an emerging artist, graduating in 2021 and this work was exhibited as part of her Degree Show at Belfast School of Art. It was purchased from the Queen Street Studios' 'Emergence V' exhibition in 2022. Through her practice, she is interested in how shapes, patterns and objects have the ability to resurface old memories, and she captures this through a combination of oil paint and mixed media on the canvas. Her work takes inspiration from found imagery and this particular piece has been influenced from an old photograph, which captured a moment in her family's history drawing on shared experiences and personal memory. Described in bright contrasting blocks of colour, the eye is drawn into the scene, which has a nostalgic glow to it and represents the idea of a memory as one that is fragmentary and abstracted.



Dazzle by Ronnie Hughes

Ronnie Hughes

2021- Acrylic co-polymer on canvas

Ronnie Hughes is an established painter, whose work is held in key collections across Ireland and shown in galleries internationally. This piece was first exhibited as part of a solo show 'Isobar' in the MAC Belfast in 2022, from which it was purchased for the Collection. Through this large scale work, we are given a strong sense of his process-driven practice, in which the final image evolves from. The artist sees his role as one to steer and nuance this evolution, until the emergence of waves, nebulae, constellations, lattice like structures start to appear. In doing this, he is searching for a pattern or hidden structure in a seemingly random and chaotic universe, and via the act of painting, he is extracting a hidden reality.



Look-out Tower by Niall Ruddy

Niall Ruddy

2021 - Photographic print on Dibond

Niall Ruddy is an emerging photographer and graduate of Belfast School of Art and this piece was purchased from the MFA Degree show at Belfast Exposed in 2021. The work comes from the photographic series 'He made a Fortress from his House', drawing on his experience of living in South Korea for the past decade. Present within the work is a post-conflict mindset, which confronts the normalization of the violence and trauma he experienced growing up in Northern Ireland throughout the 1980s and 1990s. He is interested in the legacy of the Korean War and its lasting impact on its citizens, explored through the topography of its land. He focuses his lens on those small details which indicate the omnipresent nature of conflict, which has been embedded into the everyday.



Playgrounds by Gavin Martin

Gavin Martin

2021 - Light box photograph

Gavin Martin is an emerging photographer and this photographic piece was first exhibited in 2021, as part of the MFA Photography Belfast School of Art Degree show in Belfast Exposed. Presented in a light box format, the work is intended to be viewed as a psychological landscape, in which the artist is dealing with the trauma of past abuse. Through it, he revisits how childhood resilience can transform any environment, however uninhabitable, into a playground. He is interested in how we can escape our surroundings into a world of fantasy, so as to mask reality. By working in panoramic format with multiple points of focus and depth of field, there is an overriding sense of disconnection and unease to it.



Sorrow Had a Baby
by Myrid Carten

Myrid Carten

2021 - Video HD film

Myrid Carten is an early career video-based artist and film maker, showing work regionally and nationally through gallery exhibitions and film festivals. This video work was developed as an AEMI film commission with support from the Arts Council of Ireland and was shown in the 2021 Cork International Film Festival. Her practice uses both documentary and fiction, and often is a playful combination of both, as she interrogates both the struggle for intimacy and the ways we are compromised by our pasts. She confronts the universal desire to be both known and hidden, and the impact of this. A mother-daughter relationship is explored through multiple lenses: memory, beauty, inheritance, questioning how mythologies of the self and collective memory can connect or distance us, in an honest portrayal of her own family narratives.



Les Reseaux C'est Super Cool
by Nina Oltarzewska

Nina Oltarzewska

2021– Sculpture installation

Nina Oltarzewska is an emerging artist with an installation based practice, who graduated from Belfast School of Art in 2021. This sculptural work was shown in Queen Street Studios' graduate exhibition 'Emergence V' in 2022. The piece speaks of the digital world we have come to live in, by using camera phones in the work to provide different imagery relating to the idea of the selfie, as an expression of our emotions. The artist is specifically exploring the processes we undergo when we mourn, the different stages we go through when letting go of a moment, a living thing or a feeling. She writes fragments of inner monologue onto her body as a ritualistic externalisation of thought, and in doing so is asking the viewer to confront their own thought processes.



Not only the Earth We Share by Sol Archer

Sol Archer

2021 - Digital video

Sol Archer is a visual artist from the Netherlands who has shown his work widely across galleries in Europe and Ireland in recent years. This work was made through a year long residency with Household Belfast and it explores the past, present and future of a small neighbourhood in Belfast called Sailortown. The film is a portrait of a place and community overlooked by generations of town planning, captured through the performance of imagination and memory, often with humour, and underpinned with poignancy. The work sits within a practice that is socially engaged, in which he uses video as a means for creating collective experiences and as a tool for engendering agency and auto-representation within the groups he encounters.



Untitled (Portrait VII) Rwanda
by Paul Seawright

Paul Seawright

2021- Pigment photography print

Paul Seawright is an internationally recognised photographer, whose work is held within major museum and photography collections including the Tate and the International Centre of Photography New York. These works were first presented within a 2021 solo show 'Beasts of Burden' in Belfast Exposed. The series explores the notion of reconciliation in a post-conflict situation and specifically focuses on the Rwandan genocide of 1994. The series presents both survivors and perpetrators of the genocide alongside portraits of animals (cows), giving the viewer insight into a unique reconciliation project, 'Cows for Peace', in which the artist took part in workshops forming the research stages of the work. The project pairs together a survivor and perpetrator engaging them in a journey focused on truth telling and acceptance. As part of this process, they are given shared ownership of a donated cow, to embed truth and forgiveness in their community as they raise the cow together to help to heal the wounds of the past and build a sustainable future.

Liminal
by Alastair MacLennan



Alastair MacLennan

2019-2021 – Charcoal, oil and ink on paper

Alastair MacLennan is a key figure in performance art in Northern Ireland, who has made a significant contribution as a practitioner and educator amassing 50 years of practice. He established a distinctive form of performance art in the early 1970s and has performed extensively on an international stage since, including representing Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 1997 and collaborations with performance group Black Market International.

‘Lim(i)nal’ is a series created by the artist in 2020 during lockdown through daily drawing actions over a 9 month period. The drawings are made by working on two A2 sized pieces of paper simultaneously with both hands using his peripheral vision. He is exploring the idea of creating a liminal space through an approach which engages meditation, performance and materiality. His choice of materials of oil, charcoal and ink (ones that do not normally mix) is key to unlocking a process of experimentation and exploration of the possibility of material ‘interbeing’. This work is one of 13 purchased for the Collection that sit within a larger series of drawings.





**LongevityApoptosome,
Black Water Lad (HE2067)**
by Maria McKinney



**LongevityApoptosome
(Sculpture)**
by Maria McKinney

Maria McKinney

2016- LongevityApoptosome, Black Water Lad (HE2067) - Digital Photograph
LongevityApoptosome – Mixed media sculpture

Maria McKinney is a multi-disciplinary artist from Donegal, who is a former graduate of Belfast School of Art and is now based in Dublin. In 2021 she was one of the winners of the prestigious Golden Fleece Award. This work taken from the 'Sire' series shown as a solo show in the RHA in Dublin, focuses on contemporary farming practices and agriculture, primarily cattle breeding. This has crossed over into research into the ongoing and deepening understanding of genetics and how this is being applied to livestock, and its wider societal implications. The artist has collaborated with numerous farmers across Ireland and geneticists in the creation of this work that straddles photography, sculpture and performance. Her use of materials within this project shows great innovation, repurposing artificial insemination straws to make sculptural objects using age-old straw-binding techniques.



Vigil/Protest (London/2021. Memorial for Sarah Everard. Scotland Yard. Version 1) by Joy Gerrard

Joy Gerrard

2021 - Pencil and Sumi Ink on canvas

Joy Gerrard is an established visual artist based in Belfast with an internationally recognised practice, who makes work that investigates different systems of relations between crowds, architecture and the built environment. This painting is part of a larger series of work made by the artist in 2021 that focused on women's rights and safety. This piece is a reproduction of a helicopter view media image of the 'Sisters Uncut' protest that moved through central London from Scotland Yard to Westminster following the vigil of Sarah Everard, a young woman abducted and murdered by a police officer. The work is made from repurposed news images which are reimagined through drawing and collage, as large monochrome paintings executed with painstaking detail and made with Japanese ink on canvas. In the last 10 years her practice has focused on image making around themes of protest that included climate change, Brexit, Black Lives Matter and women's equality. There are many themes at play in the work- the precarious freedom of protest, the crowd as an expression of collective agency and the ephemerality of mass media representation.

List of Acquisitions 2021-22 (Purchases and gifts)

Works with Images

Joy Gerrard, Vigil/Protest (London/2021. Memorial for Sarah Everard. Scotland Yard. Version 1). Pencil and Sumi Ink on canvas. © Copyright courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Ros Kavanagh

Mark Hanvey, Graft. Bleached Sycamore (bowl) and Oak Twig. © Copyright courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of the artist and Craft NI

Lauren Gibson, Uncle Dee. Oil on canvas. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Niall Ruddy, Look-out Tower. Photographic print on Dibond. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Maria McKinney, LongevityApoptosome, Black Water Lad (HE2067). Digital Photograph. LongevityApoptosome. Mixed media sculpture. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Myrid Carten, Sorrow Had a Baby. Video HD film. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Nina Oltarzewska, Les Reseaux C'est Super Cool. Sculpture installation. © Copyright courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Paul Marshall

Alastair MacLennan, Liminal Series (1-13). Charcoal, oil and ink on paper. © Copyright courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Brian Patterson

Ronnie Hughes, Dazzle. Acrylic co-polymer on canvas. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Sol Archer, Not only the Earth We Share. Digital video. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Paul Seawright, Untitled (Calf II) Rwanda & Untitled (Portrait VII) Rwanda. Pigment photography print. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Leah Davis, Luke. Oil on Canvas. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Sinéad Fagan, 'Underwater Cavern' Halo Vessel. Ceramic. © Copyright courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of Roland Paschhoff

Gavin Martin, Playgrounds. Lightbox/Photography. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

All other works

Aoife Bambury, Muse. Bronze and marble. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Barbara Allen, Louise in Blue. Pencil and watercolour. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Brian Ferran, Legend (diptych). Acrylic on canvas. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Cara Gordon, Thaw. Mixed media on Canvas. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Eileen Ferguson, Palestinian Woman Bethlehem Area C. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Helen McMullan, Timidus. Oil Pastel, Pastel & Charcoal. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

Diane Henshaw, Cuilcagh. Mixed media on paper. © Copyright & image courtesy of the artist

Lynsay-Erin Mercer, Biomes. Ceramic. © Copyright courtesy of the artist

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Luke by Leah Davis
Oil on canvas - 2021



Arts Council of Northern Ireland

To find out more about the Arts Council's Art Collection and Lending Scheme, please contact the Arts Council of Northern Ireland at:
collection@artscouncil-ni.org

View the recent acquisitions on social media: [#ACNICollection](https://twitter.com/ACNICollection)