



**RDS
VISUAL
ART
AWARDS**

The RDS in partnership with IMMA presents the RDS Visual Art Awards

CONTENTS

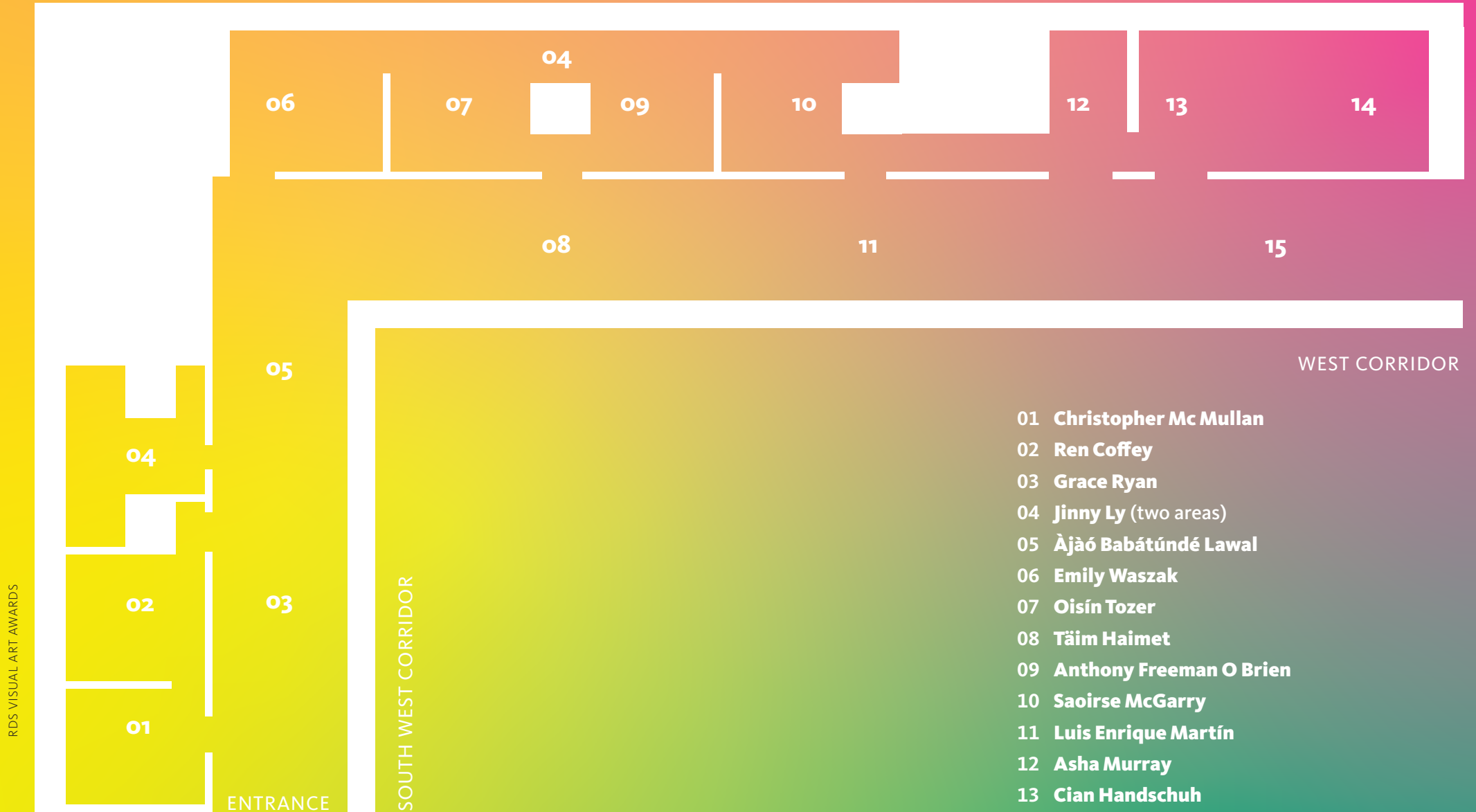
Exhibition Floorplan	04
Welcome from the RDS by Marie Bourke	06
Welcome from IMMA by Annie Fletcher	08
Introduction by Mary McCarthy	10
A Note From the Curator by Elaine Hoey	12

THE ARTISTS (LINKS TO PAGES)

→ Àjàó Babátúndé Lawal	14
→ Anthony Freeman O Brien	16
→ Asha Murray	18
→ Christopher Mc Mullan	20
→ Cian Handschuh	22
→ Emily Waszak	24
→ Grace Ryan	26
→ Jinny Ly	28
→ Laura Grisard	30
→ Luis Enrique Martín	32
→ Nikolas Ryan	34
→ Oisín Tozer	36
→ Ren Coffey	38
→ Saoirse McGarry	40
→ Taïm Haimet	42

IMMA Talks and Group Photograph	44
2023 Acknowledgements	46

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN



- 01 **Christopher Mc Mullan**
- 02 **Ren Coffey**
- 03 **Grace Ryan**
- 04 **Jinny Ly** (two areas)
- 05 **Àjàó Babátúndé Lawal**
- 06 **Emily Waszak**
- 07 **Oisín Tozer**
- 08 **Täim Haimet**
- 09 **Anthony Freeman O'Brien**
- 10 **Saoirse McGarry**
- 11 **Luis Enrique Martín**
- 12 **Asha Murray**
- 13 **Cian Handschuh**
- 14 **Laura Grisard**
- 15 **Nikolas Ryan**

WELCOME FROM THE RDS

Welcome to the 2023 RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition, the most significant celebration of excellence for visual arts graduates in Ireland.

This is a special year for the RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition. It is the 8th year of a critically important event that seeks to find among our graduates the best emerging artists. The venue is the magnificent Irish Museum of Modern Art, housed in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, the oldest classical building in Ireland. 2023 marks the longest ever RDS VAA Exhibition, which will run for three months; 8th December to 3rd March 2024

The Royal Dublin Society has sought since its foundation in 1731, to see Ireland thrive culturally and economically. The Society has a long-established reputation for fostering the arts by helping emerging professional artists in the three areas in which it focuses its support: visual art, music, and craft. The role of the RDS arts programme is to direct this philanthropic support towards the most gifted practitioners and performers in music, craft, and visual art and, in the process, help them to develop their unique talents and achieve their creative potential.

Managed by our dedicated arts team, the RDS Visual Art Awards provides genuine assistance to emerging artists at the time they need it at the beginning of their careers. Previous beneficiaries of the RDS Taylor Art Award (established in 1860) include the celebrated artists: Roderic O'Connor, Mary Swanzy, William Orpen, Mainie Jellett, Louis le Brocquy, Dorothy Cross, and Elaine Hoey. In this way, the motivation of both the Arts Committee and the arts team is to support emerging artistic talent and to continue exploring and nurturing new opportunities and partnership initiatives.

The VAA process of seeking the best emerging artists involved an RDS-appointed team of independent curators making a selection of an initial list for the 2023 Visual Art Awards. The team visited BA and MA graduate shows in art colleges throughout Ireland and longlisted 109 graduates. The graduates completed forms with details of their work, their motivation and what their plans were for the future. These

forms were reviewed by a judging panel, who evaluated the commitment of the graduates to their artistic practice and future career as visual artists. From the 26 graduates shortlisted, 15 were selected to exhibit. Our sincere thanks to the curators and judges who assisted the RDS in delivering the 2023 RDS Visual Art Awards.

The show is curated by Elaine Hoey, a contemporary new media artist working with virtual reality and, part-time lecturer at the National College of Art and Design. Elaine's experience has been invaluable as she was an exhibitor at the RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition in 2015 where she was awarded The Taylor Art Prize. Elaine worked with the RDS arts team and the wonderful staff at IMMA on the installation of the artworks. The 15 emerging artists are fortunate to have their work displayed in the contemporary surroundings of the West Wing Galleries of the Irish Museum of Modern Art. The RDS is immensely grateful to the director, Annie Fletcher, and to the staff at IMMA for their enormous contribution to mounting this show.

A major feature of the RDS VAA project is the major art fund of €35,000 from which five prize winners are awarded. These awards would not exist without the generosity of our sponsors and partners: the Taylor Art Trust, the family of Robin Lewis-Crosby, the RDS Member's Arts Fund, Mason Hayes & Curran LLP, the RHA, and the Centre Cultural Irlandais in Paris. The importance of the awards is that they represent an acknowledgement within the arts world that gives validation to the artist and their work, while also enhancing their profile. They provide real support at a critical moment in an artist's career and, together with the cash prizes, they include studio and art residency opportunities that are so essential for an artist's professional development.

Further confirmation of the importance of the RDS Visual Art Awards comes from an independent review of the project commissioned by the RDS in 2021. It demonstrated the effect the awards had on the careers of the contributing artists. The review revealed the high regard in which the Awards are held among past participants and the visual arts community. Chief among its findings was the perception that the VAA had impacted significantly on the artists' careers, evidenced by over 50% having participated in 5 or more professional exhibitions, nationally and/or internationally, since the RDS VAA exhibition.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the RDS Arts Committee, RDS President John Dardis, RDS interim Chief Executive Liam Kavanagh, the RDS Foundation Director and Board, RDS Board of Management and Council, the members of other committees and fellow Society members and staff. A special thanks to our RDS Arts team, Karen Phillips Arts Programme Manager and Mollie Molumby Arts Executive.

—

Dr Marie Bourke

Chair, RDS Arts Committee

WELCOME FROM IMMA

What a joy and a privilege it is to build on IMMA's longstanding relationship with the RDS Visual Art Awards this year, working in partnership to present this exciting exhibition at the museum for the first time in the Awards' history.

As Ireland's National Cultural Institution for Modern and Contemporary Art, IMMA is dedicated to celebrating emerging, fresh voices in a place of history, and this year's artists have brought us a truly creative vision. The artworks show strength in their engagement with the world right now, be it through cultural and gender identity, humanitarian concerns, climate, land and the environment, the suffering of personal grief, and the challenges of our daily lives. We are delighted to be able to share their vital perspectives with you in the heart of our museum. The exhibition takes place in the Main Galleries of the West Wing and runs for a twelve-week period. This is the longest ever exhibition of the RDS VAA and marks an ambitious moment for emerging art practice in Ireland.

Every year, the RDS VAA champions and propels the work of some of the most brilliant recent graduates in Ireland today. The Awards punctuate the Irish art calendar with a burst of inspiring and brave new work. Shortlisted artists are given a rare and real chance to grow in confidence and bridge the often fraught gap between graduate and practicing professional. The Awards' prize fund of €35,000 is significant but they also go beyond purely financial supports, giving invaluable professional experience to emerging artists by giving them a chance to work directly with established curators, technicians, producers and marketing teams in presenting their work to the public. This year in particular, with the added exposure of their work to our wide, engaged audience at IMMA, this moment represents a phenomenal leap for their careers. Likewise, awards such as studio provision at the RHA, Dublin, and the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, offer the opportunity for cultural exchange and a broader professional network, each vitally important in an increasingly challenging socio-economic climate.

This exhibition marks a highlight of IMMA's ongoing relationship with the prestigious RDS VAA. Over many years, members of our curatorial team — Sean Kissane, Rachael Gilbourne, Karen Sweeney, Mary Cremin

— have gone on to work closely with the RDS and their partners in the selection of graduating artists from across the country and the final judging of the Awards, with Christina Kennedy, Senior Curator: Head of Collections, working as one of the judging panel this year.

Many past winners of the RDS Taylor Art Award have gone on to exhibit at IMMA, and the work of several former awardees is held in the museum's Collection, further strengthening the strong bond and synergy that exists between our two institutions today.

On behalf of IMMA, I would like to thank everyone who has worked to deliver this exhibition. Our sincere gratitude goes to all the team at the RDS, in particular Karen Phillips, Arts Programme Manager, and Mollie Molumby, Arts Executive, for their expertise in bringing this impressive show to IMMA. Congratulations to the invited curator this year, artist Elaine Hoey, who so skillfully and sensitively curated the exhibition, and to each of the RDS Visual Art Awards judges and the selection panel for their rigorous debate and consideration. My deepest thanks to the team here at IMMA, especially to Rachael Gilbourne for leading this project with such detail, care and enthusiasm, and to Siobhán Mooney for her invaluable support. Thanks to Jason Murphy and Ciara Magee for their wealth of technical knowledge and production skills, working with Maurice Ward, Creative Technology Ireland and many other contractors who brought this exhibition to life. Thanks to the Engagement & Learning team who have devised such a generous programme of events and talks around the exhibition, and to all IMMA staff who work from their various areas of knowledge to make such a project happen. And of course a big thank you and congratulations to the fifteen emerging artists. We are thrilled to give their work a new space to breathe and develop within the walls of IMMA.

—

Annie Fletcher

Director, IMMA

INTRODUCTION

Upon Graduation, art graduates have to grapple with many challenges; uncertainty, limited finances, scarcity of affordable housing and studio workspaces, limited access to the arts infrastructure in Ireland and further afield, a highly competitive environment that can appear opaque and an abrupt disconnect with peer groups, lecturers and mentors to name but a few.

This situation is not new within the visual arts, nor indeed exclusive to Ireland, but it has been exacerbated in recent years by the ongoing and continuing post-pandemic crises.

The RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition, now in its 8th year, is a relevant and very valued support for visual art graduates at this critical point in their lives. It offers a high-profile and comprehensively multi-layered assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate students by curators and established practising artists, on an all-Ireland basis, and significantly it concludes with an exhibition of selected works curated by an established practising artist.

This process has many significant secondary benefits, as a large number of curators are exposed to work by a significant number of artists which may inform their ongoing research and artists are exposed to the often harsh realities of competitive selection.

This year's received longlisted proposals were reviewed by a judging panel of established artists and curators: Eithne Jordan, Christina Kennedy, Gary Coyle and artist and guest Curator artist Elaine Hoey. Elaine is a new media artist who works with virtual reality and is herself a two-time RDS Award winner — The RC Lewis Crosby Award 2017 and the Taylor Art Award 2016.

Our review process was highly engaged, and energising but challenging as the works presented were compelling and we were acutely aware of the opportunity being offered through the exhibition.

As a panel, our work was driven by the desire to create an exhibition that would reflect the breadth of practice across the art colleges and to

best present the artists' works and their intent. The works presented for assessment were highly in tune with the environment, the state of the nation and the artist's life experiences. They also in part reflected the influences of their various educational institutions and their lecturers.

Curator Elaine Hoey has since had the challenge to weave these individual practices into the final exhibition. The exhibition's move to IMMA is a significant and welcome development, as the exhibition will now sit within the context of IMMA's ambitious programmes and exhibitions and run for many weeks thereby creating more opportunities for the artists and the potential audiences.

Though participation in the exhibition is a significant achievement in itself there is also the matter of the accompanying prizes—a total fund of over €30,000 consisting of the RDS Taylor Art Award (€10,000), the R.C. Lewis-Crosby Award (€5,000) and the RDS Members' Arts Fund Award (€5,000), The Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, three-month residency with the support of Mason Hayes & Curran (total value €6,000) and the RHA offers a one-year studio award with access to all RHA masterclasses and workshops (value €5,000) along with a stipend of €2,500 generously sponsored by the RDS Members' Arts Fund.

We wish to thank the curators who visited the colleges and longlisted the artists. Their attentiveness and considerable experience add to the value and prestige of the awards. Thanks also to my fellow members of the Judging Panel:

Eithne Jordan, Christina Kennedy, Gary Coyle and panel members and particularly to curator Elaine Hoey who brought her exceptional generosity and personal insights and vision to the panel.

Our most sincere gratitude goes to all the artists who proposed their work in this first instance. The act of putting your work forward for multi-assessment by several individuals is never easy and can feel like a shot in the dark, a self-exposing act — but it is often a necessary step which will likely be repeated over and over in our work lives.

We thank the Arts team at the RDS led by RDS Arts Programme Manager, Karen Phillips and Mollie Molumby Arts Executive RDS who made this project possible.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of previous RDS Arts Programme Manager Dara O'Leary and her colleagues, who in 2016 forged the RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition in its current model — we are all grateful for that vision.

—

Mary McCarthy

Chair of the 2023 RDS Visual Art Awards Judging Panel and Director, Crawford Art Gallery

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

Emerging art does not conform: it thrives in the space between definitions. To experience it is to embrace the discomfort of the unfamiliar and find beauty in the unexpected. It challenges traditional modes of perception, provides a catalyst for cultural reflection, and is a celebration of experimentation and diversity.

Emerging art is a postmodern montage, a cacophony of voices and styles that converge and collide. It shatters hierarchies and invites us to piece together fragments of meaning in a world of ever-shifting perspectives. We will find that seeing is not just about looking; it is about feeling, thinking, and experiencing. Each encounter reveals a new experience and a new way of interpreting the world. Emerging artists play a crucial role in shaping the future of art. They are, in a sense, pioneers, explorers, and provocateurs — challenging established norms, reimagining artistic paradigms and fostering the spirit of continuous reinvention that shapes our contemporary art landscape.

The essence of emerging art lies at the heart of the RDS Visual Art Awards Exhibition. This year, fifteen recently graduated artists, fresh out of their Fine Art degree programmes, harness their unique voices and engage in a dialogue that bridges the historical with the cutting-edge, and the established with the experimental. The fifteen artists hail from various backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, and their diversity not only enriches contemporary art but fosters inclusivity and encourages a broader range of narratives to be told.

As we delve into the exhibition, we encounter not only traditional art forms, but also the dynamic interplay of textiles, sound, video, expanded sculpture and print, photography, interactive installations, and immersive experiences — forms that urge us to engage, question and explore. The themes examined by these artists mirror the complexities of our contemporary world, addressing critical issues relating to social

and political spheres, the environment, and identity. These artists craft narratives that challenge our perceptions of meaning, form, and materiality, interweaving the personal and the universal. As we move through the exhibition, some of the works ask us to consider and reflect on the representation and transformation of our personal and collective identities, as well as the diversity shaping and redefining contemporary Ireland. Other artists address the delicate balance between human progress and ecological preservation, urging us to consider the consequences on our environment and the impact of climate change. The interactive installations that punctuate this exhibition challenge the passive role of the viewer, inviting active participation in the artistic process. We find ourselves immersed in a multisensory experience that disrupts conventional modes of perception. Scent, sound and touch coalesce to craft environments that are as cerebral as they are visceral.

The RDS Visual Art Awards Exhibition offers an amazing platform for emerging artists and provides them with not only the opportunity to showcase their work this year in a prominent institution such as the Irish Museum of Modern Art but also to gain national exposure and establish connections that can profoundly shape their careers. As we navigate this exhibition we are immersed in the vibrant energy of emerging art in Ireland now. It is a space where tradition, diversity, and innovation intertwine, and where the artistic discourse is both rooted in history and propelled by the dynamism of the

contemporary. These emerging artists are not just the future of contemporary art: they are the driving force that propels it forward, ensuring that it remains a vital and transformative cultural force for generations to come.

Many thanks to IMMA for generously hosting this year's RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition and providing steadfast support and guidance. Special thanks to Annie Fletcher, Rachael Gilbourne, Ciara Magee, Jason Murphy, Sophie Byrne, Chris Jones, and the entire IMMA team. The RDS Visual Art Awards exhibition holds significant importance in the promotion and encouragement of emerging art in Ireland. It's been an honour and a privilege to curate and collaborate with the RDS team Karen Phillips and Mollie Molumby and these fifteen incredible artists to bring this show to fruition.

—

Elaine Hoey

Curator, RDS Visual Art Awards 2023

Àjàó Babátúndé Lawal is a Nigerian-born Irish artist who graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design in 2023.

Having been discouraged for many years by a society that favours white-collar jobs for his gender, Àjàó finally summoned the courage to pursue his passion for a career in art education. In 2018, he enrolled as a mature student at NCAD, where his passion for art was instantly reignited.

Known for his rich oil colours and visible brushwork, Àjàó adopts a modern naturalistic style of painting, leaving evidence of his working processes on display.

Exploring themes of black beauty and identity, Àjàó's works are primarily inspired by his upbringing and African heritage. Living by a Yoruba proverb which states, 'Odò t'ó bá gbàgbé orísun yí ó gbe,' translates to 'the river that forgets its source will eventually dry up.' Àjàó advocates for connecting with our cultural heritage. Like roots provide nourishment to branches, it is essential to align ourselves with life and take care of ourselves both internally and externally. He is currently working on a new collection that will discuss some serious political issues prevalent in our growing multicultural society.

Àjàó's work is motivated by a desire to tell stories that captivate people from diverse ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. This devotion aims to promote equality in artistic representation.

'Nostalgia and Gratitude' is a collection of works that reflect on the past and present of our lives. This passage conveys a nostalgic reflection on Àjàó's past experiences, as well as an appreciation for the present moment and a sense of gratitude for his current state of being.

In these paintings, Àjàó references personal photographs of family members and friends. Some paintings were created using archived collages and AI-generated images, while others were inspired by memories and imaginative depictions of both past and future environments.

→ ajaobabatundelawal.com

→ Instagram: [@skenkious_art](https://www.instagram.com/skenkious_art)



Anthony graduated from the National College of Art and Design in 2023 with a BA in Fine Art, specialising in sculpture.

Growing up in Oliver Bond House in the Liberties, Anthony spent a lot of his childhood looking out his bedroom window at the dereliction that surrounded the flats. What fascinated him most were the flowers that would grow from the decay. No matter how forgotten and unloved a space is, it can still produce something beautiful. All nature needs is the opportunity and it can flourish all on its own. Anthony says that people inspire him in the same way; if an individual is put in the right environment, they can flourish. Like a flower growing from concrete, a person who has grown out of hardship is often the strongest and most beautiful of characters.

The work presented in this exhibition is a sculptural self-portrait that takes its inspiration from Anthony's own personal journey with mental health and feeling trapped by long-term unemployment. The piece represents his past, present and future.

All the material used in Anthony's work has been reclaimed from the Iveagh Market in Dublin 8. Materials with their own history help Anthony's creative process.

Anthony works in a community project in the Liberties area of Dublin 8. Living and working in the community is of great inspiration to his art practice.

→ **Instagram: @antfobart**



Asha Murray graduated with a BA Fine Art from Limerick School of Art and Design in 2023.

As a multidisciplinary visual artist, Asha works across the mediums of film and photography, textiles and sculpture. Her art is a form of non-linear, non-conventional, experimental storytelling. In Asha's work, she explores the lived experience of everyday mundane moments and the daily rituals that construct our identities. Themes of temporality, nostalgia, as well as the eternal-internal conscious stream are present in her work. Her work is executed in hyper-colourful, exaggerated, surrealist visuals. This rejection of conventional narrative has prompted Asha to create visual rhythm collages of sound and moving images.

'Washing Machines Live Longer When Tufted' uses experimental film in tandem with wool tufted wall hangings. The visuals, audio and text found in both the film work and the wall hangings are inspired by Asha's personal film archive, a video diary that is ever-evolving and growing.

Asha is currently in residency at the National Sculpture Factory, Cork, having won its Graduate Residency Award in 2023. She is also the first-ever recipient of the TUS Limerick School of Art and Design Global Travel Award.

→ ashamurray.com

→ **Instagram: @murray_asha**



Christopher graduated from the National College of Art and Design in 2023 with a BA in Fine Art. Previous to this, Christopher graduated from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Texas and attended Le Cordon Bleu USA. After ten years working in the US and Spain, he stepped away from kitchens due to disenchantment and health concerns related to exhaustion and depression. He moved to Dublin to resume his studies in art and graduated with distinctions from NCAD.

He received High Commendations for the NCAD Staff Prize in 2023. Since graduating, he was short-listed for a Fingal Public Arts commission, was exhibition architect for '*Long time we've been working*' series at the Project Arts Centre, and has shown his work, '*Muc Chaor*', at the Douglas Hyde Gallery.

Christopher draws techniques from his youth building tree forts and go-karts, as well as his career in avant-garde kitchens, where he learned to extract aromas. It is there where he first recognised perfume's potential. By "de-luxifying" aroma, Christopher uses it as a tool of communication, exploring non-retinal perception of visual art.

The distillation of aromas is a deeply personal archival exercise for Christopher, working to find comfort in a new country the Irish Foreign Births Register suggests he should already know. However, this archive must be shared, as aromatic materials have the ability to incite creative articulation and resonating communication.

For this work, Christopher distilled and macerated materials found around Ireland, such as jasmine from Glasnevin, cedar from Sligo, fruit gums from newsagents, and slurry from Meath — each chemically related to the aromas found in Chanel No 5. The title, '*Perfumer's Organ*', references a perfumer's library of aromatic materials. It is a locus of science and craft, where formulas are created, tested, and perfected. It is the last point before the Brand capitalises on its luxury.

The viewers are invited to walk upon the apparatus, activating the bellows below the parquet which diffuse aromas into the space. The resulting scentscape is formed by the participants' transversal movements across the zones.

→ **Instagram:** [@christopherdanielmcmullan](https://www.instagram.com/christopherdanielmcmullan)



Cian graduated from Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology in 2023. He is a visual artist primarily working in sculpture and installation art.

Much of Cian's work looks at the primordial and spiritual connection we have with the materials that form a dwelling and their function as an extended body. A vital element of his work is the process in which the materials he uses are collected – many elements are hand harvested, processed and collected from specific sites. This is in order to strengthen the relationship between the sculptural object and the earth making them fuller 'worldly things'. Often this element is motivated by the aim to bring a nearness between us and things and thus weaving the self into the meshwork of our environment. These things often interact with produced building materials, illuminating a tension within a modern dwelling. This can be seen in the work 'Groundfast' in which four wild clay vessels, foraged from separate dolmen heritage sites stand in conjunction with four instances of concrete structural supports. These supports are replica of those found on the sites recently implemented in order to keep the tombs from collapsing.

Cian's practice also draws heavily on the writings of philosophers Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and poets Seamus Heaney and John O'Donoghue. He is specifically interested in how their ontological viewpoints relate to nationality, liminal spaces, divinity, things and our synergy with nature.

→ cianhandschuh.cargo.site

→ Instagram: [@andschuh_cian](https://www.instagram.com/andschuh_cian)



Emily graduated with a Master of Arts in Fine Art, TU Dublin in 2023.

Emily is a visual artist of Japanese descent, based in Donegal. She creates sculptural assemblages that involve the making and re-making of powerful symbolic object forms.

Emily's practice is materially driven and embodied. Pieces are composed of found and natural materials collected from sites of industry, abandonment and the natural landscape, weaving thresholds into the unseen. With a background in industrial weaving, textiles are the starting point of Emily's practice, though she engages other sculptural and spatially situated processes in the development of her work.

Emily's work merges the personal and the sociopolitical. Informed by her political analysis and personal experience of complicated grief, mourning the death of her husband during the isolation of the COVID-19 lockdowns, Emily offers her work as both a prefigurative resistance to the organised abandonment of the state in collusion with capital and a love letter to her late husband. Emily's work responds to the disappearance of formalised rituals in contemporary Western society and the implications this disappearance has for grieving bodies, atomised by late-stage racial capitalism. Emily says that ritual is the vehicle through which we can communicate with the dead and glimpse the unseen. Themes of transcendence, repetition and otherworldliness permeate through her work.

Though not a literal representation, Emily's work is informed by her cultural heritage. In exploring ritual, many of the reference points she returns to are rooted in Japanese culture, including the Japanese tea ceremony and Japanese Buddhist practice she shares with her grandmother. Emily also takes inspiration from the wild Donegal landscape, her husband's home place, the place where he is buried and the place where Emily now lives.

→ **Instagram: @emily.waszak.art**

→ **Instagram: @grief.weaving**



Grace graduated with a BA Honours in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2023, specialising in Fine Art Print.

Her practice explores the ubiquity of gendered materials and forms. With the pivotal idea of the hybrid, the work draws upon a rich store of symbolic associations and mythology to investigate gender expectations and female subjectivity, through the processes of mutation and transformation. Drawing attention to the unorthodox use of animal hides and the attraction/ repulsion dichotomy, the artist expands on the notion of 'gendered vessels' into animals that have been culturally and historically labelled feminine. She utilises the abject qualities of these skins to challenge patriarchal symbol systems, through their incorporation of the grotesque.

The mix of femme clothing and animalistic forms aims to contradict rules and illustrate the way we fetishize unrealistic ideals, the attributes we assign women, as well as the otherness that they generate. There is a fascination with the fetishistic implications of heels and gloves. These garments have symbolised class, power and desire throughout history, while simultaneously presenting feelings of restriction, oppression, and fragility. The uncanny capabilities of fur and scales allow these objects to step outside of their own boundaries. When norms become temporarily suspended, this permits more narratives to accumulate, calling into question whether beauty is a valuable concept when making art that deals with the feminine.

This body of work is an interrogation of material culture, concluding that everything acquires communal, social, and gender-specific significance. When substance becomes subverted, this transmutes an interpretation distant from how it is usually digested. In this liberated state, the possibility of new narratives arise. The artist invites the viewer to explore their visual and emotional responses to what our culture considers undesirable. What do we assign value to and what makes us uncomfortable? And where do these feelings originate? Ultimately presenting a transcended discourse of the erotic, that challenges mainstream taste values.

→ **Instagram: @graceryan.artist**



Jinny graduated with a Masters in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design in 2023. She previously earned a Bachelors of Arts in Studio Arts from San Jose University in San Jose, California, in 2009 where she studied under textile artist Consuelo Jimenez Underwood.

Jinny is a Teochew-American textile artist based in Dublin. Born and raised in California, she spent most of her time in Oakland Chinatown where her family settled after fleeing the Vietnam War.

Although not a refugee herself, she grew up in an environment and community filled with post-war trauma and hardship. Growing up in a multigenerational refugee household, stories of another lifetime in Vietnam and China were passed down to Jinny with an ethos of resourcefulness and diligence. These stories also instilled a sense of fear and the need to survive even though she never experienced war.

After the birth of her son, and curious about the impact of the family narratives, Jinny explored her family memories and stories – deconstructing, reconstructing, and transforming these narratives to explore how family stories are chosen to be passed on, and the impact they carry across generations. Her approach involves process-driven research combined with intention, thread, and found objects. For Jinny, these materials serve as conduits, connecting us to the different points in the past without the need for words. Found objects, imbued with their own narratives, becomes tangible witnesses to moments in history which she was not able to experience. Together, the intentional combination of thread and objects become a gathering point for time and stories – allowing insight and discussion about the past, present, and future while acknowledging inherited memories and trauma from lifetimes before her.

→ jinnyly.com

→ Instagram: [@jinnyly](https://www.instagram.com/jinnyly)



Laura graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from ATU Sligo in 2023.

Her work is comprised of elements of sculpture, drawing, video and performance, exploring ideas around landscape and its relationship to the body.

This installation encompasses three different elements: sculpture, performance and film. The sculpture acts as an amphitheatre for sound and a picture house for screening the film to be viewed. It is made of bamboo collected from these sites and agricultural feed bags that Laura obtained from local farmers. This hut-like form represents the main protagonist's tomb in her film.

The film's plot has been inspired by the folklore of North Leitrim and tales told by the locals.

Laura is fascinated by Boglands, which she describes as an ominous place of death, decay, rebirth and regrowth, a landscape where layers of time are embedded. She sees them as a portal for time travel; a benevolent custodian of history, collecting and preserving.

→ **Instagram: @grisart_**



Luis graduated with a BA Honours in Fine Art from the National College of Art and Design in 2023, specialising in Media. Before studying at NCAD, Luis participated in many media skills courses including Editing, Post-production, 3D Virtual Scenarios and Design for Multimedia Products. Photography has been an interest since childhood.

In Unnatural Deselection, Luis examines the relationship between nature and technology. By envisioning a time in the future when technology and nature are intertwined, Luis explores possible outcomes and how humans fit into this scenario. Through the interaction offered in Luis's work, visitors can feel nature in unique ways, not only through a dynamic and immersive experience but also, by inspiring a deeper connection with it. By visualising the complex connections between the natural world and our own actions, we can gain a better appreciation of the impact that we have on the world around us. Luis is inspired by the concept of biophilia and the growing need to re-establish our relationship with nature in a technological world.

Through Luis's art, he aims to blur the boundaries between the natural and the artificial, creating an immersive experience that encourages contemplation and reflection on the future of our planet and creates a space for dialogue between humans, nature, and technology. Luis believes that the future of our planet depends on our ability to develop a more harmonious relationship between these elements. With this work, Luis hopes to spark conversations about this topic.

Luis is also interested in the performing arts and has worked in theatre and moving image projects. Luis spent time working as a street artist and spray painter to fund his journeys around Europe and Asia where he discovered other cultures and ways of living.

→ luisenriquemartin.com

→ Instagram: [@luis_enrique_martin](https://www.instagram.com/luis_enrique_martin)



Nikolas is a recent graduate of NCAD's Joint BA in Fine Art (Media) and Critical Cultures.

As a working-class Trans POC contemporary artist, Nikolas' work is deeply rooted in examining the intersections of art, technology, and social justice. Over the last three years, Nikolas has been experimenting with new media technologies such as digital media and interactive software. This year, he began using these technologies to investigate his body and how society sees it and to create art commenting on gendered social constructs. His work explores themes of Religion, Spirituality, Vietnamese Culture, and Gender Identity

Nikolas's studio practice is very research-led. He is particularly interested in the ethical implications of emerging technologies and their impact on Trans POC. Nikolas's research on Biopolitics fuels his ambition to promote empowerment, regardless of deviance from the norm. With technology constantly advancing and a post-humanist future looming, Nikolas says that for him, it is crucial to contribute to the discussions surrounding emerging technologies ethics in order to protect and affirm our digital rights.

Nikolas believes that a great deal of learning can come from listening to marginalised young people's experiences as their insightful perspectives will improve not only their own future but our future society.

At its core, Nikolas's art is a call to action, urging individuals to transcend their conditioned beliefs. Through his art, Nikolas wants to encourage himself and others to go beyond belief.

Nikolas is currently pursuing an MA in Art and Social Action at NCAD.



Oisín graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art, from the Technological University Dublin, in 2023. He is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice draws upon materials, media and mechanisms to investigate our understanding of and relationship with ecology.

Sustained by an interest in philosophy and a range of material concerns, Oisín's installation practice involves the development of separate works which form an interconnected set of relationships.

In 'Nascent Network', Oisín investigates the Rhizome as both a subject and a methodology for thinking about our relationship with nature. In botany, a rhizome is a subterranean plant stem. The term is developed as a philosophical concept in the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as an antidote to the overemphasis Western society places on linearity and binary logic. The exhibition space features a large intervention in the form of a carved image of the invasive plant species Japanese knotweed. Knotweed's invasiveness is due to its rhizomatic growth. This troublesome, nonlinear nature of the plant is instrumentalised as a methodology to form various inter-reliant works that comprise the installation. The work speaks to how our experience of the natural is based on relationality, duration and site, disrupting views of the natural that are reductive or categorical.

→ oisintozer.com



Ren is a graduate of BA Fine Art, TU Dublin. They are a multi-disciplinary artist, working primarily with sound, sculpture, and installation, integrating a variety of mediums and materials. Ren seeks to create a dialogue that relates to how we determine and characterise our audible surroundings through interactive sonic installation.

Ren's work has been aided by research into the field of sound and sound art, in particular in writing their thesis 'Sound art: How we hear, listen and sonically respond to the world'.

Ren enjoys making and building work with their hands and learning through trial and error. Ren makes work that has a refined 'roughness' to it, using readily available building materials and utilising electrical wiring. The result is artworks that don't shy away from their materiality, or their function.

→ rencoffey.com

→ [Instagram: @rencoffey.wav](https://www.instagram.com/rencoffey.wav)




Saoirse McGarry graduated from Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology in 2023 with a BA in Art. She is motivated by themes of identity, womanhood, and the concept of the human soul. She uses character work in her writing and photography.

'Molasses' follows the inner monologue of Delphine as she navigates feelings of longing and obsession in the streets of her new home, Paris. Delphine wrestles with feelings of grief after the death of her mother, whom she had a complicated relationship with. She tries to become like the stylish women that she sees in the streets, who she sees as more worthy of love than her. She finds relief from her dark thoughts in the stranger — a chance encounter that proves she is real.

Saoirse has captured the stills for this piece in character as Delphine. She also wrote a long form narrative piece for which she performed the vocals. The sound piece was created in collaboration with Dublin-based band Slightly Dishevelled and was mixed by Fionn Fealey.

Saoirse is inspired by Chris Marker's use of stills in *La Jetée*. She is also inspired by Sophie Calle and her use of candid photography, and storytelling.

→ **Instagram:** [@saoirseannemcgarry](https://www.instagram.com/saoirseannemcgarry)



*It
spills
out
of
his
chest
golden*

*golden
beautiful light*

Taim graduated with a BA Honors Degree in Contemporary Art from Atlantic Technological University Galway in 2023.

Her work addresses the migrant crisis. It is informed by the haunting stories Taim heard as an Arabic interpreter for asylum seekers in Galway, as well as the conversations with her Syrian family members who have experienced this journey.

Taim's installation focuses on the story in between leaving a shore and arriving at a new one: the story lost with the drowned, that cannot be recovered. Because this story has no materiality, and can never be known, it is invented poetically, mythically and supernaturally.

The pivotal concept of this installation is the Arabic word Barzakh. It describes a secret barrier between the visible and the invisible world, separating the living from the souls of the departed. A border one can cross in dreams.

→ **Instagram: @taimhaimet**



**Exhibition Curator's Talk
& Introduction**

with Elaine Hoey

WED 17 JANUARY 2024, 1.15 – 2PM,
LECTURE ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, IMMA

**Panel Discussion with
selected artists**

moderated by guest curator
Elaine Hoey

FRI 9 FEBRUARY 2024, 1.15 – 2.45PM,
LECTURE ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, IMMA

Curator Elaine Hoey will be hosting gallery tours throughout the run of the exhibition. Follow the RDS and IMMA for future updates:

→ Instagram: @rdsdublin | → Facebook: RDSdublin

→ Instagram: @IMMAIreland | → Facebook: IrishMuseumofModernArt



The artists and the curator (from left)

Laura Grisard, Emily Waszak, Saoirse McGarry, Taïm Haimet, Asha Murray, Àjàó Babátúndé Lawal, Cian Handschuh, Grace Ryan, Elaine Hoey (Artist and RDS Visual Art Awards Curator), Ren Coffey, Nikolas Ryan, Anthony Freeman O'Brien, Oisín Tozer, Luis Enrique Martín, Jinny Ly and Christopher Mc Mullan.

Photograph by Leon Farrell.

2023 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RDS and IMMA would like to thank each of the artists for their vision and creativity. The exhibition is curated by invited artist Elaine Hoey, supported by Karen Phillips, Arts Programme Manager, RDS, Mollie Molumby, Arts Executive, RDS, and Rachael Gilbourne, Assistant Curator: Exhibitions, Projects & Partnerships, IMMA.

Special thanks to the Partners of the RDS who are integral to the RDS Visual Art Awards — Royal Hibernian Academy, Mason Hayes & Curran LLP, Centre Culturel Irlandais, the family of Mr Robin Lewis-Crosby, and the Taylor Art Trust. Thank you to the invaluable Members and Patrons of both the RDS and IMMA for their ongoing enthusiasm and support, and to all those who have made this exhibition possible.

Exhibiting Artists

Àjàò Babátúndé Lawal, Anthony Freeman O'Brien, Asha Murray, Christopher Mc Mullan, Cian Handschuh, Emily Waszak, Grace Ryan, Jinny Ly, Laura Grisard, Luis Enrique Martín, Nikolas Ryan, Oisín Tozer, Ren Coffey, Saoirse McGarry and Taim Haimet.

Exhibition Team

Mary Cremin, Head of Programming, IMMA
Annie Fletcher, Director, IMMA
Damien Flood, Lead Technician, Maurice Ward
Rachael Gilbourne, Assistant Curator: Exhibitions, Projects & Partnerships, IMMA
Cillian Hayes, Technical Crew Supervisor, IMMA
Elaine Hoey, Invited Curator, RDS
Ciara Magee, Programme Production Assistant, IMMA
Siobhán Mooney, Curatorial Assistant: Exhibitions, IMMA
Mollie Molumby, Arts Executive, RDS
Jason Murphy, Lead Technical Liaison, IMMA
Jennifer Phelan, Programme Production Co-ordinator, IMMA
Karen Phillips, Arts Programme Manager, RDS

RDS Visual Art Awards Judging Panel

Mary McCarthy (Chair), Gary Coyle, Eithne Jordan, Christina Kennedy and Elaine Hoey.

RDS Visual Art Awards College Curators

Mary Cremin, Rayne Booth, Eamonn Maxwell, Aisling Prior and Sarah McAuliffe.

The RDS Committee of Arts

Mr John Dardis (RDS President), Dr Marie Bourke (Chair), Dr Eimhin Walsh (Vice Chair), Duncan Brickenden, Lynda M. Carroll, Dr Séamus Crimmins, Emmet Kane, Katharine Maurer, Kieran Owens, Catherine Phelan, Dr Andrew Power, Caitriona Shaffrey and Gaby Smyth.

Other Information

Please contact the artists directly about commissions. All information is correct at the time of going to print.

Design by Clare Lynch Design (clarelynchdesign.myportfolio.com)

Print RV International (rvinternational.ie)

RDS Visual Art Awards Social Media Management by Allie Whelan

PR Management by Conleth Teevan

AV by Creative Technology Ireland

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