

CultureCRAFT

CULTURE IN THE MAKING

Gallery 1

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Caroline Schofield

Belief, Fleece, string 2013

For generations in my family Textiles has been a part of our culture. My earliest memories are of learning from my grandmother how to clip threads off garments as we clipped bundles of a dozen. The women in the family taught me to knit and sew and encouraged my continual projects ... always needing to make.

I grew up as an outsider. I was brought up with an English grandparent, part of the Protestant community, going to Protestant primary and secondary schools in southern Ireland. At an early age I rejected religious beliefs meaning that I didn't fit in, at school or in the community. It wasn't a loud rebellion, just a strong belief in there being another way. Those beliefs I rejected inform my work and in particular the hanging I have made for this exhibition.

My cultural identity surfaces in this piece, reflecting my childhood obsession with making and repetition and with the religion I rejected. The stone effigies of my childhood Sundays influence the imagery. Needing to try and understand people's thoughts, why they think certain ways, I am questioning how they put their faiths in beliefs unavailable to me. Impossible to read their thoughts, the bodies hang close telling us how their relationship is. The threads connecting them unravelling and joined, holding the community as one.

Biog: Caroline Schofield studied Fashion & Textiles at NCAD, specialising in Weaving. Her work has been selected for a number of exhibitions including 'A Tale of Two Cities' at Nouart Gallery in Beijing, the CCOI touring exhibition 'Seascapes' and as part of the Filament Group exhibition at the RDS Knitting and Stitching Show. Her work has been commissioned by OPW for the Kilkenny Courthouse and she has won first place in felting at the National Crafts Competition, RDS. She was also short-listed for the Golden Fleece Award. She will present new work in the up-coming exhibition *Interlace* at the National Craft Gallery and has been invited to partake in the GKV international residency programme in the Netherlands this July, leading to an exhibition.

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Sabrina Meyns

Roots, Hand made paper, seeds, Sterling silver, 18ct Yellow Gold 2013

Spanning two nationalities and a number of countries with a rich mix of traditions, languages, music, food and beliefs, my family has given me diverse yet distinct cultural roots.

When I was young my father worked as a blacksmith, hammering out metal curls and bows to precise measurements. His forge and work fascinated me. My mother is a passionate gardener, cultivating an extensive garden with vegetables, fruit, flowers and trees that I have studied extensively, and which, she has helped me understand better.

While the visual influences are unmistakably evident, there are also many other cultural facets from my family that I have captured in my craft practice and work.

This piece is in celebration of my family, my strongest cultural influence.

Biog: Sabrina is early in her career, having graduated in 2008 from The National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin with a first class honours degree in Craft Design. Since then she has co-established Workhouse Studios, a new craft collective dedicated to promoting fresh design-led craft in Co. Waterford. In 2010, the Crafts Council of Ireland awarded a Future Makers Grant to Sabrina. Sabrina's work has been represented at numerous international exhibitions and fairs. In 2012, her work represented the Hedone Gallery, USA at Sofa, Chicago. Earlier in the year Sabrina was represented in the exhibition 'Faszination Papier' which toured from Le Vigan Gard Gallery, France to Pflegeschloss, Germany. Sabrina was also represented at the '21st Century Icons' exhibition at Galway City Museum in 2012.

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Liam Flynn

Inner Rimmed Vessel, Oak, 2013

This being an exhibition about culture and how it impacts my work, I should probably be making the following points. The shape of the piece I have made is redolent of ancient monastic beehive huts, nor is it dissimilar to haystacks that were once such a common but transient feature of the rural landscape. Then again, maybe the black finish on the vessel is inspired from spending summer evenings fishing the inky peat infused water of the local rivers. Or perhaps it is as another writer so eloquently put it, 'Once he has ebonized the finished work, it has a deep patina that evokes ancient vessels blackened by their long slumber in the peat bog of archaeological sites'. I cannot say if there is a connection, instead I try to make work that feels right for me at that time. I hope it does for others as well...

Biog: Wood-turner, Liam Flynn has won numerous awards such as several firsts at the RDS National Craft Competition and a Gold Medal for his work in 1996. He has exhibited throughout Ireland and the UK in group and solo exhibitions including the USA at SOFA, Chicago, the del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles and the Woodturning Center, Philadelphia. His work is held in many Public Collections including the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Museum of Ireland, Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, and the Crafts Council of Ireland.

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Deirdre O Callaghan

Raging love heartbroken sorrowful friendship loyalty, Raku fired ceramic with sprig decoration, 2013

I am Catholic with the most Irish of names 'Deirdre'. I would consider myself Northern Irish. After spending many years living in both England and Southern Ireland I feel neither is my motherland. In this work I am exploring the cultural rituals that we part take in to reach desired objectives that are considered socially essential to succeed in the culture around us. When invited to take part in this exhibition I became interested in using the Claddagh ring as a starting point to explore these ideas. The hands represent friendship, the heart love and the crown loyalty.

It interests me that my name, also immediately recognisable as Irish steeped in meaning and mythology, holds its own trio of meanings quite the opposite to the Claddagh. 'Deirdre of the Sorrows' her story, part of the Ulster Cycle of pre Christian Ireland and its meaning: raging, sorrowful and heartbroken, the tragic character in Irish legend who died of a broken heart. Playing with these two opposing ideas I have created a very personal response to the idea of my culture. As the single mother of a mixed race child the piece is an homage to those of us who, like myself, are not very good at achieving the cultural rituals, that somehow make us fit into our culture. To create the work I dipped into the rich culture of my craft and used techniques which I had previously little knowledge of working with. I took guidance from a designer from Belleek Pottery to develop the sprigs used as surface pattern and worked with a fellow colleague to perfect the raku firing technique.

Biog: Deirdre completed a foundation course in Art & Design in 1991 at the University of Ulster, Belfast. She followed that with a BA in Ceramics and Glass, from Brunel University, Buckinghamshire. In 1997 she did the Pottery Skills Course, with the Crafts Council of Ireland in Kilkenny. She then worked as a production thrower at Michael Kennedy Ceramics, Galway for 3 years before setting up own pottery studio, Docpot, in her hometown of Derry in 2001. More recently, she helped set up Derry's first collective craft shop in Derry's Craft Village and was also elected chairperson of Craft Connect.

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Angela O Kelly

Felt, palladium leaf, text from Gerard Smyth poem on paper, labradorite beads, dyed nylon, 2013

During the last year I have worked with the Dublin poet Gerard Smyth. We have delved into our past, the landscape in which we grow, mapping our route of life and what is important to us as individuals. His poem *The Things We Keep* which he wrote after a conversation we had about collecting simple things has remained with me. Seeing dimensions and layers of our conversations emerging so eloquently in text has been fascinating.

What I have attempted to do in my three dimensional work is to echo the fluency, meanings and rhythms of the text and reinterpret them in a complimentary visual language. 'The things we keep are not the things we need', but somehow they are. These are the things that make us unique. I keep stones and pebbles from beaches which spark and refresh memories of places visited, remembering feelings, sounds and smells, images positive and negative locked away. The simple shapes of collected stones inspire my work in this exhibition.

Biog: Angela received her BA and postgraduate diploma in Design and Applied Arts from Edinburgh College of Art. She has also completed an MA in Arts Management and Cultural Policy at UCD. Kelly is currently lecturer in jewellery at NCAD. She has exhibited her work extensively in Ireland and abroad including curated exhibitions in Inhorgenta, Munich, The National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny, and The Hunt Museum, Limerick. Her work has appeared in group exhibitions at The Bluecoat Display Centre, Liverpool, SOFA, Chicago, and Origin, London. O'Kelly's work is held by the National Museum of Ireland, Office of Public Works, Dublin, and the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, among other locations.

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Alva Gallagher

Tales 'Tide Pool', Cast float glass 2013

'We need the tonic of wildness... At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that the sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of it.'

Henry David Thoreau

This work draws from my ancestry and a childhood immersed in activities of the sea. Traditions and stories passed from my Grandfather to my Father to us as children.

I grew up in the fishing village of Killybegs in Donegal, the largest fishing port in the county and on the island of Ireland. My earliest memories conjure smells of the pier, hunting in rock pools for treasure, the noise of a boat engine, and being gathered together round the kitchen table watching my father teach us how to gut the fish we caught while we played with scallop shells, waiting silently for them to open, trying to get close enough to touch them before they snapped shut. From my Mother I learnt to dive as a teenager and adore the solitude and sense of calm experienced in the depths of the water. The characteristics of the ocean, particularly its unpredictability and perpetual rhythm, the activities, memories and the tales of it, passed from generation to generation, continue to inspire my work.

Biog: Alva studied at NCAD and was awarded the first Irish Partner Scholarship at the Pilchuck Glass Studios, Seattle. She was the 2008 winner of Business 2 Art Awards and was involved in numerous exhibitions including 2012 Sculpture Biennale, Copenhagen. Alva is one of 14 international artists selected to exhibit in the London Underground, Below Art, and in 2009, was one of 16 artists selected for Pillar of Art, London and Toyko. Her work is held in numerous collections, both public and private, in Sydney, London, Dublin and Holland. Alva has been featured in the Irish Arts Review and Home Interiors and Living magazine.

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Eily O Connell

Ocean Inquest, Brass, enamels, topaz 2013

My fascination and deep connection with the sea surrounding the Island of Ireland is what emanates from the community and culture that nurtured my upbringing and profoundly influenced my craft.

Being brought up in the fishing village of Killybegs, I could smell, see and absorb the ocean daily. My father was a fisherman for 20 years so I learnt a great deal of reverence for the dangers that the rhythmic and fickle sea also brought with it. Some men never returned home... Days off always encompassed a trip to the beach with the family. Whether it be to enjoy the calming lull or spontaneous splashes, collecting crabs and other exquisite treasures, the sea was always ours.

Biog: Eily completed a BDes in metals at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, graduating in 2008. She then joined the 'Project 51' collective, located at South William Street, Dublin. In 2011, Eily was awarded Most Innovative in Show for Precious Jewellery at the RDS National Craft Fair, Dublin. Eily's work is represented at several on-going exhibitions: Jewellery Show 'Gill Wing' Gallery, London and 'Design Collection' Roger Billcliffe Gallery, Glasgow.

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Peter Fulop

Turf Ash Glaze Disc No.1–3, High iron grogged clay, turf ash glaze 2013

My teacher Professor Koie Ryoji taught me the difference between living on the land and living with the land. The symbolism of the container is both a primal and universal symbol. In ancient cultures, containers were created for ceremonial purposes and referenced the form of the human body.

I have collected containers all my life and use them to store personal keepsakes from my childhood in Hungary, and small treasures that personify special experiences of my travels in India, China, Korea and Japan. The containers created for this exhibition embody the very essence of the place in which I work and live.

Hungarian by birth, I have utilized the processes of walking and physically integrating my surroundings into my work to absorb and express a deeper sensory understanding and intellectual connectedness to the Irish landscape. It is my goal that these containers express a consciousness of the Irish landscape that has so heavily influenced the Irish cultural idioms of music and writing.

Biog: Peter Fulop trained at the School of Ceramic Studies, Hodmezovasarhely in Hungary. In 2012 he completed an apprenticeship with Professor Koie Ryoji at Gifu Prefecture in Japan. He has been awarded several Artist in Residencies including Mungyeong Zen Monastery and Ceramic Studio, 3 month residency, Korea 2011. Peter's work is held in several permanent collections: Ulster Museum, Belfast, the Shigaraki Ceramics Cultural Park, Japan and IWCAT Collection Tokoname, Japan. Peter has had numerous solo exhibitions, which include the 2012 `Vessel` at the Gallery Zozimus, Dublin and the 2010 `One Man Show` Tea House Gallery, Mungyeong, Korea. Peter has participated in several group shows in Ireland, the UK and the Far East and is currently represented at the `I Am of Ireland` show, Chelsea Arts Club, London. In 2013 he was invited to lecture at the Kathmandu University, Nepal. His work is featured in several publications which include `Hands On: The Art of Crafting in Ireland` Liberty Press, Ireland and `Best of Worldwide Sculpture` Kennedy Publishing, USA.

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Tom Agnew

Metamorphosis, Raku-fired clay 2013

I have addressed the vexed question of cultural identity many times over many years in an effort to inform my work and practice. Unerringly, for me, it leads to a dead end and only serves to encourage pale imitation of past cultural highlights. I am a political animal and have a strong sense of what my political cultural position is, but decided long ago to separate that from my creative practice. Of course it's a cliché, but we really are inhabitants of the global village, subject to a myriad of influences. I suppose if I am forced to make an observation, I feel part of a western European tradition with all its developments in politics, art, architecture and design through the centuries. Does that mean that there is a relationship between that tradition and my practice? Not knowingly.

I have conviction in my technical ability, but uncertainty and doubt are omnipresent when I come to appraise my efforts. Perhaps this is no bad thing. I try my best in whichever cultural tradition I am a member of in pursuit of happiness and fulfilment.

Biog: Tom studied at The College of Art (Belfast) from 1968-1974 during which time he completed a degree, post graduate studies and teacher training. In the summer of 1974, Tom moved to Derry and trained as a production thrower with a Swedish company for 18 months. With this invaluable experience Tom set up Mill Pottery in 1976. The next 20 years saw him running small but successful commercial pottery specialising in high-fired functional stoneware, which retailed through the best shops and galleries throughout the island of Ireland and into the UK and USA. In the mid-90s, Tom's work took a new route. With the awarding of an individual artists grant from the Arts Council, Tom was able to put creativity and experimentation at the heart of his practice. He has recently been selected to produce a series of large tile panels for the Creggan Estate in Derry funded by the N.Ireland Art Council. Tom is 1 of 12 artists recently selected by Craft NI to have a video feature on their new craft map web site.

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Peadar lamb

A whistle in the dark #2, Painted stained-glass and lead lightbox, 2013

This stained glass piece is based on the play, *A Whistle in the Dark* by Tom Murphy.

Emigration in Ireland has formed us culturally as people. When you are an emigrant you can try to be culturally similar to blend and fit in to your new environment or else you can cling doggedly to the culture you've left behind. With Murphy, the family within the play are both.

The composition is trying to emphasise the relationship between the individuals within the play and how they express themselves physically rather than emotionally.

The colour creates a separating layer, which enhances the individual isolation. Ordinarily colour in stained glass is used to create a harmony between elements within the narrative, but in this piece the structure of the lead lines and colour further emphasise the feeling of claustrophobia within the cramped space. Murphy's play, though centred on emigrants, is predominately about the loyalty to family, and the contradiction of leaving behind, breaking away and moving on.

Biog: Peadar is a graduate of NCAD and Brierly Hill Glass Centre, Birmingham. He has been involved in numerous group and solo exhibitions including the Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia, Bernholms Kunstmuseum, Denmark, the National Craft Gallery Kilkenny and Fujita Vente, Tokyo, Japan. He has received commissions in percent for the Art Scheme in Waterford and Dublin. His work is held in many public collections including the National Museum of Ireland, the Office of Public Works, Portugal and numerous private collections.

Michelle Stephens

Twill I & Twill II, Wood, LED's, screen printed and walnut case 2013

Of all the craft areas, woven cloth, is most at ease with the demands of technology and design of contemporary western culture. It is this language of textiles that I continuously employ throughout my practice. Northern Ireland has a rich heritage of weaving through the linen industry, especially during the industrial revolution. The city was, for years, built upon the textile trade with factories dominating the cityscape.

Many would say that my culture has defined elements of my practice. I have access to new technologies that I can readily fuse with my textile background, enabling me to produce unique series of works. This enables me to establish my own unique voice through the way in which I assemble the individual fragments. These arrangements of forms, colour combinations, outlines of structure and the degree of complexity or openness are all choices that are made during the making process. There is a natural affinity between weaving and mathematics, the loom and the digital computer. These are the patterns and formula that I deconstruct and re-interpret so that I can construct new compositions.

Like that of *Twill I & Twill II*.

Biog: Michelle Stephens graduated with First Class Honours from her B.A. in Fine and Applied Arts degree, June 2010. Following the completion of a placement year in an American College on the Business Education Initiative, Stephens returned to complete her final year at the School of Art and Design, specializing in Textile Art at the University of Ulster, Belfast. Michelle Stephens is now on the 'Making IT' programme with Craft NI, based at the University of Ulster, Belfast until November 2013.

Richard Sinclair

The Font of Life, Egg tempera, gold leaf on a natural gesso ground, wooden panel 2013

For approximately the last twenty years I have made images, icons, for use in prayer. These images are based on the Orthodox Christian tradition of iconography. I studied with a number of Iconographers before discovering Eva Vlavianos a distinguished Greek Iconographer and restorer of icons whom I have studied with for the last fifteen years.

When I received an invitation to make an icon for the present exhibition the icon of *The Font of Life* immediately came to mind, both for its beauty and for a remark of Eva's indicating that this is one of the few icons where the Iconographer is permitted to customise the background to reflect a particular location.

I have my studio in Pump Street and am very aware of the Roman Catholic oratory just across the street from me as well as the Church of Ireland cathedral at the top of the street. The central image of this icon shows a fountain with the Mother of God and the Christ Child in the bowl of the fountain. The Mother of God is a title given to Mary to express the belief that Christ in his incarnation was born of a human mother and was truly both human and Divine. Mary is shown gesturing towards her son indicating that Christ is the way. The shape of the fountain brings to mind the baptismal font and the chalice used in holy communion. These beliefs are held by both of the churches in Pump Street yet the ways in which they think about them can be gloriously diverse. Also close to my studio are; the Fountain, St. Columb's Well, the Walls and the Oak trees in the Diamond and the Long Tower.

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Gail Mahon

Nomatic, Porcelain, stoneware, crushed 'ceramic' sand, wire, rubber, resi 2013

Handmade, making from scratch, being 'in' the journey, processes and materials are embedded in my psyche and remain the reason I work with clay as my primary visual language.

Nomatic explores the possibilities in small interactions between materials and human connection, seeking dynamics in composition, balancing ceramic weightiness with free falling linear structures. The human quality of the objects seek to spark reaction, whether a smile, sadness or curiosity. It marks a continuum within the group of objects, each piece an open-ended idea waiting to be explored.

Biog: Gail graduated in Contemporary Crafts from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2001. She was a winner in Excellence at the British Trade Craft Fair 2007 and of the RDS National Crafts Competition 2006 Purchase Prize. In 2006, Gail began a 2 year residency at the North West Regional College Derry, N. Ireland and has been employed by the college as a part time lecturer in Arts and Crafts ever since. Gail has been represented at numerous exhibitions including the 2012 solo exhibition 'Elemental Twitch' at Spacecraft in Belfast. Group exhibitions include 'Things that Fall in Between' at Mak9, R-Space Lisburn, N.Ireland, and the ICMEA International Emerging Ceramic Artist Competition, Fuping, China. Commissions include Waterside Theatre in Derry. Her work is held in collections with the Crafts Council of Ireland and ICMEA, Fuping, China.

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Joe Hogan

Up for air, Willow rods, bog pine 2013

This basket is made from home grown willow rods and bog pine. I gather the bog pine in a wonderful area of isolated bog land near where I live and after allowing it to dry for a year or more I can consider using it. I make tentative shapes with these bog wood pieces and these will then provide the framework for the basket. In the case of this basket I had two images in my head; one from Eamon Grennan's poem *The Quick of It* about swallows on a windy day 'harvesting the cloudy air' and 'harnessing the blast to their own advantage.' The other image was from Seamus Heaney's *Squarings, no 5*, where he advises improvising and making free 'like old hay in its flimsy afterlife, high on a windblown hedge.' A sense of flying seemed suggested in some way by these bog wood pieces.

When I make non-functional or artistic baskets I am trying to develop a deeper connection with the natural world, to wonder more and be less certain of what I think I know.

Biog: Hogan has been involved in basket-making for over 30 years taking baskets from a traditional craft form into a contemporary collector's piece. He has participated in many international exhibitions including those at the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny, SOFA, Chicago, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, Handwerkforum, Hanover, Germany, and The Hunt Museum, Limerick. Hogan is the recipient of many awards including several firsts at the RDS National Craft Competition. His work is held in the National Museum of Ireland and the Pinolere Baskets of the World Collection, Canary Islands, as well as numerous private collections.

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Brigitta Varadi

Of the Land I & II, Raw wool, silk, cotton, 2013

I live on the side of a mountain, Sliabh an Iarainn (Iron Mountain). When we first moved here, we felt a bit isolated. However, after a while I started to do art projects in the community and worked with the farmers on an environment project that used the wool from their sheep. These interactions made me part of the land and part of the local community.

As a Hungarian living in Ireland I am constantly trying to define what culture means for me. From which angle shall I approach this task, from global or local levels? After long consideration I have decided to stay with the local approach as my everyday interactions define my days and my being. Living in the country I am part of the yearly cycle of birth and death, I see animals born on the field, I witness their growth and I am there when they are taken to be sold. The everyday life and daily routine of the countryside has embedded itself in me and I have become part of this cycle.

Yearly sheep shearing is part of this cycle. Fifteen years ago I used to go to Ballina to get my wool from a woollen depot where all the wool from the North West was brought in, packed and shipped all over the world. A new estate stands on the place of the old woollen depot and this business is gone. Nowadays, farmers have huge difficulties in selling the wool. In this piece I am honouring a vanishing part of the Irish culture that brought me originally to Ireland and I am honouring the present-day life of the rural countryside, still defined by the cycle of nature.

Biog: Brigitta received her BA in Teacher Training in Zsunbek, Hungary. From 2002-2005, she was the Artist in Context as part of Sligo Arts and Community Partnership Programme. She was a lecturer at Hamina School, Finland and at 'Felt Conference' Istanbul, Turkey. Her solo exhibitions include, Silver River Gallery, in Carrick on Shannon, Ireland and Sunnuntai aamu, a site specific installation in Kulttuurikauppila, Finland. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Ireland, USA, Italy, Turkey, Sweden and Scotland. Her work is held in numerous collections including the Office of Public Works, Dublin, and the Crafts Council of Ireland.

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Liz Nilsson

How did I get here?, Screenprinting, hand stitching, cotton cloth, viscose thread 2013

I sometimes look in the mirror and wonder how I got here. My head is full of random threads, unfinished impulses and loose ends. My mind, my personality and my identity are all shaped by the cultural confusion of being born and raised in Sweden, and then living for twenty five years away from home.

On my journey I met people I loved; they shaped and influenced my personality like the sea polishing the pebbles on the beach. But still there is a strong tie to the homeland; long threads that bind me to my native culture, deep undercurrents that always seem to pull me back homewards. I am a permanently displaced and dislocated person. This bicultural displacement is both enriching and perplexing. How do I keep hold of myself in this complex jumble of cultural threads? How do I stay sane when my head feels like it is going to burst from these two gravitational pulls of belonging?

I am held in a constant tension. I thread, unpick and re-thread cultural influences and counter-influences, past, present and future. I just about keep it all together in the here and now. My existence can fray and unravel, so I am constantly mending it, constantly minding it.

Biog: Liz has a BA in Textile Design from the Swedish School of Textiles and Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, and an MA from Goldsmiths College, London. Nilsson has had many exhibitions of her work in Ireland including at the National Craft Gallery, Botanic Gardens, Dublin and the Lavitt Gallery, Cork. International exhibitions include Chevrotère Mill, Quebec, Canada, Kentucky Museum of Art, USA, and the Central Museum of Textiles, Lodz, Poland. Nilsson has created a number of public commissions including those for The Gibson Hotel, the Patrick Pearse Museum, Dublin and the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Dundalk. Her work is held in public collections in Ireland and Sweden.

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Charlene Mc Farland

Oscar, Blown glass, copper, brass, steel, found object, 2013

My work captures childhood memories of time spent in my father's workshop, being mesmerized by his enthusiasm and passion for collecting and restoring old, used and discarded mechanical objects. My work often incorporates actual artefacts from my father's collection and my inspiration comes both from the relationship with my family and people I meet and from the objects themselves.

The fascination with these objects is in the history and the past that they hold within them, the people that have held and worked with them and the places they have been.

As such, my work imagines these objects into characters that have lived the objects past. During a recent visit to Estonia, I visited a retired Soviet chemical plant. The plant was scattered with unused and discarded blown glass test tubes that covered shelves and tables. The sight was of a place stuck in time, testimony to a world and culture that had largely been left behind. I began to imagine each of these tubes as a little piece of that history. I began a process of recreating my own glass test tubes to create a new, long character made up of individual blown glass tubes sections, each tube representing the journey that the object has taken through its past.

Biog: Charlene received her Diploma in Art and Design from Limavady, NI and her BDes (Hons) in Craft Design/Glass from NCAD. She has exhibited in Galerii Pink, Tallinn, Estonia, Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, and Traver Gallery, Tacoma, Washington. Her work is featured in the Jan/Feb issue of Craft + Design, 'Current and contemporary Irish Glass'.

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Stuart Cairns

Recollection, Silver, mixed media 2013

Culture can be seen as shared behaviours and understanding between individuals within a community. As an artist I draw upon the cultural associations of society in general, but frame them within my own individual culture, so while the objects I make are personal in nature, others are able to understand/read them through our shared social understanding.

The principle forms I am interested in are utensils and vessels – the objects from the tradition of silversmithing which relate to the table, dining and eating. These activities have an essential place within human culture as eating is a principal activity of survival, therefore the viewer can connect with the associated forms through the suggestion of use.

The materiality of the objects I create spring from my own personal culture of experiencing the landscape, translating through the finds I make as I walk through it. Through this activity of walking and collecting I am physically lifting the landscape and translating it into the objects I make.

The manner in which I work and combine these found and fabricated materials through various processes is also important. The act of construction is revealed in how the materials are handled: often marks from filing, hammering and cutting are left visible, rather than being removed or hidden.

Bio: After previously completing a degree in Economics and working as a landscape gardener, Stuart returned to college to study Silversmithing and Jewellery in the University of Ulster. He graduated in 2000 with a first class Honours degree. On leaving, he won the BT Millennium Award of Art and Design and the RUA President's Prize and went on to set up his workshop. In 2004, he returned to college completing his Masters degree in 2006, winning the Association of British Designer Silversmith's award for new work in silver at the New Designers fair in London. Stuart's work has been purchased by the University of Ulster and is held in the permanent collection at the Ulster Museum. In 2011, he was represented at the Linen Diaspora 4th Biennale Internationale du Lin de Portneuf at Chevroterre Mill, Quebec.

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Rachel Mc Knight

Granny's Pearls, Wood, polyurethane resin, 2013

In Northern Ireland I feel we have a culture of traditions whether it is music, marching, relationships or family engagements. Traditions are very prominent and breaking from them is not that common. I work with non-traditional materials, but it's not a conscious effort to try and break from tradition, I genuinely love the nature of the materials that I use. My personal culture is informed by; vibrant colours, modern architecture, alternative rock music, repeated pattern, powder coated metal, quirky furniture, lighting, wood and neon. *Granny's Pearls* is a traditional piece of jewellery, in the sense that it is a string of beads worn around the neck, but it is made from materials not commonly associated with jewellery design and it challenges the common perception of scale.

Biog: Rachel holds a BA (Hons) in Fine and Applied Art from the University of Ulster, Belfast. She has been involved in numerous group exhibitions including 'Suspended in Pink' at Birmingham School of Jewellery in 2013 and a Solo Exhibition at Galerie Caractere, Switzerland. She has participated in a number of trade and retail fairs including SOFA, Chicago, Origin, London, and Showcase, Dublin. Her work is held in collections including the University of Ulster and the National Museum of Ireland.

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Alex Scott

Grannie's wee chair, Terracotta crank, 2013

We were a small family, my mother passed when I was young leaving myself, two brothers, a sister and my father.

My mother's mother was the primary matriarchal figure in our lives. Of the few possessions she had to bequeath I have eventually come to own her chair. It's of no monetary value; being neither fine nor fancy, but for me as an object it acts as a portal to that time and place. Being from an Ulster Scot's background (more Scottish than English, more British than Irish) I was raised on values of the importance of family, fortitude, and quiet respectability. My father was entirely pragmatic and taught me how to make and mend. There was an emphasis on the importance of tools, their function and how to care for them. These are skills I carry forward today in my work with the medium of clay.

As a craft maker I am inspired by three-dimensional forms. I am rarely interested in recreating or representing them in a precise way. I appreciate an honesty in ceramics that appear to listen to the material itself and where the evidence of how it is made, such as marks, indentations, fingerprints and textures are present in the final work. Having been interested in the chair form for many years and most recently in a body of work that responded to a residency in China in 2011, this project presented new challenges in scale and the use of specific clay bodies and slips to make pieces that referred to my grannie's wee chair.

Biog: Alex attended the Ulster College of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art. He was a lecturer at NCAD from 1983-2011. Since 1998 he has been a member of the Institute of Designers in Ireland. He has exhibited throughout Ireland, UK, Europe, China and Japan. He has numerous representations in Biennale Internationale de Ceramique Contemporaine and the International Biennale of Ceramic Art, Brussels and the International Ceramics Festival, Mino, Japan. His work is held in The Ulster Museum, Belfast.

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Neil Read

Identity Stamp, Digitally printed porcelain & black stoneware 2013

Events often evolve around individuals over which they have little or no control but which alter the culture they live in. My great grandfather Robert Read (1832—1921) was born at Pettigo, Donegal into a family that could trace their roots in the village back to 1610. Like his father Thomas, (1767—1856) Robert and his wife Annie McCrea became Postmasters in the village and collected its history.

When I think of post offices I think of stamps, these marked the life of that small community and events in the wider world that impacted on it. The Post Office, initially British, underwent painful and dramatic changes between 1919 and 1922, when the Free State was formed shortly after the battle of Pettigo. The Read home, a few yards south of the border, was abandoned, windows broken and gates left open. The Post Office split like the country, to Billary in the south and Tullyhommon in the north, and the stamps changed too.

Today the Post Office is again in its old site on Main Street and run by James Gallagher a descendant of Peter Gallagher who ran the temporary office at Billary. This piece is inspired by the transition from one culture to another, the small paper prints that document it and the culture of collecting.

Biog: In 1976, Neil graduated from Edinburgh College of Art with a Postgraduate Diploma in Design and Crafts. In 1987, he was appointed Head of the Department of Ceramics Glass and Metals at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, a position he held until 2010. Read has exhibited extensively, most recently the `Bricks in the Rain` show at the Farnleigh Gallery in Dublin. In 2011, he exhibited at the Fule International Ceramic Art Museum in Fuping, China where he was also selected for a 4-week residency. In 2010, Neil was selected to exhibit work at The National Porcelain Museum at Jingdezhen, China. Read's work can be found in numerous public collections including The Irish Museum Collection, FLICAM at Fuping, China, The National Museum of Ireland, Dublin and The Paisley Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland. Other activities include Chairman of judges, The Golden Fleece Awards, Ireland 2013 and Chairman of judges, RDS Craft Award, Dublin 2012.

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Cara Murphy

Infuse, Silver, enamel, ivory substitute, 2012

Drinking tea is rooted in our Irish culture, Ireland being the number one tea drinking nation, drinking more tea per capita than any other nation in the world.

Tea is simultaneously a beverage, a medicine, and a social ritual. We drink tea on our own, with family, with friends, in business and socially. It's drunk while we communicate, celebrate, commiserate, console, relax, calm, negotiate and revive.

Infuse is a teapot for those occasions when we want to drink tea. This teapot will be enhanced by user participation, it aims to initiate dialogue while in use and challenge the users' established knowledge of silverware. Nature and the Irish landscape, discussions with farmers about furrows and growing, observing the changes to the landscape through the weather, the seasons and erosion, are key to my practice. Infuse is inspired by the natural environment and has a sculptural presence, focusing on how the piece interacts with the table and metaphorically 'grows' from it.

The enamelling is by my mother Deirdre McCrory, many cups of tea were drunk in the designing and making of this teapot and while deciding which of the forty shades of green were most appropriate to use for the enamel.

Biog: Cara received her MA at the Royal College of Art. She is the Associate Lecturer in Silversmithing and Jewellery at the University of Ulster in Belfast and a selected member of the British Silversmiths. Her numerous awards include the RDS Award of Excellence, the California Gold Medal and several Individual Artist's awards from the Arts Council of N. Ireland. Commissions/Collections include: The Silver Trust Collection at Downing Street, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, National Museum of Ireland and Irish Embassy Collection.

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Nigel Cheney

Made in Market Harborough, Digitally printed linen union, cotton and viscose thread, brass, 2013

As a child I grew up in a house with a sewing machine in the living room. My father was the manager in a garment factory and brought boxes of outwork home every evening for my mother who then sewed them together the following morning. There was a seemingly endless cycle of work in and work out. My mother was an amazing machinist. I've still never seen anyone who could sew as fast and as neatly as her.

On reflection I consider that my cultural identity was forged somewhere between twin notions of 'sacrifice' and 'industry'. The piece I have made contains over 90 metres of hand sewn hems and represents hundreds of hours of labour. Using digital technology to apply colour to a linen union fabric it was possible to consolidate many hundreds of images onto a single piece of cloth. The images that create the narrative of this measurement of time and memory come from a variety of family archives. Music is incredibly important to me, as Michelle Shocked sang I consider I also have a '45rpm soul'. The number 45 has many personal significances for me, from the speed of a vinyl single on my childhood record player to the fact that at this point in my life I can finally act my age and my shoe size simultaneously.

Biog: After gaining a first class B.A Textiles, with Commendation in Art History, in 1990, Nigel Cheney graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University in 1991 with an MA Textiles. He has held the position of Lecturer in Embroidered Textiles at NCAD since 1993. He has been the Republic of Ireland Selector for the Łódź Tapestry Triennale, Poland, since 2000. He is an expert in Industrial Multi-Head embroidery and has worked with several companies in Ireland and the UK. On-going projects include: Goldilocks and the 2 Bears, developing a proposal for a 3 person show involving a textile sculptor and a ceramic artist. This focuses on reinterpreting aspects of the children's story. Nigel's current research involves textiles as narrative/metaphor; using multi-disciplinary process to create discourse with relation to esoteric topics.

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Peter Meanly

The Queen, The Potter and his Sauce, Salt glazed ceramic 2012

The two pieces selected for this exhibition tell a story.

The Queen: The desire to make her Majesty started when I visited the Ulster Museum to view an exhibition entitled *The Queen*, as seen through the eyes of many different artists. Each seemed to be emphasising the glitz and glamour or the Majesty. None seemed to be dealing with the lady herself. I wanted her to be quietly sitting with her hands folded with her comforts; her handbag and her corgi and a simple brooch. Her legs are crossed which she never does in public (I took this aspect from a photograph of Elizabeth the Queen Mother). I gave her a tiara to reaffirm who she is but also that the liquid can be dispensed more easily.

The Potter and his Sauce: This work depicts me and my passion for Toby jugs. I have a collection of about twenty historical Tobys, the best are those made in the late 18th century. After about 1850 most Tobys became debased; their making became crude and uncritical. In the 18th century captions would be misspelt as the education of the makers would often be lacking. Thus my use of the word SAUCE instead of SOURCE extends this earlier characteristic but also adds a piquancy to my passion for making and collecting Toby jugs.

Biog: Upon graduating from the Royal College of Art in London over 50 years ago, Peter has established himself as one of N. Ireland's foremost ceramicists. He has a DPhil in salt glazing and was Head of Ceramics at the University of Ulster for 30 years. His work is represented in a wide range of international collections and museums across Ireland, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Italy and Spain. Meanley has exhibited extensively including the 2011, 'Ceramic Design from 1860' exhibition in Bonhams, London and the 2010 'Teapotters' Craft exhibition in the Bay Gallery, Cardiff. Peter has been awarded several commissions by Auckland Museum, New Zealand, the British Council and the International Museum of Ceramic Art, Teranco, Italy. His featured publications include 'The Ceramics Book: A-Z Guide to 300 Ceramic Artists' Emmanuel Cooper 2006, and 'BBC2 Priceless Antiques Roadshow 2009'.

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Mary R. Cullen

Traverse I, II & III, Digitally printed silk twill 2013

Traverse – to move, pass, cross, bridge, negotiate; this word can be interpreted in many ways. My work tells a story that can be read in a multiplicity of formats.

Images from the past (as a child going from the south of Ireland to the North to visit family and as an adult to study in Belfast) merge with contemporary images from Dublin and recent travels in Japan and Berlin. My pieces reflect an emotional, selective and sensory response to cultural and social situations. Images from these years are imprinted on my memory, photographs record, reaffirm and make visual these cross-cultural journeys.

Formal and informal objects are metaphors for communication, status, conversation and dialogue (dia – through or across). Shards are evidence of different previous existences, mirrors may reflect what is absent and present. I have juxtaposed and altered my information to present three composite pieces that convey this series of memories.

Biog: B.A. Hons. Fashion and Textiles, Ulster College of Art, Belfast; M.A. Textiles, National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin. Mary R. Cullen is a lecturer in Fashion and Textiles and Core Studies and has taught in other colleges throughout Ireland. Her interest in collections of objects / diverse cultural ephemera inform her visual narrative. She is interested in regenerating and bringing new meaning to this imagery through various processes - photography, computer technology and digital printing on to cloth and other surfaces. Mary jointly established "One Off" a mixed media studio in Dublin and has shown in group exhibitions and trade fairs.

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Scott Benefield

The Alarmist, Glass, granite 2013

I was born in Japan and grew up in the United States, moving throughout my childhood and adolescence to a different location in that vast country every two years. But it is given to us as adults to find a culture or a tradition into which we find a comfortable fit, and for me that came with my introduction to the global community of artists working with glass.

It is the material and the understanding that it demands which unites us across barriers of nationality or language. We may come from different traditions within that glass-working community, but on a very real level we have an appreciation for the medium of glass that transcends those specific origins. It also extends across time. I can look at the work of a 16th Century Muranese craftsman and understand, from the tool marks and slight imperfections which the glass so sensitively records, exactly what his struggles and triumphs entailed in the making of one particular piece of glass.

I have taught glassblowing classes in Turkey and Japan to students who had no command of English, only communicating through the language of heat, gravity and ancient tools that are essential to the common culture of glass-working. We all got along just fine.

Biog: Scott studied art at the Philips Academy Washington, finishing in 1974. He went on to complete an MFA in Ohio State University in 1990 and took further studies at the Pilchuck Glass School between 1992-1996. He is currently based in N. Ireland. Scott's work is held in many international collections: Museum of American Glass, New Jersey, USA and Himitsa Collection, London, UK. A solo exhibition of his work is currently being held at the Custom House Gallery, Westport, Co. Mayo. In 2012 he was represented in the exhibition: 50 years of American Studio Glass, at Kentucky Museum of Arts and Crafts, Louisville, USA. In 2011 Scott was awarded an honorary lifetime membership to the Glass Art Society.

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James Toal

Untitled I, II & III, Kiln formed glass, 2013

I am passionate about culture and the way in which heritage, language and traditions shape us as individuals. Having worked and lived abroad, I am even more appreciative of my background and equally absorbed by the history of other cultures. In particular, I am interested in traditional practices within craft and how these principles shape contemporary art today.

Building upon this knowledge, I am very interested in the continued exploration and experimentation with materials and processes within glass making. My current investigations explore the opacity of colour and how it is transformed through the transparency, fluidity and reflective qualities of glass.

Biog: James received his BA in Glass, from the National College of Art and Design in Ireland in 2005. His exhibitions include *Work-in-progress Show* and *Man Group Drawing Competition* both at the Royal College of Art in London in 2008. He received the R.J. Washington Award in 2009 and Third Prize in the Man Group Drawing Competition in 2008.

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Suzanne Woods

Blue Willow Fragments, Merino wool felt 2013

For a long time I have been interested in the decorative and symbolic use of pattern especially in the ways that pattern is created from original sources and is altered and diffused over time.

Whilst born in Northern Ireland, I spent most of my life living elsewhere – in the UK, Canada and the USA. Returning on holiday as a child and later as an adult, an awkward ritual of visiting barely known relatives and family friends became a pattern. Good china cups and saucers balanced on knees imposed a formality to these occasions. Good china displayed in cabinets until important visitors came by was a reflection of our standing and the rarity of our presence.

The dresser with its display of china has pride of place in many homes. It is a family shrine which is decorative yet holds meaning ranging through family memories, feelings of comfort and hospitality to symbols of status and wealth.

One of the most common china patterns to be displayed is Blue Willow, developed in the late 18th century by Minton Pottery and replicated by most potteries up until the present day. The pattern is an amalgam of various Chinese-inspired details, and a story was invented to market the china to householders seeking an exotic experience. It is recognisable even in fragments.

Biog: Suzanne graduated from the University of Southern Illinois with a BA in 1986. She received her MA in modern art history at the University of Wisconsin in 1991. Woods lectured in art history at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, the University of Indianapolis, and the University of Wisconsin. Woods began her own textile studio, ArrooDesigns, in 2005. She was featured in RTE's Nationwide programme and images of her work have appeared in print including in The Irish Times, Sunday Times, and various interiors publications. Exhibitions include Leitrim Design House and the National Craft Exhibition, RDS. She has received the CCOI Travel Award and the CraftNI export grant.

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Adam Frew

Large Jar, Porcelain, 2013

My work centres on the potters wheel. Traditional eastern forms inspire me, but spontaneity as a means of personal expression is key to my work. The exuberant action of throwing is enhanced by a continued experimentation through process, form and colour. Mark making is intuitive, sometimes relating to the form or process of making, sometimes it's part of a personal narrative. I create large pots as I enjoy the physical and technical challenges of throwing on a large scale. This leaves me with a substantial surface area, a blank canvas, to add colour and marks to.

The firing is as important as the making. I gas fire to 1300 degrees in a reducing atmosphere, this allows my celadon glaze to become a vivid blue colour, bringing to life the coloured slips that I used to decorate the pot.

Biog: Ceramicist Adam Frew is a graduate of the University of Ulster 2000-2004 and has worked with internationally renowned potters including Judy Makela in Finland, 2003, and Lisa Hammond in Greenwich, London, 2006. In 2008, Adam completed a 2 year placement at the Flowerfield Arts Centre, Coleraine N. Ireland. He remains at the centre where he continues to develop his profession. Adam`s solo exhibitions include 2012 Aberstwyth Arts Centre, Wales. His work has been represented at numerous group exhibitions, which include Mungyeong Chasabal Festival, South Korea, 2012, The Gallery Uggerby, Denmark, 2011 and Bonhogn Gallery Shetland 2010. Frew's commissions include the Law Society House, Belfast 2009, and his work is held at several collections including University of Ulster and the Mungyeong Ceramic Museum, South Korea.

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Logan McLain

Wunder, Viscose thread on paper 2013

Cultures can create, exchange and borrow words, images and ideas from each other. The rate at which these can spread has become instant with the prolific availability of online social media, allowing people from all cultures to generate and share content online in completely new contexts.

The starting point for this piece came from one such example; an image found within a randomly discovered online compilation of snapshots categorised together and shared within a community and culture of collectors. The original image is a photograph of a single neon sign in isolation against the backdrop of an aging concrete surface.

Who took the original photograph? How did it come to be a part of this seemingly random online collection of images? What logic was applied to qualify this image as worthy of inclusion in this catalogue?

Regardless of the answers to any of these questions the image has become part of an emerging online behaviour, a culture of collectors that ultimately may only exist in its current form for a limited period of time given the rate of change in technologies and the ways we use them.

Wunder is a product of interacting with this culture of online collecting and sharing. The image was chosen for no other reason than its resonance with the maker's aesthetic. It was then taken out of the context of its collection and was worked through a craft process. The outcome will go on to be made available as more online content to be discovered, shared and collected. The image may again be taken out of this context and to become just another thread connected to more collections.

Biog: Logan completed a BA in Art and Design Education at NCAD and then an MA in Textiles.

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Justyna Truchanowska

B.O.C.I.A.N., Merino fleece, silk cut tops, sterling silver, thread, 2013

Living as an immigrant in Ireland for over a decade, I often question where my true home is, or where do I belong? The place where I was born and raised, or the place where I have been educated and developed a career, given birth to my child, and most likely will stay?

It seems more appropriate to consider the Renaissance attitude to identity which was founded on the territories they inhabited rather than nationality. To use an age-old quote – Where is your heart there is your place.

This question of belonging has become a subject matter for my work. In an attempt to illustrate the essence of the question I am drawn to the nature and behaviour of migrating birds, in particular the Stork. On reflection, I can relate to these migrating birds. They arrive in Poland every summer to lay their eggs, build a nest and await the arrival of their offspring. By the end of the summer the birds fly south to spend the winter in a warmer climate. In subsequent years the same couple will return to the same nest. I feel an affinity for this routine. The nest, my true home Poland to where I make an annual summer pilgrimage only to leave and return to my actual home in Ireland.

In creating the jewellery object, I have chosen materials for visual and sensual impact, combining merino wool and silver. Wool offers unlimited possibilities for developing form whilst the nature of the material allows me to utilize a myriad of colour and tones. Silver units punctuate the larger felted pieces and accentuate their organic texture.

Biog: Justyna is early in her career, having graduated in 2009 from The National College of Art and Design with a 1st degree Hons in Craft Design Metals. At the RDS Graduate Show of that year, Justyna was awarded 1st prize in the Jewellery category and 1st Prize in the Felting category. Since then, Justyna's work has been represented at numerous exhibitions including in Australia and London. In 2012, Justyna was awarded the Polly Weiss Color Prize with the Society of Designer Craftsmen, London.

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Tara Ni Nullain

Foundation I – VI, Concrete, steel, fabric paper and stitch 2013

Culture is commonly defined as 'the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.' Personally, I view the role of custom and history as essential to culture, we as individuals and as societies are built on our past.

I identify strongly with Irish Culture, which to me is a culture of contrasts. I have a great sense of pride in my 'Irishness', my 'Dublinness' that I celebrate in my work. I see the history of family, of place, of the Irish language (that I discovered as I grew up) and Irish culture and traditions in all forms as a resource that strengthens our future. Irishness, to me, is a shifting quality which is constantly adjusting to changing times. It is made of contrasting notions of past, present and indeed future.

We continue to redefine what it is to be Irish in the context of the 21st century both in Ireland and around the world. It is the contrast between our past and our becoming future that interests me in this work. Where are we from and where are we going? Foundations reflects on Irish culture and history as a base for a modern Irish identity. The piece features a series of stitched drawings of the M50 motorway supported by or cast into cylinders of stitched concrete.

The M50 Motorway is for me, a symbol of modern Ireland, literally (in the case of Carrickmines Castle) and metaphorically built on the past. It encircles Dublin City and is evidence of the advances in infrastructure and development of recent times. It connects the old city centre with new outlying communities and radiates links to all parts of the country. There is a sense of permanence about the structures of the M50 that will mark our environment for generations to come.

Biog: Tara has participated in exhibitions throughout Ireland including in Sculpture in Context, National Botanic Gardens, Dublin, the RDS winners travelling exhibition, the Filament Group exhibition at the Knitting and Stitching Show, RDS and the Graffon Gallery, Co. Down. She has conducted workshops with the Embroiders Guild and demonstrations for Source exhibition of Contemporary Craft.

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Seliena Coyle

Untitled / Unlabelled, Brass, copper, sterling silver, dymo labels, 2013

I was born in Derry. An undeniable trait of Northern Irish cultural behaviour is a dogged determination on meeting someone for the first time, to pigeon-hole, label if you like. Labels are applied at a sub-conscious, unspoken level.

The work *Untitled/Unlabelled* relies on this unique learned behaviour to engage the viewer in a social experiment. Given the choice, how would you label yourself? Is there an adequate or appropriate set of linguistic signifiers capable of the task?

This work questions the fundamental function of a specific jewellery type. Historically, the brooch embraced both form and function. Made from precious materials, it ultimately denotes status and/or wealth whilst in utilitarian form, it functions to identify, such as corporate pins or name badges.

I have created a series of badges/pins using a nostalgic yet nonetheless effective label-making device. The choice of pin(s) lies with the wearer, an exercise in self-determination if you like. Inherent in this process is a fundamental question; just how comfortable are you 'wearing' your (cultural) identity... is it a badge of honour or unwelcome branding?

Biog: Seliena studied Jewellery and Silversmithing at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art (Dundee University), graduating with a BDes (Hons) in 1993. She went on to complete a MFA in Jewellery and Silversmithing at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, graduating with Honors in 1998. She has complemented her academic studies with two training programmes delivered by the Crafts Council of Ireland. Coyle has lectured full-time at several institutions including Indiana University, and most recently at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin. She is currently External Examiner for the Design for Industry Degree programme at Birmingham School of Jewellery (2009 – present).

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Helen Mc Allister

3 feet make a yard, but 3 of your feet make a shipyard, Tights, bleached/unbleached linen yarn, glass shards, beads, leather, cotton thread, 2013

This is one of the many humorous sayings a school friend of mine had, it reflects Belfast's, 'honest,' frank, often cutting pessimistic humour. The title references three elements.

The Goliath and Samson ship-building cranes have become emblematic of Belfast. We did not live in their shadow, yet from my bed I could see them. Their sounds carried with other city noises of bomb blasts, and shots, making everything feel very near. Yet as long as I could see those red lights I was able to sleep. These cranes were 'mine' as much as any favourite toy or any blanket a child is comforted by.

Yellow tights reference the cranes by their torsion and tensions with the repeated motif of the boat like footwear. The repeated shoe form hints at a production-line and references the title. My childhood saw the demise of Belfast as a world-ranking manufacturing centre. The Linen industry is one such case. The hand crafted shoe-forms and embroidery techniques, make homage to the linen industry by use of linen thread, referencing industrious work ethic and the respect for 'making'.

The glass shards used in the artwork are precious, iconic mementos of Belfast, retrieved from a fire-bombed church. They reflect emotive memories and history in the found, collected objects.

Biog: Helen has an MA in Embroidered Textiles and a PhD in Practice-Based Design from NCAD. She is currently head of textiles at NCAD. Her exhibitions include Dalkey, Dublin and the CCOI AnPost Stamp exhibition. She has a number of publications to her credit including the 2009 "Art of Research", University of Art & Design, Helsinki (Published Online) and "Communicating (by) Design", Sint-Lucas, Brussels (Published) 2008.

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