

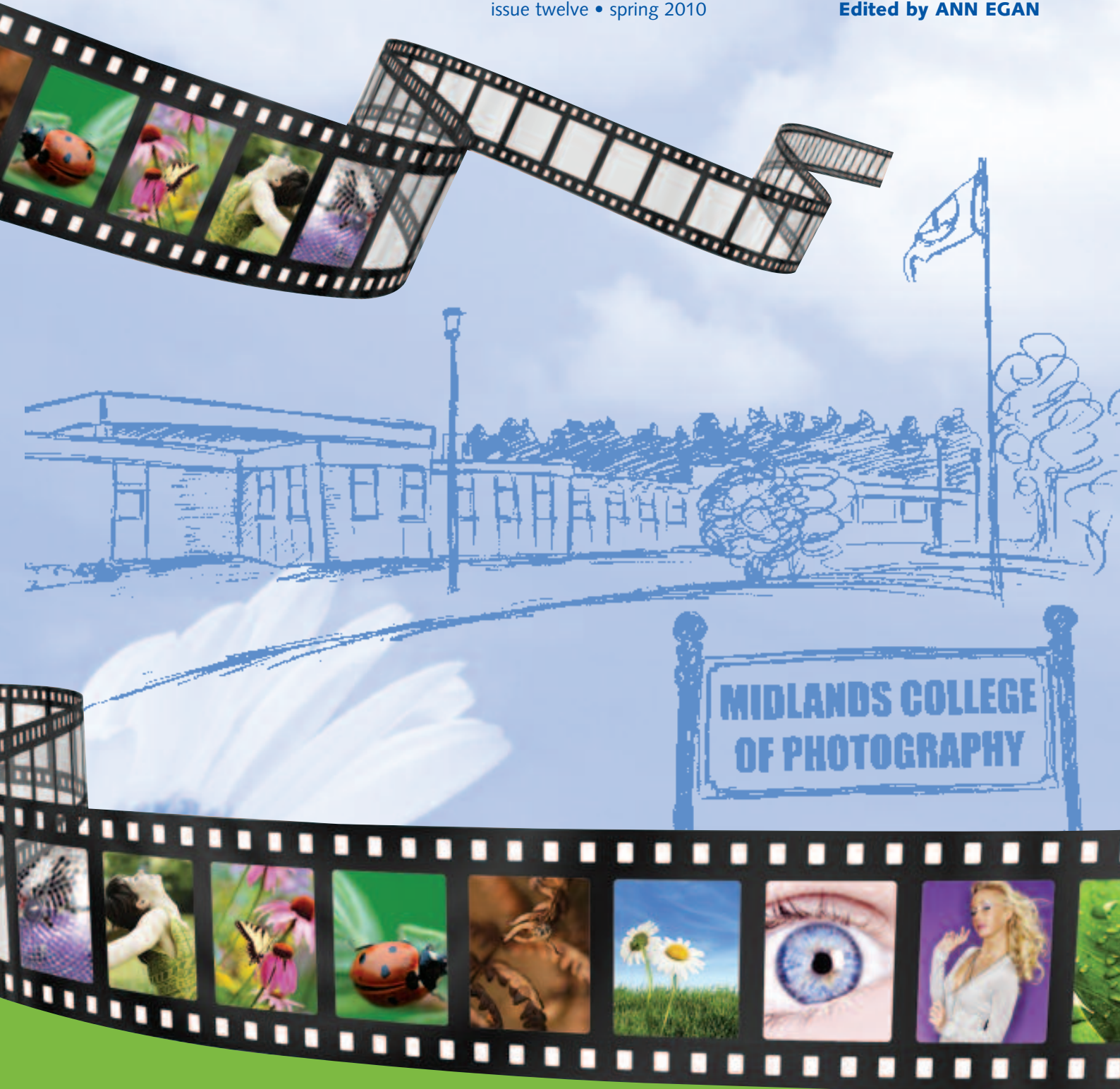
midlands

arts and culture magazine

a review of the arts in laois westmeath offaly and longford

issue twelve • spring 2010

Edited by ANN EGAN



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**MIDLANDS
ARTS AND
CULTURE**

a review
of the
arts in
laois
westmeath
offaly and
longford

**SPRING
2010**



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Foreword...

Once more I was delighted when I received a phone call from Fergus Kennedy, inviting me to be guest editor of the Spring edition of this magazine. Fergus commented, 'The level of interest and activity in photography is such in Longford at the moment that we decided to dedicate the entire contribution from Longford to this issue to photography.' This level of interest and activity in the arts throughout the Midlands is very obvious in the sheer variety, originality and creativity in all the submissions to our magazine from: Catherine Kelly, Arts Officer, Westmeath County Council; Muireann Ní Chonail, Arts Officer, Laois County Council; Sinead O'Reilly, Arts Officer, Offaly County Council; Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer, Longford County Council. In the opening article, President Mary McAleese stated that every city and county council played a frontline role in cultivating an embedded arts culture and in creating access to the arts. President McAleese noted, 'Arts Officers are the hands and head of that work. Your investment is what helps to give us a healthy, vibrant and resilient civic society.' I hope you will enjoy reading about the abundance of the arts, the nurturing, guidance and availability that are on offer through the Arts Officers and the County Councils.

Spring is the time of the year when our earth is opening up to us in all its beauty and growth, presenting us with intense images of love, remembrance, sorrow and joy, through the blooming of its first flowers, the stillness of buds, the bustlings of birds. I am immediately reminded of a beautiful image I saw of the Star of David, made by golden crocuses to commemorate the precious memory of Holocaust Victims. These little Spring flowers, planted underneath the shade of a tree in Scoil Mhuire, Portlaoise, are now forever written in to the poem 3rd class created with me entitled, 'Behind the Bookcase', inspired by their empathy with Anne Frank.

My theme for the Feature Section is – 'On Becoming – A Journey with Creativity'. I had the great pleasure of talking with four people who interpret this world and life with their artistic vision, and imaginistically present it to us through: photography; sculpture; visual art; fashion design. They are Kip Carroll; Siobhan Bulfin; Geraldine O'Reilly; Heidi Higgins.

Longford Photographer, Kip Carroll speaks of: childhood strolls along the banks of the Shannon; his Father's gift of a camera; the constant presence of creativity about him; Nepal's astounding beauty; the sight of photo gravure; and all played out in the backdrop of world events and people displacements. When I looked on Kip's photographs for the first time, their intense beauty of the moment stunned me.

Offaly Sculptor, Siobhan Bulfin, met me, carrying one of her bronze horses so as we could identify each other, and the power of that image matched that of Kip's photographs. I felt the sculpture spoke all there was to say. Siobhan traced her journey with creativity for me, and it too was as unique, brave and inspirational as the power contained in her bronze horse. Westmeath Visual Artist, Geraldine O'Reilly outlined her personal journey, and from the moment the small child was lifted up to the huge blackboard to do her drawing, that world of creativity

awaited her interpretation and careful study, to give it back to us through extraordinary paintings, ceramics, etchings that led her across the world and back home to Westmeath.



Laois's own Heidi Higgins, Fashion Designer, was set for her journey with creativity from her childhood. She has already achieved national recognition for her beautiful creations; has established her own Studio/ Boutique in her hometown; is selling her second fashion collection that has a palette of colour that mirrors Spring's own. All this and a plethora of awards, and Heidi is barely two years out of college! I hope you will find the artistic journeys of these four artists of our Midland counties inspirational. Who knows what person they will inspire along the way to find his/her journey with creativity?

For myself, I am delighted to be writer-in-residence in my native Laois. Muireann Ní Chonail invited me to be the writer for a creative project of The Arts Office, Laois County Council. Entitled 'Fíliochta Laoise', the project is part of a multidisciplinary approach that will, in its eventual entirety, encompass the worlds of: writing; music; song; art; Irish language; English language. In phase one, 'Fíliochta Laoise' will marry the ancient world of Finn Mac Cumhaill with the contemporary world as viewed through the experiences of young and old alike across County Laois through creative writing workshops in schools, communities, libraries and in Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise.

I hope you will enjoy: the photography; drama; art exhibitions; readings; music; festivals; and all the art and creativity - too numerous to name - that are within the pages of our magazine, and which reflect all the opportunities in the arts with which the Midlands, so rich in lore, so varied in heritage, abound.

Ann Egan: Guest Editor

Ann Egan, from Laois is a multi-award winning poet. Her three books are – The Wren Women (dramatised by Listowel Writers' Week); Brigit of Kildare; Landing the Sea. Editor of 12 books, she is widely published. RTE and local radio stations have broadcast her work. Holder of numerous residencies, she is currently Laois writer-in-residence.

Muireann Ní Chonail
Arts Officer, Laois County Council

Sinead O'Reilly
Arts Officer, Offaly County Council

Catherine Kelly
Arts Officer, Westmeath County Council

Shane Brennan
Arts Education Officer for the
Midlands Region, Westmeath VEC

Fergus Kennedy
Arts Officer, Longford County Council

ON BECOMING A JOURNEY WITH CREATIVITY

KIP CARROLL

PHOTOGRAPHER

CONVERSES WITH ANN EGAN

Kip, will you tell me about your childhood?

My Dad, an architect from Derry, and my Mom, from Dublin, met in London, and married. I was two weeks old when we moved to Holland – stayed for two years. Then we moved back to Ireland; and to Lanesboro when I was four. My parents bought a house on the banks of the Shannon – Clonbony.

I got my name, Kip, which means chicken in Dutch. 'My little chicken, Kip', is what my Dad used to call me. Kevin is my name, and my Dad's. Later in boarding school – Sligo Grammar School – I tried numerous times to change it back to Kevin, but I got nowhere. People just kept calling me Kip. It's even on my passport now.

My parents had an art gallery in Longford town, 'Carroll Gallery'. My Dad's office was also in Longford. My Dad used to collect art, he always wanted to be an artist. He had lots of artist friends which gave me an interest in art. He went to Columba's in Derry and was in Seamus Heaney's class.

Were you inspired by the gallery?

I wanted to be an artist but I didn't have the results for Art College in '85 but I got a job as a photographer's assistant. I helped with portrait photography, fashion photography, in the studio and darkroom in Dublin.

The only photographic studios were in Dublin at that stage. Then I started doing model photos, and then I progressed to magazines, doing fashion editorials and portraits. Mainly people photography, but I photographed everything from wellington boots to light bulbs!

At what stage did you set out on your own?

I set up a studio in '88 in Lad Lane. I had a studio there for 20 years. I did fashion and advertising – for banks, drink companies, Telecom Eircom, HB Ice Cream. I did a lot of

advertising with people. I left it six years ago because I was going to London three times a week for Hello Magazine. I wasn't using the studio. I did 120 photo shoots. I went to New York, Milan, France, all over England. Ryanair was my best friend! I was paying for the travel expenses. It was a nightmare. I gave it up because of the travel. You'd have to be up at four in the morning to catch a plane for a job at nine. You'd get on to the Tube at rush hour, and you might get back home at 12 or 1 at night.

You have met many famous people.

I met Daniel O'Donnell, - I still do most of his albums, calendars, jigsaws. I've been over to his house in the Canaries. I've photographed Donovan and his daughter in Majorca. We did the photoshoot on a yacht where everyone else was drinking champagne at 11 in the morning. I always had to drive! Some of the people I've photographed are : Samantha Mumba; Danielle Llyod; Juliette Lewis; Neil Jordan; Dolores O'Riordan; Leanne Rimes.

Did any occurrence change how you looked at things?

About 15 years ago, I went to Nepal with my mother. I found it very photogenic. I took an awful lot of photos there. That's where I had an idea about - I hadn't thought of a show but I did want to take more of this type of photograph.



Kip Carroll



Cows Crossing.



Catherine.

Did the place inspire you?

It was more the people, culture shock helped. I just found everything so photogenic. I guess what I wanted to do was try and focus a little bit on – not really travel photography but I get a feeling from a scene, and then I capture it. It's quite spontaneous as well, a moment in time. With my work portraits, I'd take maybe a 100 photos, but where with these photos, they'd be a quick snap trying to capture a moment in time. With these photos you can't set them up really. You have to use the light and weather that is there, whether it's clouds or rain. I travelled to India, Thailand, Vietnam afterwards, taking photos in each place.

What was the next stage to developing this interest?

When I saw etchings at a Trade Show in Ireland from Noble Art, that sparked something off. When I saw how beautiful their etchings could be, I decided I would try and make a show out of the photos I had. The etchings are Photo Gravure, which goes back to the origins of photographic printing in the 1880s.

I worked with Noble Art, which is based in England to produce a set of 35 photo gravure plates. My first exhibition was in The Bridge Gallery, Ormond Quay. My sister, Deirdre, who was managing the gallery, offered me a solo show. It was very successful. Four months later, I had a show in The Backstage Gallery. Everything sold. Because they were etchings, they were a set of 10, and all sold.

Longford Library bought, 'Boat Shop Vietnam'. I'd visited Halong Bay when I was on honeymoon in Vietnam. I'd met my wife, Nguyen, she was a model in Dublin. We were on a boat visiting a large cave when the little girl saw our boat, she paddled over. It was in the middle of the sea. On her boat was two boxes of noodles, and bottles of coke, she was selling to anyone visiting the cave. She was about seven, on a boat, all on her own. I was the only one who thought it was strange, everyone else was Vietnamese.

Where would you like to photograph?

I'd love to do a set of photos on the Shannon at some stage. From growing up on the bank, I used to love walking along the river, through the fields on my own, walk with my dog, along the bog also. Everytime the light changes, the scenery changes.

Longford has brilliant sunsets, beautiful sunsets. I miss the country. These days I don't see very many sunsets. In Lanesboro you had 180 degrees of sky.

What was your first camera?

When I started photography, I got an automatic camera off my Dad, 35 ML Compact Camera. I still have it even though it's broken. I wanted it to take photos of the Shannon - to try and capture the sunsets over the bog and river. Because it was a totally automatic camera, I couldn't control the light, the photos didn't turn out very well. Later when I got an SRL

Camera, I went back to take a lot of the missed photographs again. This time, I could capture the scene exactly as I wanted it. I still find that rivers and the edge of water are great for capturing interesting images. Half of the show of, 'Time and Place' has river scenes or water in them.

What is your next project?

At the moment I've been offered a show in Paris for next year. So what I would have to do is see can I afford it, it will be quite a gamble. I have some new photos. What I'm hoping is to incorporate some photos into my art photos.

I have a few things I'd like to do - I'd like to visit our historical sights – the ring forts, the stone forts, and dolmens, and see what I can do.

How did you meet your wife?

My wife's family were one of the first Vietnamese Boat People to come to Ireland as refugees after The Vietnam War, in 1978. We met through photography. We have two boys. We spent last Christmas on Danang Beach in Vietnam, which was nice.

What were your feelings on hearing of the fire in St Mel's Cathedral?

I was totally shocked when I found out about the fire. My Dad had a house on Keohane's Terrace, opposite the front of the cathedral. I used to love looking at the sculptures above the front door.

What do you think of Longford's, 'Midland College of Photography'?

I'm jealous because when I was starting out, they weren't really any of those opportunities. One had to learn on one's own more.

What advice would you give to a young person starting out?

The more photos you take – I guess constant working at photography will help you the more - if you don't do it, you don't gain.

In photography, a lot of the time you learn from your mistakes. It also depends on which type of photos you are doing. I often help the Blanchardstown Photography Club. I help them with portrait light, and I've gone on a few trips with them.

Does Longford play a part in your creativity?

I have a special place in my heart for Longford. After twenty five years I'm only getting used to living in Dublin. We camp with the kids at every opportunity in Forest Park and in the west.

I did a photoshoot for Ardagh Heritage Centre. They had a lot of turn-of-the-century photos of buildings. I did new photos of the old. They are on display in Ardagh Heritage Centre which was designed by my Dad.

Ruth.



Vanessa.



Siobhan Bulfin

SCULPTOR

converses with Ann Egan



Siobhan
Bulfin.

Siobhan, will you talk to me about your growing up?

I'm one of nine children of a family of ten. I was number nine, second youngest. I grew up in Derrinlough, Birr in the countryside. We had a pony when I was young. Mom got it when I begged it to death! We never used a saddle or bridle but the pony never bucked us off. We never really broke her, we just got on and rode. We called her, 'Nipper' because we used to sit on her in the stable, and she used to turn around and nip us, but never bit us. I was in school then,— about seven or eight. I went to Rath School.

Did you show any interest in Art then?

Yes, I used to draw all over my school books. They were always giving out to Mom about my doodling. But doodling got me through primary and secondary school.

Did you like to doodle any particular image or in any particular way?

Yes, I loved people and horses. Then in secondary school – Banagher Vocational School - I started doing people and skeletons. Really, skeletons are the starting point of sculpture. If you do the skeleton well, the end product will have movement and life in it.

Did you have an Art teacher in school?

No, we didn't. I did Art for the Leaving Cert, using notes from a previous student. I used to go once a week to the Art teacher at the neighbouring school – La Sainte Union. At that time there were two schools in Banagher, now they are joined into one.



Horse in Wind
Watercolour.

You only did Art for one year for your Leaving Cert?

Yes, but you can do Inter. Cert and Junior Cert. Exams without any input from your teacher.

You taught yourself, that is amazing!

It's not that amazing, really. You can't teach somebody to be an artist or a poet or a singer. You can give them pointers but it's within their own hands. College won't make an artist, and it won't unmake an artist.

It's important that people realise that college won't unmake an artist. If you've been to college and have been discouraged, don't let that hold you back.

It's up to everybody themselves, you can find your creativity if you just look for it. Find the thing that inspires you, and stop hearing the voices in your head that tell you it's no good, you have to stop criticising yourself.

You need to just produce something that you really love. Try not to produce something that will get you good marks from a tutor or someone. Make something you love and other people will love it also. What you make doesn't have to fall into any category, just as long as you love it. It has to move you in some way. Then you know that it's good.

The pieces that I made for myself were always very successful. If you made a piece that didn't move you, it's better to scrap it and start again until you know that you've got it right.

After Leaving Cert. what did you do?

I got an honour in Art. I went to Charlie Swann's Racing Stables to ride horses. He was in his heyday. His father, Donald was in charge. I got on great with Donald, he was a great character. I did that for a year.

I did all kinds of jobs, I never really thought I was good enough to be an artist, to go to college. But I was sick of books, I wasn't going to study anything.

I'll skip a few years to meeting my husband, George at Larry Greene's Racing Stables. George convinced me to give Art a second chance. So I started painting again. I did my first sculpture simply as a break from the painting. I was really pleased, and all editions of it sold out. The sculpture was of a bucking horse with his head down between his front legs. In the middle of making the sculpture, I got a phone call and I put the sculpture lying on its back on the table. A friend walked in and said, 'Ah! That's a nice rolling horse'. I looked at it and sure enough, it was a grand rolling horse.

God gives you a gift for creativity and it's good to hand over to Him in a way. And when the thing you're making is not going the way you planned, it may well be your best piece. And that

rolling horse was the fastest seller and launched my career as a sculptor. It was a wake-up call – 'Here is your gift.' Sometimes you can be polishing up your coppers to make them more valuable, working on your weakness trying to improve it, instead of recognising the silver, the talent that you have, and putting more time into that.

How did you learn to sculpt?

I started to take sculpting seriously. On the advice of Peter Curling, a very famous horse artist, I went to see a very good sculptor called Mark Coreth. Two days with Mark Coreth taught me how to make a skeleton. This is the basis for good sculpture, if you get the skeleton right. If you get the bones of anything right, it's the most important piece of creating anything.

How did you first discover the joy of sculpting?

We used to go down as children to the river – a drain in the bog which had marl clay. We'd dig out a lump and bring it home and make little things out of the clay and bake them in the oven. Mom and Dad were great to encourage creativity. They didn't compare anybody, and some of the family were very academic but everyone was treated equally. We were all encouraged to be creative and work hard at what you were good at. I know that Dad would be proud of everyone because they all work hard and are honest. His motto was- 'Be honest, do a good job and be kind'. Dad's father was William Bulfin, a writer. He wrote, 'Rambles in Erin.'

Was there a time of further enlightenment in your life as a sculptor?

What launched and has been a great step forward, a turning point for me was an accident I had in July '07. I had a fall from a horse and a serious brain injury. I was just recovering - able to walk – I won a commission in April '08 to make a life-size piece of three horses.

I'd never made a life-size sculptor before and there was no way I could fulfil this commission alone. If it hadn't been for George's help and encouragement and muscle power, I would never have made it. I would make the sculptor with a marker and he would carve it. I was the eye, he was the hand. Our friend, Vitalli with George made small work of a giant job. Also, working together showed me the importance of listening to the people you work with, and the power of partnership. The finished sculpture is a credit to team-work and it's at the Curragh at HRI Building, just off the Curragh Roundabout. It was ten metres long, three life-size horses jumping in sequence.

We brought it to the foundry in the horsebox. The pieces were cast in Dublin in The Coombe at 'Cast Foundries', by a very good sculptor called Vadim. It's thanks to Leo Higgins – sculptor and foundry owner – that the piece was cast.

You found that accident, horrific as it was, to be a turning point. Can you talk some more about that?

It has me seeing very clearly what is really important in life. It's really our families that gives us the most joy. They also love you the most. It's only when you're on death's door that you realise how much you mean to people, especially your partner and your children.



For years I had put my work, my business first. Now I work when the kids are at school. When they get home now, I switch off. They're only little for a few years. I'll always be able to make bronze but they won't always be needing me. I have a few years to be a Mom and I'm going to make the most of it.

I have two boys, Daniel, aged four and Fred, aged eight, both great kids and lovely kids. Dan loves riding his pony, feeding the horses with Dad, and his dog. Fred loves boats and nature.

What is happening now in your Art?

I've just finished doing awards for ITBA - Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association. It was very nice and the highlight was doing an award for the breeders of , 'See the Stars', the Choi Family. 'See the Stars', trained by John Oxx in Ireland, and ridden by Mick Kinnane, has won more Group 1 Races than any other horse in history - the first horse ever to win the 2,000 Guineas, the Derby and Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe!

The next project is to make another life-size horse, this time an Irish Cobb. I'd like to have it finished for The Horse Show in August in The RDS where I have a stand every year.

Where can your work be viewed?

I have my paintings for sale on my website - sbulfin.com and also on it are a list of galleries which sell the bronze.

The galleries are:

Ib Jorgensen (Dublin); **Tuckmill** (Naas);
Almond Tree (Roscrea); **Green Lane** (Dingle);
Lee (Cork); **Art and Print** (Slane).



Geraldine O'Reilly

VISUAL ARTIST

converses with Ann Egan



Geraldine O'Reilly

Geraldine, will you tell me about your journey to your art, starting with your early years?

I'm originally from Killucan, Co. Westmeath. I went to national school here, the local secondary school for a year, and then to the Convent of Mercy, Lanesboro.

I actually sat the Leaving Cert Art Exam on my own, it wasn't a subject in the school but I didn't realise the long term consequences of taking the exam then. I passed it. Then I went to work in Bank of Ireland in Dublin, and started doing night courses in art in NCAD. I was doing night classes five nights a week. I was in the bank for three years and I was absolutely desperate to get out of it. I knew it wasn't for me.

Towards the end, I used to mitch from work and go and watch the Art students in NCAD. I have always wanted to be an artist since I was a small child.

When I was three, I followed my father to school (my father was the school principal) - I remember being held up to the blackboard to draw. Obviously people around me recognised that in me. It's always been there. There hasn't been anything else there really. Finding a way to be an artist and a female one at that, was difficult. I had never met an artist growing up, and I had never thought there was such a thing as a female artist. There wasn't any role models to follow where I was coming from. Getting to Art School was a bit like searching in the dark, seeing a tiny little light away in the distance.

I applied to go full-time to NCAD and one requirement was you had to have a pass in your Art in Leaving Cert. The fact that I had sat the exam and got the pass was more of an instinctual decision. You do something and you don't know why you do it. Yet it has a profound effect on the course of one's life.

I did a diploma and then a degree in Fine Art in NCAD, finishing in 1983. There wasn't any money in the country, the Visual Arts were not that well established. It was very difficult to know how you were going to earn a living. In a way the art college bit was the easy



My Grandmother Saving the Harvest' from 'The Winter Island', Irish Cultural Centre, Paris. (Traditional and photo etching techniques).

bit. One of the things I got very involved in was the beginning of the arts community movement.

One of the jobs I did back then was working for Inner City Festival (of Dublin) to do murals with the residents of the Summerhill Flat Complex. That was quite interesting on the political and social side of things. It was using the process of Art to engage people. The Arts Council also ran a Murals in Schools Scheme and I spent four years working freelance on that. The community arts movement came out of all these creative workers wanting to bring the creative process to the general public. An umbrella organisation was set up called C.A. F. E. – Creative Activity for everyone - it's now called CREATE. I worked in community for about ten years full-time.

Did you have other moments of instinctual guidance?

I had a lot of jobs on the go, but in 1998, at that time – I was asked by Cityarts Workshop – a mural company in New York city to give a talk on the murals we were doing here in Ireland. They asked me to do a mural in New York city about something to do with the Irish Diaspora. It never happened. But I wound up doing an enormous amount of research into what happened to the Irish in America. Eventually I won a Fulbright Scholarship, which funded me for a year in New York to research Irish emigration.

I did an exhibition called 'Journal' based on emigrants' letters. That brought me out of Community Art back into Fine Art. I was back painting for myself.

Where did your exhibition travel to?

It opened in Triskel Art Centre in Cork. Some of it was shown in The McMullen Museum at Boston College in an exhibition called, 'Re-dressing Kathleen' – ten Irish women artists. I was also selected for The Guinness Peat Aviation Award for Emerging Artists Exhibition.

IMMA have some of the exhibition in their collection. So it got a good outing. I spent five years in New York in the late 80's, early 90's. When I came back to Ireland, I was selected for a residency in the newly-opened Fire Station Artists' Studios in Dublin's North Inner City residency. I spent about three years there. I had worked in the same area years ago on the inner city festival, so I got involved again. I spent a year working with the children in Rutland St. doing a ceramic mural – 'The Children of Lir'.

I did the ceramic mural alongside my own artwork in the studio. I also featured in an RTE documentary working with the children of Rutland St. School.

It was a very, very fruitful time. I had quite a few exhibitions and I got a scholarship to do a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada. I also learned how to etch in the Graphic Studio Dublin.

I had an exhibition of etchings based on living along The Border in Monaghan. The subject matter was based on how the two traditions marked the landscape. It was called, 'Land Marks'. I'd been going up to Monaghan, living there quite a lot. Some of that work along with emigration work was selected for the exhibition, 'Redressing Kathleen.'

Where did you go after The Firestation Studio?

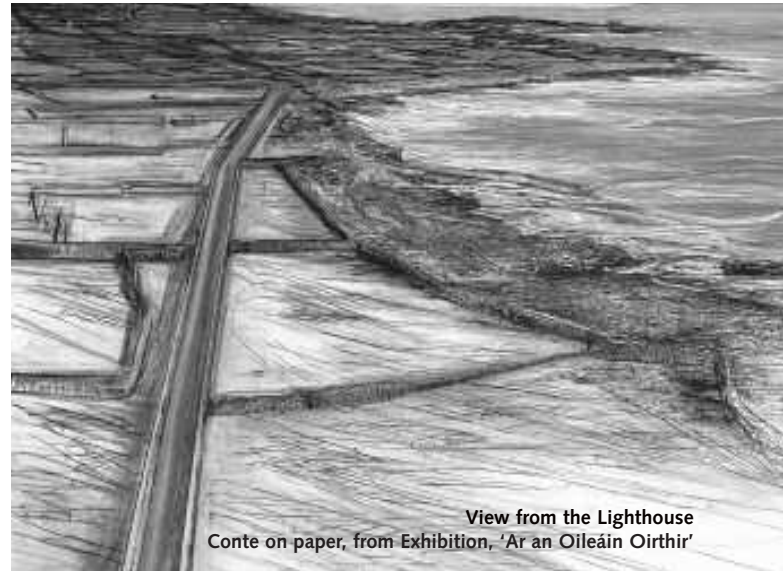
After The Fire Station, I didn't have a studio so I worked in the Graphic Studio Dublin, a collective fine art printmaking studio. I didn't have the money for my own studio. I was also part-time lecturer in Fine Art in NCAD, and Dun Laoghaire School of Art and Ballyfermot College of Further Education. I was also showing in a couple of galleries. During that time I did a lot more printmaking than painting.

In 1999 my job in Ballyfermot went full-time, it was a decision where I would have had to compete with other people for my own job which was now being advertised full-time. I had to either lose the job and have no income or accept that I would go full-time with the job, which I did do.

Around that time as well my mother wasn't managing very well. So I came down to Westmeath to look after her and I ended up commuting to Dublin for work. For artists it's always that very tricky balancing act – having no money and still wanting to make art. Then having to make the hard decision of taking a full-time job because of your responsibilities. That's the point where a lot of artists have to give up making art. Sometimes you just can't manage the two things together.

Commuting to Dublin was pretty rough, it was at the beginning of the boom. I got sick. I got cancer. I don't think I was nine months full-time in the job and I got sick. I had to give it up as it took me a long time to get better.

When I was recovering, I was invited to a residency on the Inis Oirr island- the smallest of the Aran Islands. I started working outdoors on a set of drawings, partly as a response to extreme claustrophobia that I suffered when I was ill. I had to be



View from the Lighthouse
Conte on paper, from Exhibition, 'Ar an Oileáin Oirthir'

outdoors. I had an exhibition of the work I did there in the island art centre - Áras Éanna. The residency lasted four months and afterwards I stayed on for another two years. I fell in love with the place, people, the language. I worked outdoors all the time, I didn't have a studio. I had never really worked outdoors much before so this was a big shift in direction.

Towards the end of two and a half years, I went to another residency in Mayo - at Bellinglen Arts Foundation. I got asked to do an exhibition by 'Alternative Entertainments', a company that organises the Arts in Tallaght. At the time they ran The Civic Theatre Gallery. I called the exhibition, 'A Circuitous Line,' and it covered the artwork I did in three different places finally winding up back in Westmeath. I noticed I was withdrawing from Inis Oirr and coming more inland with the work. Inis Oirr was all about the edge of the island and the sea, and the new work was retreating inland away from the edge. At this stage my mother was very elderly so I wound up coming back to Westmeath taking care of her again. 'A Circuitous Line' went on to Sligo Art Gallery.

In 2004 I was elected to Aosdána for my contribution to the Arts in Ireland. It was quite something for me because your peers vote and acknowledge your contribution. It was deeply moving to be elected.

I rejoined The Graphic Studio Dublin when I came back to Westmeath.

I became a board member for four years, and elected chairperson in 2008.



High Tide, Fardoras, Inis Oirr.
Conte on paper, from Exhibition, 'Ar an Oileáin Oirthir'

HEIDI HIGGINS

Fashion Designer

converses with Ann Egan

Heidi, will you talk to me about your childhood when you became interested in art?

I was always interested in art. I was very lucky, I had fantastic art teachers who always encouraged me. I went to Scoil Bhrí in Knockmay, and to secondary school in Ballyfin. My art teacher was Mark Marnell, a fantastic art teacher -he gave me great time and encouraged me very much.

I started taking part in different designs competitions. In 3rd Year I designed a celebrity room, a mini version. I reached the finals – ‘All Ireland Celebrity Fantasy Room.’ I was really interested in interior design, working with fabrics. I decided I wanted to go to Art College. I did a portfolio course in Abbyleix V.E.C. after my Leaving Cert.

My tutor there was Jackie Carter. I focussed in on fashion. I took part in ‘Nokia Young Designer Competition’. I reached the finals. I was definitely going to do fashion. I had to make up all the garments. I went to the RDS. It was fantastic to see all the designs come to life on the catwalk.

What was the next step?

I started college in NCAD for four years. My area of speciality was obviously fashion for which I was selected for second year. I spent my Summer months working with Louise Kennedy. That always stood to me - heading straight into 2nd Year, to the Fashion Department.

We were creating patterns, working on our own designs, learning to use the industrial sewing machine, and learning to drape on mannequins.



Tess

Adele

Izzy



Studio/Boutique
Opening,
Heidi Higgins
and Peter McNulty.

We did a lot of knitwear also. After 2nd Year, I went to New York for the Summer. I worked with Irish Designer, Daryl Kerrigan. That was fantastic. I loved New York. In 3rd Year I worked on a mini-collection, showcased at the end-of-year fashion show in Trinity College.

Summer after 3rd Year, I worked with Louise Kennedy again which prepared me for my final year in college.

In Final Year I selected a theme and worked to create a six-piece collection. I also reached the finals of, ‘UCD Young Designer’, and, ‘DIT Young Designer’. We had our fashion show at the end of the year. I was lucky enough to obtain an assistant design job with Louise Kennedy. I spent a year working with Louise. I served customers, created design boards, went to fabric fairs, worked on collections which was great. We were working to the real life fashion calendar. I always enjoyed designing stylish, fashionable, wearable, clothes.

What was your next move?

Last May, I took the big step and launched my own label, something I always wanted to do. I started to sell up in ‘The Loft’ in The Powerscourt Townhouse. Now I’m selling my second collection, it’s going incredibly well. I’m also stocked in several boutiques around the country.

I'm delighted to have launched my Spring/Summer Collection in my new – Heidi Higgins Studio/ Boutique, 27, Church St. - recently in Portlaoise, my hometown. I've had fantastic support from local people who travelled to see my collection when I was in Dublin. It's great to be back in Portlaoise now and to provide my service here.

So, each season, I design a collection but I also offer a bespoke service to my customers. I designed my new Studio/Boutique on an open-plan design. My studio is to the back, and to the front is my boutique. The whole idea is allowing my customers to take part in the design process, selecting fabrics and colours, so as they will get the finished design they want.

How would you describe your designs?

My designs are classic, yet bold, deluxe yet practical, very wearable pieces for all occasions. I love to work with luxurious fabrics. My collection is evolving as I am evolving as a designer.

Where does your inspiration come from?

Beautiful fabrics inspire my collections. I go to Paris twice a year. I make selections at the fabric fair. Manufacturers from all over the world show their fabrics for Spring/ Summer, Autumn/Winter. I also look for the developing trends.

When I design a collection, I look at fabrics first, I'm not big into drawing. I rather drape fabric on the stand and see how proportions and shape look in a 3-D form. From that the collection comes to life. My colour story always comes very easy to me.

What do you think about your Studio/Boutique's location?

I'm thrilled with the location of my new Studio/Boutique. I'm opposite the Dunamais Theatre. I feel it's in a very creative area of Portlaoise. There are always lots of fabulous exhibitions on show, it creates a fantastic atmosphere and joins likeminded people.

My Studio/Boutique is very much my creative space. Designs are worked out in my studio and the finished product comes to life in my boutique's window display.

I think that it is very important that people buy Irish. But as a designer, it's my job to make sure the design and quality of the fabrics and price must be on level with international labels bought into Ireland,

Have you showed your creations in Portlaoise previously?

I was invited to take part in a fashion show in collaboration with The Dunamais which was a fantastic opportunity and I look forward to doing more work with them in future.

Coming down from Dublin was a big change, a big move, but since I've done it, it has opened so many doors. I realise there is so much happening particularly in Laois with fantastic opportunities with The Arts Office. There are so many events drawing creative people together. From this creativity, arts can only grow. I also have fantastic support from my Dublin customers. Laois is very central, only the hour from Dublin. My customers call in on their way down to Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, saying it is so easy to make their way into Portlaoise off all the main roads.

Heidi Higgins Studio/Boutique, 27 Church St Portlaoise

www.heidihiggins.com



Studio/Boutique Opening
Heidi Higgins and Laura Hyland



PRESIDENT PAINTS A POSITIVE PICTURE

President Mary McAleese was special guest of honour at the annual conference of the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers (ALAAO) at Dublin City Council's Civic Offices on Wood Quay in late 2009.

During her inaugural visit, President McAleese noted every city and county council played a frontline role in cultivating an embedded arts culture and in creating access to the arts. 'Arts officers are the hands and heads of that work. Your investment is what helps to give us a healthy, vibrant and resilient civic society', the President told conference delegates; adding, 'The world of arts is woven so tightly into everyday Irish life that it would be easy to take it for granted but on this day and in this company, I want to thank you for all you do to keep Ireland curious about the arts and confident in the arts, for making them the opposite of élitist and for bringing the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the arts into the lives of all our citizens.'

Rosaleen Molloy, out-going chairperson of the ALAAO, said the association was privileged to have had President McAleese as guest of honour for their 2009 conference, adding - 'Local authorities are central players in leading the development of the arts in Ireland and since the appointment of Ireland's first arts officer 25 years ago, the burgeoning of the arts across the country has been one of the most significant and successful measures integrated into local government in recent times'.

John Tierney, Dublin city manager, representative on the City & County Managers' Association (CCMA), remarked how the President's presence marked, 'a very proud, a very prestigious and a very pivotal moment in the history of Ireland's Local Authority Arts Services'.

The President's address brought, 'well-deserved recognition to the immensely challenging work of Arts Officers', and highlighted, 'the tremendously positive impact local authorities have had on the development of the Arts in Ireland over the past quarter of a century'.

Over the next few months, the Slieve Bloom Photography Club has arranged a full agenda of quality presentations and workshops. On April 28th, Michael McGrath, an experienced local photographer, will give a presentation on landscape photography in preparation for the club's workshop 'outing' to photograph the landscape of the Slieve Bloom on May 8th.

Slieve Bloom

On May 26th, Carolina Gustavsson, a Swedish-born photographer, based in Birr, and previously employed by the National Swedish Library as a historic photographer, will introduce the group to - 'The importance of preserving the present through photography'. Vintage cameras, supplied by Brendan Marsh will be displayed.

The club plans a workshop in Adobe Photoshop for beginners. Key speakers for future presentations include Paddy Phipps, a

Midland College of Photography

The arrival of relatively inexpensive but technically sophisticated digital SLR cameras has stimulated a huge renewal of interest in photography both as a hobby and as a means of creative expression.

This revival of interest in photography is evidenced by the number of new camera clubs being established in the region e.g. Athlone, Longford, Lanesborough and Boyle and the ever-increasing number of courses being offered in Digital Photography, Adobe Photoshop and associated subjects.

In response to this growing demand, County Longford VEC Adult Education Service, in partnership with Longford County Arts Office, has established the Midland College of Photography in Templemichael Community College, Longford.

Since the College's inception, FETAC courses have been delivered at Templemichael College in Film Photography and Digital Photography and students have been drawn from Longford and surrounding counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan and Westmeath. Examples of the portfolio of work

created by the students on FETAC courses 3 & 4 were presented at 'The Red Eye Photography Exhibition' that recently toured The Tuar Ard Gallery, Moate, the Atrium Gallery, Longford and Cavan County Museum, Ballyjamesduff. The Midland College of Photography's course offer has been expanded to include for beginners: Know Your Digital (Compact) Camera; an Introduction to Digital Photography; an Introduction to Adobe Photoshop; and for the more experienced photographers, we have re-structured the FETAC Level 5 Digital Photography into FETAC Level 5 Phase One which covers all of the substantive elements of the FETAC Syllabus followed by Phase Two which involves the compilation of a portfolio of photographs and detailed tuition in post-photography digital editing in preparation for adjudication and hopefully awarding of the FETAC Award. Keep a close eye on the College web-site for the announcement of some new and exciting courses.

According to County Arts Officer, Fergus Kennedy, 'The most appealing aspect of the establishment of the Midland College of Photography from the photographer/artist point of view is the flexibility of programming. Courses vary in length from a calendar year in the case of FETAC Level 5 Digital Photography, to six to eight weeks for Intermediate Level Courses to a weekend for Studio/Portrait Photography and Environmental Photography Workshops.'

While the Midland College of Photography offers a programme of core subjects, we are committed to being as flexible as possible in meeting the needs of midland photographers. We welcome programming or project proposals from interested members of the public and we look forward to working closely with photographers throughout the region.

Information on new courses and any future College developments can be found on www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie

Should you wish to discuss any of the information available on the website in greater detail, please contact: Longford County Arts Office (086)8517595 fkennedy@longfordcoco.ie

To book a place on any of our courses, please contact County Longford VEC Adult Education Office 043 33 45474



Mary Farrell, AEO, Co. Longford VEC and
Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer, Longford County Council.

Photography Club

photographic lecturer from the Midland School of Photography, and Tony Murphy, lecturer at Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology.

If you wish to join the **Slieve Bloom Photography Club**, e-mail slieverbloomphoto@gmail.com or ring 05793- 57400

slieverbloomphoto@gmail.com



Exhibition of Photography

by Brian Flanagan



Stradbally Hall: Land and Landscape
a photographic exhibition by Brian Flanagan

The Arts Office, Laois County Council are currently hosting a photographic exhibition by photographer, Brian Flanagan entitled, 'Stradbally Hall: Land and Landscape'. The exhibition was launched on Thursday, March 11th at Áras an Chontae by film and stage producer, Arthur Lappin. From an archive of over 1,500 photographs, the exhibition depicting Stradbally Hall Estate, is Brian's most ambitious project to date. There are framed photographs, slide shows and short video films.

The photographs are the painstaking result of waiting for long periods until the season, light, cloud and objects are illuminated ideally. 'The exhibition is in some ways about how photography and painting are connected', he says. 'When I first visited Stradbally Hall Estate, everything about it seemed natural. Looking more closely, the apparently natural land and trees were very specifically planned landscapes.'

Brian started his career in Architectural Photography in 1983. He worked as a lecturer throughout most of the 1990's at DIADT. In 2003, he concentrated on his own photographic and film work alongside large-scale collaborative commissions. He coordinated a broad range of film, photography and audio projects across the primary, post-primary, third-level, community and corporate sectors. These projects included artworks in film, documentary, photography, slideshow, and illustrated books.

For details contact: The Arts Office, Laois County Council, Áras an Chontae, Poraioise. Tel: 057 8674344 email: artsoff@laoiscoco.ie

WESTMEATH CULTURE Night 2010

Westmeath County Council hopes to organise an evening of entertainment, discovery and adventure in Westmeath as part of National Culture Night 2010 on Friday, September 24th 2010.

We ask arts and cultural organisations to open their doors for free events, tours, talks and performances for the people of Westmeath to enjoy as part of an overall county programme.

We hope Culture Night will be a platform to showcase the county's rich cultural offering and represent a powerful and positive image of the immense contribution culture can make to our society ultimately making the arts accessible to everyone - enthusiasts and novices alike.

With this in mind we are hosting our next two meetings in:

Mullingar Branch Library, **Mount Street, Mullingar**
on **Tuesday April 6th at 6pm.**

Athlone Branch Library, **Civic Offices, Athlone**
on **Thursday April 15th at 4pm**

At these meetings, we hope people involved in the arts can come together,

organise a variety of free activities for the people of Westmeath across artistic disciplines. You may already have an event around this time, or your group/organisation may plan to organise one for this specific night; maybe a: talk; lecture; exhibition; music performance; concert etc. We are also looking for venues to offer their premises free of charge for a variety of cultural events as part of the overall county programme.

We hope you or a group/organisation member will attend, so as we can begin to plan for Westmeath Culture night 2010. Please feel free to pass on this email to anyone who may be interested in coming along.

For further queries contact:
Westmeath County Council
Arts Office arts@westmeathcoco.ie

LONGFORD'S YOUNG SNAPPERS

Young people in Longford are taking to photography in greater numbers than ever before. Teenagers, rarely intimidated by technology to begin with, are exploring the creative, manual functions of their DSLR's to stunning effects.

The first structured steps in teaching photography to teenagers in Longford were taken by Árd Scoil Phádraigh in Granard when they applied for dormant account funding to fund the imaginative, 'Capturing the Community Through the Lens Project', and Exhibition.

This project was so successful, the school decided to programme photography as part of the visual arts syllabus of the Leaving Cert. Applied Course. Professional photographer, Luke Danniells takes the students for lessons in all aspects of applied photography. The student skill base is now developed to the point where they can begin to explore other aspect of multi-media arts such as animation.

Following the success of Árd Scoil Phádraig, Longford County Arts Office in 2009 secured Arts Council funding for a Photographer-in-Residence to work with young photographers

in Longford. and assess the relative levels of interest in photography among teenagers. Following a very successful residency by photographer, Luke Danniells, it was decided that a very significant proportion of Longford youth are interested in photography.

In 2010 Longford VEC and Longford County Council through the Midland College of Photography have put in place a comprehensive support structure for the development of youth photography by establishing a Camera Club in every secondary school in the county.

Professional photographer, Paddy Phipps is appointed to support the teachers and students. Each school is working towards their individual year-end exhibition. The young photographers are preparing portfolios for submission to the Longford Young Photographer of the Year Competition to be held in December 2010. Plans are being drawn-up to expand the Schools Photography Initiative to include primary schools and training and education centres outside the formal education structures.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VISUAL ARTISTS AS PART OF A PUBLIC ART COMMISSION – PER CENT FOR ART SCHEME FOR EMO

EMO NATIONAL SCHOOL, EMO, PORTLAOISE, CO. LAOIS

Emo National School under the Department of Education & Science, Per Cent for Art Scheme is delighted to announce details of an opportunity for visual artists as part of the Public Art Commission for the new school building at Emo, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Emo National School has one of the most beautiful natural settings with strong historical and heritage associations. This is a very exciting opportunity for a professional artist/s to work in this unique environment to create a permanent, visual artwork especially for the new school building and community in celebration of a new phase in the school's life. At this stage, Emo National School seeks submissions from professional visual artists.

The total fund is €16,000 to include all fees, costs, transport and installation. The commission will be awarded by a two-stage selection process. At the second stage, artists will be short-listed and invited to submit a detailed concept proposal for the final piece/artwork which Emo National School wish to have completed and installed for March 2011. The deadline for receipt of the expressions of interest is 12 noon, Monday, 26th April, 2010.

For full details, application form and artist's brief, please contact: The Secretary, Emo National School, Emo, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. **Tel:** 057-8646868 **E-mail:** secretary@emons.ie **Web:** www.emons.ie

THE FIREWORKS



Offaly artist, Caroline Conway recently completed a public art commission in Belfast. 'The Fireworks' is 6ft x 3ft and is one of 7 pieces for the Adolescent and Children's Units in Forster Green Hospital, Unit for Adolescent Mental Health.

Sculpture in the Parklands

Funding for an Arts

Sculpture in the Parklands has announced that it has recently received Heritage Council funding for an innovative project that explores boundaries between art, science and technology. Internationally renowned artist and scientist, Brandon Ballengee will deliver an education programme from July 19th to July 30th that will focus on the rich biodiversity of the Lough Boora Parklands.

The programme will include a week-long education programme for primary school children, one-day workshops for all ages and a series of lectures and night walks to discover the rich nocturnal biodiversity of the Boora Bogs.

During Brandon's residency, he will install a large canvas screen into the sculpture park, entitled *Love Motel for Insects*. The installation will use

ultraviolet lights on the enormous blank canvas to attract insects. This will create an opportunity for public interaction with nocturnal arthropods. At each site, the insects arrive onto the canvas to reproduce and create pheromone paintings!

The public will be invited to participate in night walks to the *Love Motel* installation and to hear talks by Brandon on nocturnal insects and the

rich insect biodiversity of the landscape. The last weekend of the residency will culminate with an *Insect Festival*, which will exhibit the artwork and documentation over the preceding two weeks. Legitimate Bodies Dance Company has been commissioned to create an original work to be performed at The Insect Festival. Performances take place on 31st July and 1st August, as well as an autumn presentation at The University of Limerick.

Kevin O'Dwyer, Project Manager at Sculpture in the Parklands states, 'This is the International Year of Biodiversity and I can't think of a better way to celebrate the year in the Sculpture Park. I hope that the public will support Brandon's programme so that we will be able to deliver additional education programmes in the future.'

I'd like to thank: the Heritage Council;

LONGFORD CAMERA CLUB

There has been a long tradition of photography in Longford with camera clubs in the town stretching back over a century. The past two years has seen an enormous renewal of interest in photography with the arrival of digital SLR cameras.

The digital revolution in photography has immediate effects locally; new people who were never involved in photography are drawn to the past-time, and those who have been involved for years in film photography, discover a renewed interest in the whole digital experience.

According to County Arts Officer, Fergus Kennedy, 'I have been involved in photography in Longford for over thirteen years and I have never before seen such a sudden surge of

interest in photography or, any other art form, as I have seen in the past two years.'

In response to this renewed interest in photography, we have established The Midland College of Photography in Templemichael College, Longford in partnership with County Longford VEC Adult Education Office. We delivered various courses in photography to capacity numbers since the beginning. We currently have waiting lists for most of our present courses.'

Fergus Kennedy points out that while photography is essentially a solitary activity, photographers enjoy the company of fellow enthusiasts in an informal club atmosphere where they can compare notes and information, organise small, regular competitions, workshops and guest lectures, and they can stage occasional exhibitions.

Another addition to the provision of supports for the development of photography in Longford has been the

receives Heritage Council Meets Science Project

Offaly County Council; Bird Watch Ireland; Bord na Móna and the Lough Boora Parklands Group for their enthusiasm and support for this project. The Sculpture Park continues with its mission to engage the public and celebrate our cultural and environmental heritage.' Sculpture in the Parklands will host a free public lecture: *Of Audacious Insects and Cryptic Amphibians: Experiencing the Biodiversity of the Bogs* by Brandon Ballengee at 7.30pm on April 29th in Teach Lea Community Hall, Lough Boora.

The primary school workshop will be limited to 20 students and will take place from July 19th to 23rd.

Further information will be available in April from Kevin O'Dwyer, Sculpture in the Parklands, Amanda Pedlow, Offaly Heritage Officer, and by visiting the Sculpture in the Parklands website www.sculptureintheparklands.com Booking places for workshop at info@sculptureintheparklands.com



establishment of a new Camera Club for Longford town. The Longford Camera Club meets at 8.00pm every second Tuesday evening, upstairs in the Market Bar, Ballymahon Street. It tries to be an informal meeting place for people of various levels of talent and experience in photography and to be a place where the less experienced and confident photographers benefit from the advice and encouragement of the more experienced members.

Meetings are usually organised on a themed basis and every week members bring in photographs taken on the weekly theme, the photographs are peer reviewed with the more experienced photographers gently directing and advising the beginners.

The club recognises the need for diversity of activities so they also organise exhibitions, the last being a Christmas retrospective of work done throughout 2009 which was very well attended. The Longford Camera Club programme a varied schedule of workshops, demonstrations and field trips, recent examples have been: a fascinating lecture on 'The

Exposure Triangle', given by the well-known lecturer and photographer, Tony Murphy and enthusiastically supported by Lanesborough Camera Club; a day-long master class in ambient/low-light photography again by Tony Murphy; a weekend-long Longford based demonstration on streetscape and picture composition and design given by Westmeath based photographer, Tim Durham.

The club is currently exploring a number of interesting activities such as summer photography weekends away, twinned relationships with other Camera Clubs as well as developing its programme of lectures, demonstrations and workshops. Longford Camera Club is always on the lookout for new members.

If you are interested, regardless of your level of experience drop a line to: club chairman Paddy Phipps at paddyhipps@yahoo.com club secretary Gertrude Malone at malonegertrude@eircom.net Longford County Arts Office at 086 8517595 or fkennedy@longofrdcoco.ie

PUBLIC ART

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL COMMISSIONS TWO NEW PIECES OF PUBLIC ART FOR MULLINGAR TOWN

The Silver Brosna/An Lámh Airgid by Ann Meldon Hugh

The sculpture "The Silver Brosna /An Lamh Airgid" is inspired by the history of Mullingar. The River Brosna which flows from Lough Owel through Mullingar, into Lough Ennell is frequently mentioned in stories. 'The Lake County', famous for its rivers and lakes, is the Brosna catchment area, and has lakes, a river and two canals. Mullingar, built on the Brosna, is named from a story about a mill on the river. The river, originally called the Silver Arm, was mentioned in the 11th century poem by Cuan O' Lotchain's list of the High King's seven privileges -

'Fish from the Boyne,
Deer from Lubrich,
Fruit from Manann,
Cresses from the river Brosna,'

The river was silvery bright and clean!
There were four mills on the Brosna.

The poet, O'Brennan says -

'Craftsmen skilled, and merchants good
Where gold and silver arms reaching
Ply their trade by Brosna's flood;
Vats for tanning, green for bleaching,'

Legend gives an account of Áth Féine (the warriors' ford)- a crossing place over the Brosna, the site of a battle in the Táin Bo Cuailgne. The Town Seal (13th century) has a representation of the Brosna flowing beneath a mill wheel.

The 'Sparkling Brosna' has been the "Silver Arm", but the river was an open sewer in later centuries until a sewerage system was introduced. The river, deepened, polluted, diverted, survives today listed as a course fishing river with rich limestone water, producing the finest fish! I propose to create a sculpture celebrating the Brosna, its natural beauty and importance in Mullingar's history.

The sculpture will be 8ft high and 3 1/2 ft wide, made in stainless steel and bronze. Depicting the flowing water of the Brosna with intertwining figures, fish, plants etc. the burnished stainless steel will give the shimmering silver impression of the water.

The bronze relief will be figures and plants. The three dimensional with lifesize sculptures on the back and front - some figures appearing to move between both sides as through the water - represents generations who lived on the Mullingar river-banks. The other side depicts the Bull and Warriors of the Táin Legend.

The burnished stainless steel will get a disc-grinded finish to achieve a three dimensional, holographic effect as one moves about the piece.

I am a sculptor living and working in Kells, Co.Meath. In recent years, my public sculptures include: 'Motte Gráinne Óg', outside Moate.

I look forward to making 'Silver Brosna', to depicting Mullingar's history in this way. I hope people who see it in the Town Park, will find it interesting and beautiful.'

See website www.annmeldonhugh.com



AMATEUR DRAMA Alive and Kicking in Tullamore



Directors Gay Veitch, David Fahy and Denise Keoghan.

Excitement, exhilaration, fear, terror, joy, sadness, frustration – all of the emotions that run through the mind and body of anyone contemplating walking into a room filled with strangers, let alone walk on stage! The truth is we all act as part of our everyday lives: chatting up someone; negotiating on a new car; or talking to someone you don't quite like but have to be civil to. Drama can help you with these everyday skills, help build your confidence with new people and situations, and help you to become happier in your own skin - as said by Sinéad Cusack - 'Acting is a shy person's revenge on the world'.

Tullamore Amateur Dramatic Society (TADS) are in the throes of rehearsals for their forthcoming production, themed 'A Night of Conversation' which features three set pieces – 'Two', by Jim Cartwright, and 'Between Mouthfuls', and 'A Talk in the Park', by Alan Ayckbourn. These productions are set to go on upstairs in Hugh Lynch's, Kilbride Street, Tullamore from 10th-13th May to co-inside with the Tullamore 'Phoenix Festival' and the 'Bealtaine Festival'. Local Drama often struggles to get people involved. TADS are not lacking spirit or enthusiasm as new and existing members ebb and flow through productions from year to year. What is lacking is a suitable home to establish a firm foundation to foster and develop a secure future for Drama in Tullamore. TADS still relies on people's goodwill and the power of a smile or wink and a nod, to make productions happen. But with the anticipation of an Arts Centre in Tullamore on the horizon, they will soon be able to focus more on the drama and less on constantly negotiating space and equipment.

To become involved contact Denise on 087-9183352; email: tads4all@gmail.com ; check out TADS Tullamore on Facebook.



Good Hatchery Celestial Salt

Celestial Salt is the latest series of artists' residencies at the Good Hatchery in Daingean, that is currently culminating in a publication. Six artists brought an art work, originally created for an art context to the rural surroundings of The Good Hatchery, an environment with no current infrastructure to support contemporary art.

Over the winter, this environment is characterised by: large expanses of frosty industrial bog; short hours of stark winter sunlight; challenging weather conditions; and few or no people exploring the out-of-doors. These attributes are rarely involved with outdoor group exhibition in Ireland. *Celestial Salt* was keen to experiment with this custom.

Artists: Mark Clare; Alex Conway; Anita Delaney; Doreen Kennedy; Barbara Knezevic; and Ben Mullen created installations around Daingean that included: a life-size replica of a wooden military watch tower; a flowerbed of photographs; weather balloons in the abandoned shell of Bord na Móna's briquette factory; and a currach, buried 5 feet beneath the turf at the foot of Croghan Hill, invisible ... but left awaiting future developments.

Each installed art work was teamed with a writer, asked to use it as seed to create a piece of writing. Writings and documentation of all works in *Celestial Salt* will be in a publication to be launched in Dublin in April. Writers include: Darren Barrett; Patrick Bresihan; Jenny Fitzgibbon; Claire Feeley; Paul Murnaghan; and Luke Sheehan.

BENEFITS OF THE LAOIS PATRONAGE AWARD

by recipient Astrid Walshe

It is hard to quantify how many positives came with being awarded the Laois Patronage Award. I moved to Laois in 2007 with the intention of leaving all my other professional identities behind and to focus full-time on being an artist.

Receiving the award was a huge sign for me that I was doing the right thing.

The award gave me the time and space to focus on creating a body of work. As part of this process, I worked with a dancer in Canada collecting footage which I developed into a body of work at home. The fact that I had some 'financial space' meant that my work could develop into different and unforeseen directions. The work's scope became much wider than what had been in the initial plan. The experience of buying equipment and materials freely cannot be taken for granted. I was able to purchase equipment which I had previously rented.

The Patronage Award also paved the way for new opportunities. Once artwork exists, it tends to take on a life of its own! Even the application process brought my work to the attention of others working in the arts. I had the opportunity to show work at the Electric Picnic in Stradbally. Also, since some of the work I created with the Patronage Award was shown in Abbeyleix, I was invited to take part in an event during Design Week in Dublin (which unfortunately I can't take part in). Receiving the Award also meant receiving publicity as I was introduced to the Midlands art world in an article in this magazine last year. Winning the Award brought my work to a whole new audience.

Since receiving the Laois Patronage Award, I have moved to County Cork. I can bring with me a body of new work with which to introduce myself to the Cork art world. I will also remain in close contact with the Laois and Kildare Arts Offices to hopefully build a long-term relationship.



What Do We Want? When Do We Want It?

The Source Arts Centre, Thurles has commissioned an original piece from Offaly based artist, Rowena Keaveny. Her exhibition title, *What Do We Want? When Do We Want It?* echoes the cry from picket lines, and as these become more familiar, her exhibition title is timely and provocative. Her vibrant, accessible work, is reminiscent of graphic novels, with figures proclaiming a rich, thought-provoking range of reflections on society today. Alongside hung work – large canvas-mounted digital prints of champions for: equality; freedom of speech; anti-corruption; and other burning issues – Rowena is creating a piece directly onto the walls of the gallery at The Source. Visitors can chat with Rowena while she paints. Comments written down by them, are hung on the wall beside the piece, and are often incorporated into her painting.

Rowena is a brave voice in a world increasingly suffocated by PC, conformity and outdated blasphemy laws. Her work is: bold; courageous; colourful; humorous; thought-provoking; energetic; and accomplished. This non-didactic exhibition, its visitor participatory space, is a celebration of the person on the street. The exhibition continues until April 24th www.thesourceartscentre.ie



The 'Wise Men and Women' of Longford Photography

Photography is a multi-dimensional art form. Granted, the one unifying element is the camera which is needed to capture all photographs, but apart from that one, photography shares all technical and creative diversity of elements of all the visual arts forms.

In recent years the application of digital technology to the art of photography has brought with it a plethora of additional technical elements and challenges from the wonderfully clever and sophisticated manual functions of the DSLR to the huge computing power and creative potential of Photoshop and other editing and graphic design programmes. Then the technical requirement of digital multimedia and internet modes of presentation and transfer of photographic images have to be tackled.

For these reasons it is extremely difficult today to structure educational courses

and to schedule programmes of developmental activity that provide adequate and comprehensive support and training for aspiring photographers often composed of a wide diversity of experience, talent and technical ability.

One of our responses to these multifactorial challenges is to establish a committee of, 'twelve wise men and women,' as we like to call them. This focus group of experienced photographers is drawn from a comprehensive spectrum of the visual arts including: professional visual artists; professional photographers; art and photography teachers; experienced amateur photographers; and arts and education administrators.

The purpose of the Longford Photography Focus Group is to advise the Midland College of Photography about

the type of courses that should be offered and the substantive content of all courses. The Focus Group members participate fully on course or sit in occasionally on particular courses, and advise us on how we should fine-tune course content and presentation. The Focus Group also advises the County Arts Office on such subject issues as topics for master classes, demonstrations and lectures; they help identify suitable facilitators and when necessary they lend a hand when physical effort is required to mount exhibitions and supervise fieldtrips.

Therefore both the managers of the Midland College of Photography and the Longford County Arts Officer would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the invaluable advice and support of our, 'twelve wise men and women.'

Laois - A Sense of Place, A Time of Christmas

On the 15th of December last, there was a night of celebration in Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, with the special guest of honour, Pat Moylan, Chairperson of the Arts Council, hosted by Muireann Ní Chonaill, attended by Gerry Maher, County Librarian. The occasion was to mark Ann Egan's residency as Laois Writer-in Residence with the commemoration of - 'Laois, A Sense of Place, A Time for Christmas'.

Mary O'Donnell, a former Writer-in-Residence, read from her new book, 'The Ark Builders'. Laois School of Music provided

seasonal music and song while participants from Adult and Young People's Workshops, given by Ann, read their stories and poems of their own place and of Christmas. Pat Moylan gave a memorable talk on the power of the sense of place, recalling especially the history and wonder of The Rock of Dunamais.

A magical night concluded with special thanks from Ann Egan to Muireann Ní Chonaill, Bridie Keenan, Nuala Kelly, The Arts Office and Laois County Council. Afterwards everyone enjoyed beautiful mince pies, cream and tea provided by Eunice Burns.

BELMONT MILL

and Artist Studios 2010

The Artists-in-Residence Bursary Programme at Belmont Mill will run from April to December with up to 8 artists availing of the unique studio spaces. Resident artists are encouraged to have 'open days' for the public to visit, and to visit local schools to share their experiences of Art at college, and being 'an artist in practice.' The Mill retains a great interest in the careers of artists, previously in residence. This summer a number of them are invited back to show their recent work.



It's festival, family fun again at

TULLAMORE'S PHOENIX FESTIVAL

which has brought its dates forward to May 7th to 10th.

A wide variety of activities include:

PARK ART; STREET ENTERTAINMENT; ANIMATION;
DANCE; FILM SHORTS; HOT AIR BALLOONS;
AND FIRE LANTERNS.

For a detailed programme see www.phoenixfestival.ie or email info@phoenixfestival.ie phone 057 - 9360900



Fiona Kelly, printmaker and sculptor (resident, 2007) completed her Masters at Crawford College in Cork. By adopting common-place objects to address social concerns, she creates humorous allegories - behind every object is a dream object.

Eoin O'Connell, photographer (resident, 2008) captured a diverse cross-section of the landscapes and people throughout the Midlands, revealing an interesting insight into the reality of a country undergoing major transition.

Sharon Morgan who works in pen and ink (resident, 2009) is bringing new work from her home town, Belfast.

In July, August and September, an Art Historian, in conjunction with the National Gallery of Ireland, will give three public lectures on the History of Art and Irish painters.

In September the Mill will host a talk by Alfio Bonnano about his work and in conjunction with his residency with, 'Sculpture in the Parklands' at Boora.

All events will be detailed on our website. For programme and applications' details see www.belmontmill.com

STREAM SPIRE

A Contemporary Sculpture for Mullingar Town

Westmeath Co. Council commissioned a major sculpture for Mullingar Town. This will be sited at the entrance to the Town Park on Austin Friar Street. The sculpture, 'Stream Spire', by Mayo visual artist, Cathal Mc Carthy, was selected following an open competition of more than 50 artists. Open to many visual interpretations and constructed entirely of a series of mirror-polished stainless steel spheres, the idea for the sculpture is that it will resemble a weightless ribbon of water mirroring the Brosna River, which runs nearby.

The sculpture also refers to a Joycean 'stream of consciousness', celebrating the literary flow that gave birth to, 'The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man'. Mullingar is famous worldwide for its rivers and lakes. This contemporary sculpture will create reflections in different scales, of the faces of modern Mullingar. This dynamic and interactive sculpture will create a unique landmark to enhance Mullingar's cultural and artistic heritage for generations to come. Designed to float in the air like a ribbon of water droplets, the sculpture will

appear to defy gravity. It will enhance the entrance of the town park, be a unique work of art, reflecting Mullingar's cultural heritage. The piece explores forms' fluidity and organic structures, particularly water. By its' vertical positioning of a stream, it explores boundaries between nature, art and architecture. This ambitious sculpture will successfully marry contemporary public art practice with state-of -the art engineering, and will become part of the town's aesthetic and cultural oeuvre. The material's reflective nature will provide



an interactive sense of play. A team of international engineers is undertaking the challenging structural design.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

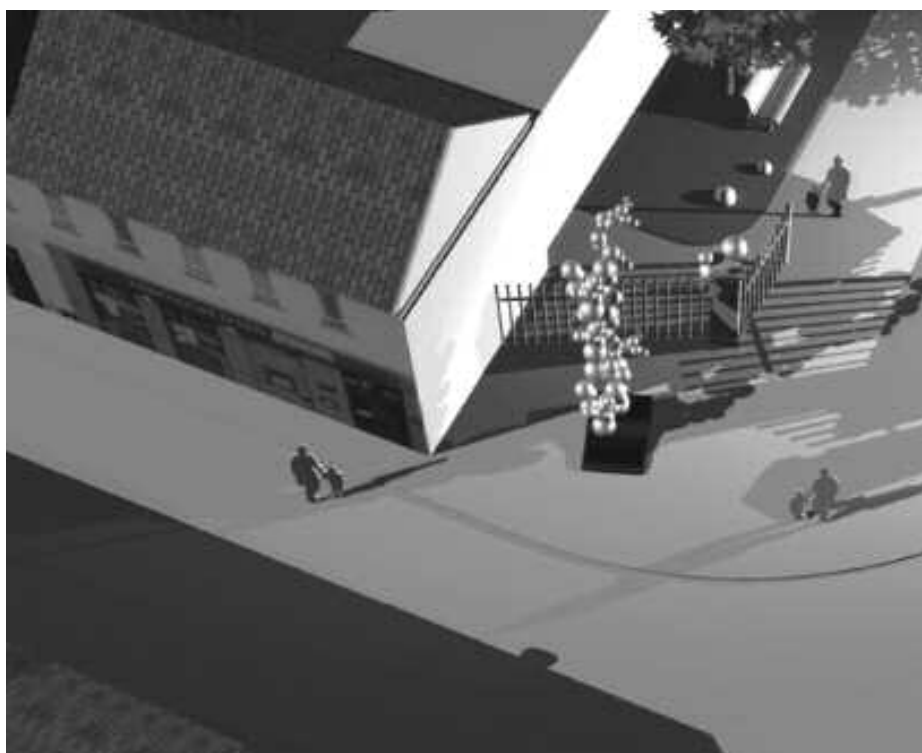
Cathal Mc Carthy, a visual artist from Ballintubber, created a number of public sculptures, is most well-known in Mayo for, 'The Player', a brightly-coloured, massive steel piece at Ballindine Village. His work explores gravity, balance, nature, form, colour and architecture. Working in a range of materials, his public art pieces have gained positive appeal over the years. He created Ireland's largest interactive musical sculpture for a Mayo school - 'Monk with Candles' - that featured 12 coloured chimes, and a 24-note xylophone.

A passionate artist with strong beliefs about creativity's value, he has made objects since youth. Connection with place is a continual theme in his work, which he sees as vital to the success of his public art projects.

His work, featured on RTE, TG4, was part of a radio documentary, 'Ray of Light', by Kay Sheehy. A largely self-taught sculptor, he worked with theatre and art companies in Ireland, England, France, including : Druid Theatre; Macnas; Horse and Bamboo, UK. His work is in international private collections.

He teaches art part-time to a group of learning disabled artists in Westport. For more information about art for people with learning disabilities see www.wordsaremyprisoner.com

Married with three children, he lives in Castlebar.





The Chapters at Castle Palooza 2008'

CASTLEPALOOZA

Castlepalooza is a two-day music and arts festival set in the historic Charleville Castle, Tullamore. This intimate festival, taking place on Saturday 31st July & Sunday 1st August, showcases a range of music styles from both Irish and international artists.

For 2010, Castlepalooza would like to extend their programme to bring in more: art exhibitions; installations; recitals; performances; workshops; and markets.

Castlepalooza is interested in hearing from artists across all art forms in the Midlands who would like to take part in this year's festival. Submissions are encouraged from people involved in outdoor art installations and interactive projects which would involve audience participation.

Please send a one page proposal, with supporting images and proposed budget to susanna@cherrycool.ie by Friday 23rd April 2010. Please put "Midlands Proposal" in the subject box.

Castlepalooza was shortlisted in the, 'Best European Festival', category at the UK Festival Awards 2008. See www.castlepalooza.com

Offaly Libraries Celebrate Bealtaine

TULLAMORE LIBRARY is hosting three events to celebrate Bealtaine: 'Timeless Classics Film Festival'; 'Table Quiz and Coffee Morning'; and 'Books and Biscuits'.

Contact 057- 9346832 for more information.

BIRR LIBRARY will host a 'Games Morning' - card games, scrabble and chess – on Tuesday 4th May 10.30am. The launch of the 'Senior Book Club' will take place on Wednesday 12th May 10.30am. The group will meet monthly to discuss books over tea and coffee. There will be guest speakers at the Thursday Club, and a visit by school choir and dancers from the Mercy Primary School.

Contact 057 - 9124950 for further information.

EDENDERRY LIBRARY will host an exhibition of photography called, 'Through a Swedish Lens', from the National Folklore Collection, UCD. The exhibition illustrates the work of 4 Swedish ethnologists who visited Ireland 1920-1950. The

exhibition will be launched by Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Archivist, UCD, Wednesday 19th May. It will be on view from Tuesday 18th May to Saturday 5th June.

There will also be a 'Meditative and Therapeutic Dance Session'; 'Reed Crafts' with Veronica Birmingham on Friday 14th May; and an exhibition to mark the 'Centenary Year of the Irish Country Women's Association'.

Contact 046 - 9731028 for further details.

CLARA LIBRARY will host a table quiz, coffee morning, and flowering arranging workshops.

For further details contact 057- 9331389.

DAINGEAN LIBRARY will host a photographic exhibition called, 'Memories of Daingean'.

For further details contact 057 9353005

KEN WARDROP

Award-winning Filmmaker

CONVERSES WITH ANN EGAN

Ken, your recent, prestigious award is - The World Cinema Cinematography Award for Documentaries, Sundance 2010 for your début feature documentary, 'His & Hers.' Will you tell me about the experience?

The Sundance Film Festival is the premiere North American Independent Film Festival, founded by Robert Redford. It was a huge honour for our little low-budget film, "His & Hers" to be selected for the prestigious festival in Park City, Utah. To my knowledge, "His & Hers" is the first Irish documentary to be afforded the opportunity. Our team of five travelled there. The film receives five public screenings and a 'Press & Industry' screening. Both important trade magazines, 'Variety' and 'Screen' gave it the thumbs up. The producer, Andrew Freedman was incredibly busy.

We were thrilled to pick up a gong for cinematography due to the fantastic work of cinematographers, Kate McCullough & Michael Lavelle. Kate received the, 'Michael Dwyer Discovery Award' at the Dublin International Film Festival, while the film got a Critic's Choice and Audience Award, and the IFTA Award for best documentary. Hopefully these accolades will help to attract audiences when the film goes on release this Summer.

You are the recipient of The Laois Patronage Award 2009, what part has this played in your filmmaking?

The Patronage Award allowed me the opportunity to develop my latest project, 'Return to Roscoff' - a short drama we shot at the end of 2009 on the ferry between Ringaskiddy Port, and Roscoff Port. It tells the story of a single mother trying to introduce her son to his father for the first time. My first time to direct a traditional drama, for this reason the Patronage Award was crucial, as I used the funds to find the appropriate cast, and develop the script in the appropriate manner to my abilities and the story. This project has proved an extremely valuable experience. I have gained a huge amount of experience and knowledge from directing a drama. It was an important steppingstone for me as I move forward in my career and direct my first feature-length fiction.

Will you talk about your filmmaking voice, its development in relation to your native Laois – Portarlinton, and around the Midlands where you made your film?

I've been shooting projects in and around my hometown of Portarlinton since I started making films in 2001. These short documentaries have usually featured my family. This tradition initially derived from a college project I was set in my first year in film school. I remembered advice where the filmmaker suggested that some of the best stories are to be found in our back gardens. He wanted us to explore what we knew best - our personal worlds. As I'm from a farming background, my back

garden happened to be a field. The film I made - 'Hen' - featured my family discussing the pros and cons of rearing hens. It proved successful, and was broadcast on television.

Since then I have developed stories and featured most of my family in my short films. I guess because I have both directed and edited these films, I have been able to create a particular style and continuity of storytelling.

I think it's very difficult to explain my particular filmmaking 'voice'. It's something filmmaker's should have instinctively. A lot comes down to the stories you tell - invariably informed by one's background, where one's from. I certainly have gravitated towards Laois and the Irish Midlands for my stories. I returned there to shoot, 'His & Hers', - a story of how women share their life's journey with men. I also used my Mum's life story as the narrative spine of the film. I chose the Midlands because it's where my Mum is from, but also they're people I like to think I relate to and understand. I hope the film demonstrates the remarkable strength of character and sense of wit I discovered from the women I met me on the project.

Where did the idea of, 'His & Hers', come from?

I'm not sure - I think it had something to do with me worrying about being single. All my friends were in long-term relationships, getting married and having kids. I never had the same burning desire to settle down and commit. So I thought it might be worth investigating why people chose to share life's journey with someone else. I might even learn something from it before it was too late.

I knew it was a universal theme and if I could present it in an original, more succinct manner, I could be onto something. The great thing about the final concept - it allowed me to create a film using small character vignettes - a genre I was very comfortable creating. The final film is, in many ways, 65 short films combining to tell one story.

What are your future projects?

The next project is a feature drama. I'm currently sitting on a train en route to Cork for the first open casting. We're hoping to discover some fresh new talents. It's provisionally titled, 'Probable Parent'. Of course I'll be shooting this in the Midlands. I'm thinking that Mountmellick could be the perfect spot. We'll also be casting in Portlaoise, so keep a look out for us!



Tiernan Dolan:

A UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPHY STORY

When Longford man, Tiernan Dolan first picked up a camera at the age of 19, little did he know that this small black box would open an amazing world of travel to him in later life.

From Honduras to war-torn Darfur, the GOAL photographer has seen sights in front of his lens that many of us can only dream about or have nightmares about.

Tiernan started taking photos for Maynooth magazine, Kairos. 'The editor, Mick Melvin, gave me a superduper camera – a Canon A1', he remembers.

Tiernan began organising local, fundraiser initiatives for GOAL. When Kairos finished up, he volunteered to take photographs for GOAL. 'I just wanted to get involved with them and I thought I could do it through photography. It was only about a four minute interview so they must have liked me.'



Darfur, '07



Uganda, '08, Aids Orphan



Afghanistan, A Future



Famine in Ethiopia

In 1993, Tiernan was sent to South Sudan where there was a brutal war. 'It blew my tiny little brain away.' The Longford teacher says: 'GOAL sent me there to take photos of the local people's situation to show to everyone back home but I saw children starving to death and nothing prepares you for that. My first reaction was to cry and then I realised I had to get on with it and capture it on film.'

The photos captured the attention of Longford people. Tiernan hosted annual exhibitions in the County Longford Library so people could see GOAL'S work.

One trip was not enough for Tiernan. 'John O'Shea, the CEO of GOAL told me I might be opening a door that I wouldn't be able to close but to be honest that door just blew off the hinges. I started taking around 2,000 photos per trip and I'd get them developed at home by Spectra, who kindly did them for free, and Hands in Mullingar who enlarged them for exhibitions.'

About five years ago, Tiernan embraced the digital era by purchasing a Canon 350d. However digitalisation didn't have a huge impact on his photography as the places he travels to are so remote that there is often no internet access. 'To be honest, it's not my priority because I'm an aid worker first and foremost when I'm there – I'm just one who happens to be carrying a camera.'

Tiernan's photos appeared on posters and brochures for GOAL and in several newspapers. He always asks himself - 'I wonder what happened to the person in the photo?' Although taking photos for GOAL has shown him horrific sights, he has no regrets: 'Photography has opened a lot of doors for me and I've met some amazing people through it. For me Patrick Kavangh explains it best, *You can celebrate the ordinary.*'



Gary Hoctor (Film Offaly & Hello Camera) with Paul Richards (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Staffordshire University) and James Fair (Hello Camera and Staffordshire University) at the announcement the university will back the 72 Hour Movie Project at Melbourne International Film Festival.

Hello Camera

A range of projects occupy Birr-based film production company - Hello Camera. James Fair and Birr man, Gary Hoctor attended the Chancellor's Forum at Staffordshire University. A major partnership was announced for the firm's 72 Hour Movie Project at this year's Melbourne International Film Festival.

The project is similar to one FilmOffaly sponsored two years ago at the Galway Film Fleádh. That project's success interested Melbourne Festival Organisers in 72hourmovie.com, guaranteeing the firm a prestigious slot in their 2010 programme. The festival, largest in the southern hemisphere, runs for over 2 weeks, screening hundreds of international films. 59 years old, it's Australia's oldest festival.

Gary and his team will travel to Melbourne in July. They will commence shooting 72 hours before the feature-length film will be screened on August 7th before a 400-strong audience.

Currently the firm are finishing a documentary following the life of the 92 year old maid, Nin. From Cavan but living in Meath for the past 75 odd years, the wily and redoubtable Nin is an inspiration to all; but the film also calls into question family relationships and responsibilities asking viewers questions about their own lives and achievements.

Check www.hellocamera.ie for further details.

See www.72hourmovie.com for further details or join their group on Facebook or follow 72hourmovie on Twitter.

Westmeath Artist David Dunne Exhibits First Solo Show

'Throughout my teens my childhood love affair with art continued and when it came to choosing a career path, it made perfect sense to study Architecture. However that was back in the day when the economy was booming, after graduating from college and securing over five years experience in architecture, the good times as we knew them had come to an end, as had my chosen career.

While seeking employment, I began to devote more time to my hobby. It soon became clear to me that my greatest disappointment to date, *my redundancy*, was in fact a blessing in disguise. This Ah-ha moment allowed me to entertain the dream of becoming a full-time artist.

Saint Stephen's Green artwork inspired me to move from pencil drawing to acrylics. I saw Irish caricaturist, Niall O'Loughlin's work there. A painting caricature of Colin Farrell grabbed my attention. I invested in paints, brushes and canvas board, got to work painting him. Not overly pleased with the results, I tore up the canvas board which I still regret.

I have grown up a lot since, not only has my passion for perfection grown but my appreciation for imperfection has too. I also discovered my preference for oil paints.

I will never see Art as a chore as long as I am involved with it. I will continue my quest to be the very best I can for as long as I can pick up a brush.

The Bad Art Gallery displayed my paintings, then the opportunity of having my own exhibition came to pass. I got started immediately.

For my first solo exhibition I wanted a strong theme. Inspiration came from my background - music, film and sport but mainly American-based icons. I linked this back to Ireland as the timing of my exhibition will be around St.Patrick's weekend. My theme came when I read an article about Bruce Springsteen's roots in Ireland, Westmeath specifically. I thought who else has Irish roots? Soon, I had a long list of Irish Americans whom I was keen to paint.



I found preparations demanding, daunting, challenging but for the most part, enjoyable. I learned not only more about the art of painting but also about myself in the process.

I look forward to my first solo show and have half-a-dozen portraits to complete. My total is - twenty four pieces 'exhibition worthy' for D Day 04th March 2010.

I wanted to connect Ireland with America by discovering American icons of yesterday and today, of Irish descent, and Irish people who made an impact in America. There were several inspirational figures from Film and Music in both over the last decades.

I constantly strive to improve my technique. As an artist, I want to create photo-realistic portraits emphasizing every detail. Losing myself in the detail is where my pleasure with the painting process lies - for example spending hour after hour painting Bruce Springsteen's hair. Inspiration is captured in a second but it takes days, weeks to create a detailed portrait.'

ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Dunne describes himself as a contemporary Irish realist portrait painter. Self-taught, he has been drawing since childhood. Over the last few years he has really started to concentrate on his preferred medium of oils.

His inspiration comes from music, film, sport and politics. His main influences are - American portrait artist, Chuck Close and German artist, Sebastian Kruger.



CONCERT

In association with
The Arts Office,
Laois County Council

XUEFEI YANG

Guitar (China)

AND

NATALIE CLEIN

Cello (UK)



TUESDAY 27 APR, PORTLAOISE

Emo Court, 8:00PM, €15 / €12

057 8663355 Booking Box Office

"She is a performer of such great magnetism that she sweeps her audiences along with her, so much so that it is almost a shock when she stops playing and you find yourself back in the real world once more."

The Oxford Times on Natalie Clein

"One of the most extraordinary instrumentalists in the world. Ms Yang plays her Spanish music, like her other music, fabulously; with sparkle, clarity and flair."

The New York Sun

This unmissable tour features two truly spell-binding performers. Natalie Clein's remarkable talent first came to the world's attention when, aged sixteen, she won the BBC's "Young Musician of the Year" award. Since then she has won a Classical Brit award and performed with many of the world's finest orchestras and chamber music ensembles. If her innate musicality and gorgeous tone weren't already leaving the critics breathless, she has been fearless in combining traditional repertoire with more experimental pieces.

Clein's pioneering spirit is more than matched by Xuefei Yang: first-ever guitarist in China to enter a music school or launch a professional career, and first to sign an international recording contract with EMI. Lauded for her "feisty virtuosity", light touch and precision, Yang gives a new meaning to the phrase "in demand" – in 2003 alone she performed 54 concerts for the "Night of the Proms" Tour, appearing in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany to a combined audience of over 800,000 people!



Harvest Moon, glass,
Deirdre Cairns

Edenderry Artists Collective

Artists in the Edenderry area joined forces to create a greater awareness of the diversity and quality of their work.

The latest in the series of exhibitions entitled, *The Waterside Exhibition* will be opened on April 3rd 2010 in 'The Eden Deli Café'.

Artists include: Angela Burns; Maura Fahy; Lorenza Mahon Burns; Anna Winarska; Deirdre Cairns; Emma Barone; Tara Barone; Richard Parish; Olive Cuskilly; Nora Duggan; and more. This is one of the many events being organised during, 'The Easter Festival,' in Edenderry.

For information, contact Niamh in 'The Eden Deli Café' on Ph. 04697-33994, or Deirdre Cairns on 086 -3671280.

Shannonside Camera Club

Shannonside Camera Club started on 24th March 2009. The stimulation to form the club came as a result of local camera classes held that Winter, jointly organised by ESB Lanesboro Retired Staff and Co. Longford VEC, Adult Education.

The first exhibition was the following April at Shannonside Heritage Country Market and included vintage cameras, and photographs taken by club members.

In July, the club held an exhibition at the Lough Ree Environmental Summer School. Each member submitted two to three photographs, amounting to 70. The exhibition was well received. The members were rightly proud of their first major exhibition. This year the Summer School's theme is, 'Energy', which takes place on the 8th to 11th July.

February had another exhibition of over 90 photographs for Adult Learners' Week, organised by Co. Longford VEC Community Education Facilitator, Mrs Mary Toher. There was a very positive response again.

The Club has 30 members. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month;



Horse at
Lanesborough
Fair

presentations on: portraiture; restoration of old photographs; picture mounting; studio photography.

Tony Murphy, university lecturer, photographer, gave a wonderful talk and demonstration of his photographs of landscapes, portraiture and animals. His website is: Tony Murphy Photography.

The Club plans a Field Trip to the west of Ireland this summer. Members look forward to the club's first outing.

Our internet site and club's focus is for: exchanging ideas; information; uploading member's photos; providing links to interesting photographic sites. Go to www.google.com - search for Shannonside Camera Club.

Happy snapping!

Legitimate Bodies News...

After working with Transition Year of Gallen Community School in Ferbane, Legitimate Bodies Dance Company are delighted to present a full production of, 'Romeo and Juliet' in dance/drama form. Directors, Cristina Goletti and Nick Bryson, worked with Macdara Deery on the script which included a huge input from the students. The performances were in Birr Theatre and Arts Centre, March 25th 1:30pm; March 26th 11:30am and 8:00pm.

In a new venture, Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and Legitimate Bodies Dance Company with the assistance of Rebecca Armstrong, will host 'You(th) Share' - a Youth Dance Platform for contemporary youth dance groups from around the country. This will take place on the evening of Saturday May 22nd, spotlighting Birr as a national centre for youth dance.

In June, Nick Bryson and Damian Punch will premiere their new Legitimate Bodies production for all the family - 'The Goldilocks Zone' at The Cork Midsummer Festival, before it features as a Culture Ireland supported dance-work at Dance Base, Edinburgh during Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



THE PAINTWORKS STUDIO!

The Paintworks Studio is the brainchild of Ronan Leavy, son of renowned Westmeath artist, Anna Marie Leavy. Opened two months, it is the first of its kind for Mullingar and the Midlands. Located on Mary Street, Mullingar, it has seen huge interest from customers including: craftspeople; budding artists; local businesses; school children and the general public all keen to experience this creative activity. Birthday parties are very popular with the younger clientele.

Visitors who choose functional pottery pieces, must have these pieces glazed and fired in one of two kilns. Pottery is fired to 1,000 degrees+. Acrylic paints are available for the *paint and go customer*. The paint dries within an hour and can be taken away. Although non-toxic, they are not food-safe but are safe to touch, and great for trinket boxes.

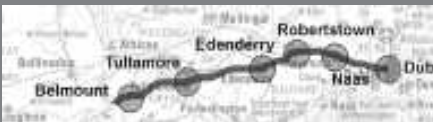
The Paintworks Studio introduced a PARTY BOX, ideal for anyone wishing to paint pottery elsewhere. After a brief demonstration, the box is stocked with materials including: paints; brushes;



sponges; colour wheel and the range of pre-selected pottery pieces. The Party Box can be returned 2-3 days later for the glazing process.

Slow Architecture Exhibition

The Slow Architecture Exhibition – *Public Voices* – will take place on a canal boat which will traverse the Grand Canal from Belmont in Offaly to the Grand Canal Dock in Dublin in September 2010.



The canal boat, donated by Waterways Ireland, will be fitted out at Tullamore Harbour during August. The exhibition involves 6 selected architects and artists, working in glass, metal, architectural drawings and models. One exhibition will involve communal participation in building the exhibit.

The proposed route follows the Grand Canal west to east, mooring at Belmont Mill, continuing via Tullamore to Edenderry to Robertstown to Naas, and finishing in Dublin at Grand Canal Dock. The journey is expected to take two weeks. The canal boat will stay in

each mooring for an opening celebration in early evening on the arrival day, and the following day for general public visits.

The opening night celebrations will engage with the exhibition through events including: lectures; talks; workshops; and interdisciplinary art events combining architecture with visual arts, literature, and music.

For information see www.slowarchitecture.ie



For schools - children are introduced to a creative activity using painting techniques and styles. Already Ronan is working with pupils in Crowenstown and Delvin National Schools, thanks to the support of the Arts Office, Westmeath County Council.

The Studio has other craft areas. Art classes by Anna Marie Leavy are enrolling for the second time. Easter Camps offer painting, knitting and paper crafts. There is a Kids' Club every Sunday from 2-4pm where young artists can unleash their creativity – as children must be supervised at all times - parents, guardians, older siblings are welcome to select pieces and paint along with them. Available membership includes a shop-special piece each month and no studio fee!

The Studio with a seating capacity for 35, is an ideal venue for: birthday parties; school tours; corporate outings; hen parties etc. The Studio is open 11am-6pm Tuesday-Saturday, Sunday 2-6pm – other times by appointment. Booking is not essential but recommended if you are taking a group of friends/ colleagues along.

For details contact Ronan at THE PAINTWORKS STUDIO on 044 9338735

LORG LUNNY ROBERT HARVEY

In October last year, Stirling Productions called me, asking if I would go to Limerick to play tunes for a new series for TG4, about young traditional musicians, hosted by Donal Lunny. I was unaware I was being interviewed for Donal's new band. I met Donal in Limerick, a week later in Dublin. He invited me to be the flute player in a new band.

Band members met for the first time last November. Stirling Productions were secretive, they wanted to capture our reactions on camera. We met Donal who outlined his ideas - to create a band of young traditional musicians from around the country, and to introduce a new percussion instrument - a Gradain into traditional Irish music.

The Gradain is a cross between a bodhrán and a drum kit. He had this idea since his Planxty days. Donal shortlisted a number of singers, looking for a new type of vocalist. The final two band members were introduced before Christmas. We were asked to keep quiet until television unveiled details. We worked on songs, tunes and arrangements during filming over a ten-day period. Donal Lunny remained in the background, allowing us to come up with our music, offering advice when needed. Other famous traditional musicians who offered assistance were Michael McGoldrick, Noel Eccles, Mel Mercier, and Paul Brady. Most of the music we played we composed, including one tune I composed. We performed the music in the Empire Hall, Belfast.

This concert will be the final show in the television series, but the band plans to stay together and record an album in April.

I undertook other endeavours this year. I graduated with a Bachelor in Music Education, Trinity College Dublin, and the Conservatory of Music and Drama, DIT where I am studying for a Masters in Music Performance. I was involved recording the Bravo CD for the Junior Certificate music textbook. I collaborated with DIT Traditional Ensemble and Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra in Savannah.

'Lorg Lunny,' runs for eight Wednesdays on TG4 until March 31st.

LONGFORD'S FUTURE PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY SUMMER CAMPS

One of the most enjoyable aspects of photography is strolling through the countryside, capturing the Irish landscape's beauty using your camera, your talent, your technical skills. Combine that with people's ever-growing environmental awareness, locate it in the beautiful midlands countryside and you have a guaranteed recipe for a wonderful experience.

This is what the Midland College of Photography proposes to provide this summer through our Environmental Photography Summer Camps. Each morning, students will leave by minibus from Templemichael College Longford, their destination - either the beautiful Derrycassin Woods near Granard - a typical midland raised bog or the Shannon Callows at Lanesborough Commons.

There they will be greeted by a local environmentalist who will talk about the unique landscape, flora and fauna they are about to photograph. They will be briefed by an experienced photographer on the techniques of landscape/environmental photography. Photographer and environmentalist will be on hand to advise the participants throughout the morning. In the afternoon, the participants will return to the Computer Suite in Templemichael College for some post-photography editing in Photoshop. Participants will be grouped according to age and photographic experience.

Bookings for The Environmental Photography Summer Camps will not be taken until later in the Spring. Please check the website; www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie for information on fees, booking procedure, etc.

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION SESSIONS

Photography is essentially a solitary pursuit, therefore one of the most difficult things for any photographer is to evaluate how well they are developing as photographers and how can they access information on career development opportunities, if that is indeed their ultimate ambition. Camera clubs and photography courses go some way towards addressing these needs, however as this is not their primary objective, they are ultimately inadequate in this area.

To attempt to address this gap in supports for the creative and professional development of photographers, the Midland College of Photography proposes to schedule a series of Portfolio Review Sessions. We will assemble a board of experienced, professional photographers to evaluate portfolios of work - submitted in advance by aspiring photographers - from a technical and creative point of view. Photographers will be given an allotted time to meet with the evaluator on a one-to-one basis where they will discuss the individual photographs and exchange professional development advice and information.

Bookings for Portfolio Evaluation Sessions will not be taken until later in the Spring, please check the website www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie for booking and all relevant information.

PHOTOGRAPHY MASTER CLASSES

For the past number of years, the four Midlands County Arts Offices have organised a series of annual Autumn Art Forms and Professional Development Master Classes. Photography has always featured in the County Longford master class programme. 2010 will be no exception, in fact the photography programme will be expanded to meet the increased demand of recent years. While the definite programme has not been completed yet, we are already in discussions with specialist photographers to provide workshops and demonstrations in studio and portrait photography, and the techniques of printing and presentation of work.

A full programme of master classes will be available during the Summer; bookings will be taken in September. Additional information will be available on www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie

Brendan Gleeson
on location in Offaly,
photo courtesy
of El Zorrero



Brendan Gleeson Shot in Offaly

Award winning, internationally renowned Irish actor, Brendan Gleeson was in Offaly recently to star in a short film. Written and directed by Domhnall Gleeson, (Brendan's son), starring Brian Gleeson, this became a family affair.

Shot on location over four days in and around Shannonbridge and Mucklagh, cast and crew didn't let the adverse weather best them. The production was helped greatly by the assistance and kindness of local communities. The film, produced by 'El Zorrero Film', included Ruairi O'Brien, director of photography and Nicola Moroney, art director. The film premieres in Tullamore later in the Spring, before being promoted at national and international film festivals.

The film was the recipient of the 2009 FilmOffaly and Filmbase Bursary, which was the first of its kind. The award's success encouraged the partner promoters to run the bursary again in 2010. Details of the 2010 bursary will be announced shortly.

See www.filmoffaly.ie for updates.

ALSO ON LOCATION IN OFFALY:

The Grave Diggers, written and directed by Offaly local, Colin Fox and shot on location in Leamonaghan, Offaly, is currently in post production. American director, Philip Marcus (who spent two years with the Jacques Cousteau research team and has won MTV video awards for groups such as Nirvana and BB King) was drafted in after the script won a Judges' Selection at the Las Vegas Short Scripts Award.

The Other Side of Sleep is an Irish Film Board funded feature drama, by award winning writer/directors, Rebecca Daly and Glen Montgomery. Produced by Fastnet Films, it is in pre-production in Tullamore and will be shot in various locations around the county later this Spring.

Turning Point, a short film written and directed by Offaly native, Alan Lawlor, is currently on location in North Offaly. It tells the story of family drama set in the current recessionary times.

Journey to the Louvre of Photography

I've had great photographic aspirations ever since I first got my hands on my mother's Kodak Brownie in the 1970's. Displeased with askew angles and chopped heads, I appointed myself family photographer at an early age. In my teens, I moved to London and took courses which led me into the fascinating world of the dark room. Last year, in the back room of a public house in Fisherstown, Co. Laois, I attended a VEC funded Digital Photography Course, tutored by Portlaoise photographer, Alan Keogh. This was the perfect opportunity for our class of thirty to update skills and learn the modern tricks of the trade, which in my case come in useful for my work as a travel writer.

On a recent assignment to 'Woodstock', home of the famous 1969 music festival, I visited the International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, a small and charming city, only a few hours drive from Niagara Falls. Considered the Louvre of photography, the Museum is housed in the former home of the inventor of Kodak. George Eastman bought his first camera to bring on holidays in 1878. Dissatisfied with the cumbersome apparatus of heavy glass plate negatives that had to be dipped

Margaret Scully

into silver nitrate and processed on the spot, he set out to simplify the process. Following experiments with cookie sheets in his mother's kitchen, Eastman invented the first rollable film in 1884.

By 1905, Eastman had invented the Kodak Brownie and fulfilled his wish 'to make photography an everyday affair and to make the camera as convenient as the pencil'. The word 'Kodak' was actually contrived by Eastman, who wanted a name for his new company which would sound good in any language. He also invented motion picture film for Thomas Edison. Becoming very wealthy in the process, the bank clerk who left school at thirteen, built himself a colonial mansion which houses the museum today. A tour of Eastman's house takes us into the personal quarters of the philanthropic man himself, who upon his death in 1932, left his entire fortune to the Rochester community to fund education, the arts, and expansion of medical services.

The museum's extensive collections include more than 400,000 photographic prints and negatives representing 14,000 photographers including Ansel Adams, Lewis Hine and Diane Arbus. Temperature controlled vaults house a huge collection of rare movie gems like the first feature length, 'Snow White' made in 1916. It also holds the personal film collections of Martin Scorsese. Films are screened in the Museum's - Dryden Theatre. More than 16,000 pieces of camera equipment are on display, including the first commercially manufactured camera

(1839). The Library contains more than 53,000 publications on cinema and photography. The Museum also runs a two years master's degree in film preservation with the University of Rochester.

Eastman Kodak headquarters are still in Rochester today and my guide tells me that the city is indebted to George Eastman. The drive between Woodstock and Rochester takes around five hours via the second largest wine producing region in the USA, the Finger Lakes. I stopped off in the pretty lakeside town of Skaneateles (pronounced Skinny Atlas) for a sip of local Riesling and a visit to the gallery of photographer, John Francis McCarthy. A regular visitor to Ireland, Sean O' Casey's words embellish McCarthy's photograph book - 'A Glimpse of Erin'. Upstate New York is steeped in art attractions. The Corning Museum of Glass is a mind and glassblowing experience with pieces dating back to ancient Egypt. The picturesque little town of Woodstock has been an arts colony since the early 1900's and the biggest kaleidoscope in the world is open for visits nearby. Meanwhile back in Fisherstown, a rural arts colony is sprouting away nicely in the back room of the Fisherman's Inn on the last Wednesday of each month. A field trip (everyone welcome) is planned for April and group exhibition for May 2010. Maybe one of these days I'll even get my mother down for a few lessons.

www.eastmanhouse.org
www.fingerlakesphotography.com
www.margaretscully.com
 Happy Snappers Camera Club
 0851655575



The Little Studio in a Courtyard Garden.

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre **EXPANDS**

Since opening our doors in July 2000, we have had over 100,000 patrons attend performances of: theatre; film; dance; comedy; music - classical, contemporary, folk, jazz - etc; 21 solo visual arts exhibitions, group exhibitions; showcasing the work of over 80 artists.

As we become busier, it becomes clearer our foyer area is inadequate. Consequently we propose to refurbish our existing foyer, currently including reception area, box office and toilet facilities.

Additional foyer space will have a multi-purpose function, offering our patrons a more enjoyable, comfortable theatre experience.

The extra space will facilitate much-needed visual arts space allowing artists (local and national) to realise their ambitions while giving the community an opportunity to extend their experiences of the Arts.

The Little Studio in a Courtyard Garden

by Rosalind Fanning

This year we celebrate the tenth year of opening. Beginning in November 2000, with a group exhibition entitled, 'The Presence of Light', many solo and group shows by regional artists and photographers followed. Lately, these are mostly concentrated at the Birr Vintage Week & Arts Festival. One may wonder if having a gallery and studio occasionally open to the public is the best occupation for a 'semi-introvert', but over the years, it has been rewarding to see a happy response to this attractive, adaptable place. As they duck through the small door in the big green gates and step into our courtyard garden, adults and children love the setting and calming, encouraging atmosphere. With thanks to Tadhg O'Crúadhlaich, we've recently entertained with Féile Gearrscannáin, (Irish Language Short Films Festival), the 5th at An Crúiscín Stán. Good attendance and great chat afterwards as *Gaeilge*.

The most popular studio's activities continue to be children's art and craft classes. Bernie's Autumn-to-Spring classes for 6-9 year olds, designed invitations for their St.Patrick's Day morning exhibition and sale (partly in aid of charity, but largely in aid of themselves!) A Tin Jug Studio perpetual calendar was commissioned from Stephan and Mandy Haller, featuring the children's artworks. During children's classes and workshops, humour; imagination; light-heartedness; originality; and using recycled materials are essential ingredients. But it has been said of the Summer workshops, 'the 'best part' is being allowed to flip the hamburgers, pick the herbs and make the salads for the barbecues - under very watchful supervision, of course! My husband Derek continues to make his woodcarvings, often sold in aid of charities. And as for myself, with mighty encouragement I'm at last carving out a small area of the upstairs studio, tucked behind a whimsical screen designed for my own imagination to flow into stories, designs and illustrations.

March/April	Kidzart Classes @TJS
May/June	Chocolate Saturdays' Two-hour creative workshops for children, teens and adults. (with irresistible, homemade chocolate treats) Life Drawing for Artists
June/July	Walking/Art Tuition weekends for tourists (in conjunction with Extreme Ireland).
August	Birr Vintage Week: Group Art Exhibition, 'Imagination Rules'. Children's Parade Costume Workshops Poetry Reading Environmental Film Screening 'Be A Passing Artist' Artists' Tea Party

For information see www.tinjugstudio.com

Passionfruit Theatre Athlone

Passionfruit Theatre is a community-based, intimate, 55 seated venue on Northgate Street, Athlone. All involved are volunteers. The late Dr. Joe Duce, local playwright, author, former teacher of St. Aloysius's College, founded it.

Passionfruit Theatre opened to the public in February 2008 with *A Pot of Broth*, by W.B. Yeats, and *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*, by Joe Duce. Since then, it has hosted a variety of drama, music and visual arts.

Many travelling theatre groups performed at Passionfruit Theatre including: *The Mend and Makedo* Theatre Co. with John McKenna; *Jasango* Theatre Co.; and *Gare St. Lazare Players* with Conor Lovett. Local playwrights staged their productions there including: Margaret McKenna Mullan with *Promises, Promises*; and Vernice Darnley with *The Pox Doctor's Clerk*.

Musical performances at Passionfruit Theatre include: Damien Dempey; John Spillane; Cathy Davey; Declan O'Rourke; Ronan O'Snodaigh; Steve Wickham; Freddie White; Eleanor McEvoy; Mick Flannery; Albert Niland; Paddy Keenan; Padraig Rynne.

Passionfruit Theatre is also committed to promoting lesser-known but equally talented artists: Eugene Donegan; Una MacLochlainn; Bill Coleman; Hickory Wind; Resurrection Fern.

Athlone artist, Miriam Walsh organised the First Art Exhibition at Passionfruit Theatre in 2009 which looked at developing opportunities for artists and creative professionals to make new work in response to a specific site.

Committed to Community Development, Passionfruit Theatre Co. runs free workshops for all ages. Galway-based pipe & bodhrán-maker, Michael Vignoles ran a beginners' bodhrán workshop. Galway's Talent Fusion held a Career Guidance workshop for students. The theatre hosts free Art workshops



for children; and provides free drama workshops each Saturday for 15-18 year olds, organised by Annemarie Hynes.

Passionfruit Theatre thrives on its 'open door' policy. Artists from every discipline are welcome. It welcomes more use by local schools, its setting is ideal for any school show, music recital or drama lesson.

The volunteers at Passionfruit Theatre are: Fiona Duce; Stephen Duce; Aoife Duce; Michael Cummins; Emma Lohan; Annemarie Hynes; Mary Hearty; Helge Wehder; Sandra Dowling; Brian Dolan; Eddie Keenan. New members are welcome.

Website www.passionfruittheatre.com for upcoming events.

A Shop Window IN BIRR

To be found in the window of a nameless shop, painted lime green and white, on the north side of Connaught Street, near the east end, in Birr, is an installation by artist, Lynne Hoare.

This artwork is an evolving work, inspired by architecture, environment and nature. The installation changes every few weeks and always carries through elements from the previous artwork, showing slight intentions for future installations.



BEALTAINE 2010 IN LAOIS

CELEBRATING CREATIVITY IN OLDER AGE

Laois County Council Arts Office has a programme of activities planned for hospitals, day care centres and active age groups in Laois during the month of May.

The Laois ICA Choir will entertain residents and out-patients in Abbeyleix District Hospital and Day Care Centre and St. Vincent's Hospital, Mountmellick.

The Carnation Theatre Company will perform for residents and outpatients in St. Vincent's Hospital, Mountmellick and in Abbeyleix District Hospital and Day Care Centre.

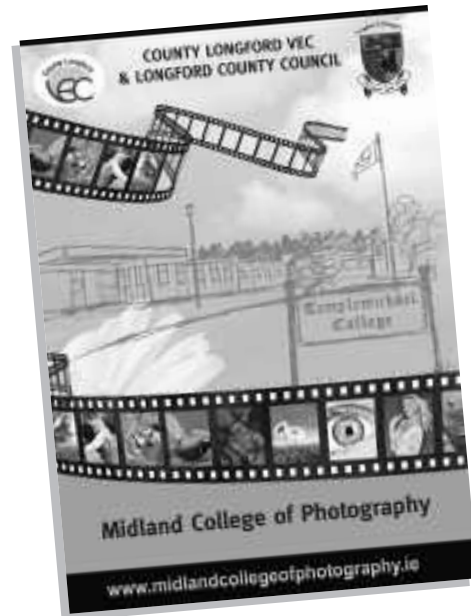
Celebrating Bealtaine with cherished poems written and remembered, Julie Duane, storyteller and drama tutor, will give basic tips on recitation and presentation for the 50+ Active Age Group in Portlaoise, Ballinakill Active Retirement Group and Mountmellick Active Retirement Group.

The Arts Office will also produce a brochure giving details of all other events happening in the county during the month of May for the Bealtaine Festival. We will launch this programme of events, celebrating creativity in older age in the Dunamais Arts Centre, Portlaoise on Tuesday 20th May @ 3pm followed by a Tea Dance, facilitated by Maureen Culleton.

All will be warmly welcome to the Dunamais for this special event, admission is free. Come join in the dancing or look on and enjoy the music and chat.

For further details contact The Arts Office, Laois County Council on 057 8674342/45

CALLING ALL EXPERIENCED PHOTOGRAPHERS



THE MIDLAND COLLEGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

is currently compiling a list of suitably qualified photography facilitators who are available to teach courses at various levels in digital photography and associated subjects.

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR EXPERIENCED
PHOTOGRAPHERS TO FACILITATE ENVIRONMENTAL/LANDSCAPE
PHOTOGRAPHY FIELD-TRIPS AND URBAN-BASED FIELD-WORK

THE MIDLAND COLLEGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

will programme a series of master classes, workshops, lectures and demonstrations in various aspects of photography throughout 2010.

We are seeking expressions of interest from experienced photographers and proposed topics for lectures and demonstrations in specific areas of photography.

Experienced photographers interested in working with us in any of the above areas should complete the application form available on: www.midlandcollegeofphotography.ie and e-mail the completed form along with the requisite number of examples of work to: fkennedy@longfordcoco.ie

SHOULD YOU WISH TO DISCUSS THIS,
CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN GREATER DETAIL,
PLEASE CONTACT LONGFORD COUNTY ARTS OFFICE

AT 086 8517595



SUMMER HAS ARRIVED IN PORTLAOISE

Summer has arrived at the Dunamaisé Arts Centre with its brand new, jam-packed line up of events creating sunshine over Portlaoise! The programme features everything from family events to movies, theatre, music and more.

Family events at the Dunamaisé this summer will feature a fabulous family show called, *Flea Circus* by Pignut Productions on June 12th, as well as our weekly, Saturday Treehouse Club for families and summer camps during the month of July.

Music at the Dunamaisé will include the inimitable Jimmy McCarthy on May 2nd and country music artist, Louise Morrissey supported by, Liam Cunningham and John Hogan on May 7th. Direct from London's West End, *Showstopper, The Improvised Musical*, can be seen on May 22nd and 8-string guitar player, Redmond O'Toole will perform a very special gig at Stradbally Hall on July 2nd.

The infamous Mick Lally and George McMahon (aka Mondo in Fair City) will co-star in, *God's Official* on June 3rd as part of the theatre programme at the Dunamaisé this summer. The Lyric Theatre will also present, *The Miser*, a tale of true love between a man and his money, on June 19th. Audiences will be in stitches on July 10th as the cast of, *Faulty Towers, the Dining Experience* serve up a 3 course meal in the theatre.

Dance will also feature on the summer calendar at the Dunamaisé. Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company will present their beautiful production of, *Madam Silk* on May 14th and Ballet Ireland will host their annual summer school at the arts centre, week commencing July 5th.

The now regular Dunamaisé, *Ladies' Night* will feature a hair and beauty event, followed by a fashion show, and a showing of the Oscar winning film, *Precious* and will take place on June 30th. A host of other films will be shown throughout the summer including, *Bright Star* and Tom Ford's, *A Single Man*.

Within the gallery at the Dunamaisé, Abbeyleix College of Further Education will present their Graduation Show from May 15th to June 23rd and the

Dunamaisé Open Submission, curated by Geraldine O'Neill will be exhibited from July 1st to August 16th.

To see full programme of summer events at the Dunamaisé see www.dunamaisé.ie or call the box office for a brochure on 057 8663355.



Contact Information

LAOIS

Muireann Ní Chonaill,
Arts Officer,
Laois County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Tel: 057 8674344

Fax: 057 8674382

email: artsoff@laoiscoco.ie

website: www.laois.ie

LONGFORD

Fergus Kennedy,
Arts Officer,

Longford County Council,
Co. Longford

Tel: 043 41124

email: fkennedy@longfordcoco.ie

OFFALY

Sinead O'Reilly,
Arts Officer,

Offaly County Council,
Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

email: artsoff@offalycoco.ie

website: www.offaly.ie

direct line: 057 9357400

fax: 057 9346868

WESTMEATH

Shane Brennan,
Arts Education Officer
for the Midlands Region,
Midland Arts, Old School House,
Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath.

Tel: 044-9379040

email: midlandarts@eircom.net

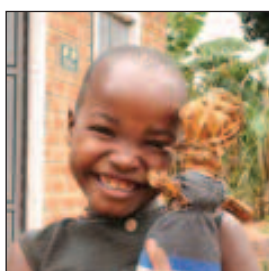
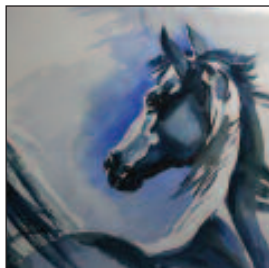
Catherine Kelly,
Arts Officer,
Westmeath County Council,
County Buildings,
Mullingar.

Tel: 044-9332140

email: ckelly@westmeathcoco.ie

www.westmeathcoco.ie

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Ann Egan



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Midlands College of Photography
by Green Bottle Design

Back Cover:

Horse in Wind
Watercolour by Siobhan Bulfin

The Chapters at Castlepalooza 2008

AIDS Orphan – Uganda
by Tiernan Dolan

midlands

artsandculturemagazine

a review of the arts in laois westmeath offaly and longford

