

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL'S MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION PURCHASING AND DONATIONS POLICY



20 turf footers, Shane Hynan 2021

Approved by
Local, Urban and Rural (LURD) Strategic Policy Group
Corporate Policy Group
September 2015

Review of Policy presented to Economic, Community & Cultural Development
Strategic Policy Group

February 2022

1. SETTING THE CONTEXT

1.1 *Why collect?*

Kildare County Council's Municipal Art Collection was established through the Architects Department in the 1970s, led by County Architect Niall Meagher. To enhance the collection, the county council availed of The Arts Council Joint Purchase Scheme¹, an incentive for the local authority to purchase contemporary artworks from emerging artists of the day, including Evie Hone, Patrick Pye, Patrick Collins, Charlie Brady, Seán McSweeney, Robert Ballagh, Norah McGuinness.

Kildare County Council established an Arts Service in 1999 which took on the Municipal Collection within its' Visual Arts remit. In 2005 a cleaning, restoration, cataloguing and valuation programme of the collection took place.

In 2015, a Municipal Art Purchasing Policy for Kildare County Council was approved by the Local, Urban and Rural (LURD) Strategic Policy Group and the Corporate Policy Group. The Purchasing Policy is further supported by arts and cultural strategies and policies.

In the guiding values set out in 'Short Grass Stories: An Arts Strategy for Kildare County Council 2018-2022'², we commit to

- Cultivating artistic excellence for artists, arts organisations and the wider arts sector.
- A belief that working in partnership supports cohesive and sustainable programming.
- Acknowledgment of the value of amateur and volunteer participation in the arts.
- Recognising the role of the arts in celebrating and interrogating a wide range of social and cultural traditions and values.
- A 'duty of care' towards the individuals and groups we engage with.

A strategic priority in the Strategy is 'Supporting the Artist and Developing Arts Infrastructure', in recognition of the vibrant community of professional artists living and working throughout the county, with diverse practice ranging from circus to digital media. Kildare County Council Arts Service is committed to supporting artists to develop their ideas and areas of work. Furthermore, it is our belief that supporting artists enriches public engagement in the arts.

Within this, the Arts Service supports exhibition, development and care of the Municipal Art Collection on behalf of the local authority. The Municipal Art Collection is a mechanism to generate critical debate on arts and culture.

2. A COLLECTION UNCOVERED

To increase public awareness about the collection, *A Collection Uncovered: selected works from the Municipal Collection* was exhibited in Riverbank Arts Centre in 2005. The exhibition

¹ <http://archivestories.artscouncil.ie/to-encourage-the-purchase-of-paintings-by-irish-artists/>

² <https://www.kildare.ie/ArtsService/PoliciesandPublications/KildareArtsStrategy.pdf>

was launched by Martin Gale, Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) (the Municipal Art Collection features two early paintings by Gale). Following on from the success of this exhibition *A Collection Becoming* was curated in 2006 and featured new acquisitions in the Municipal Art Collection, complementing the existing collection. Artist Paul McKinley curated both exhibitions. In 2008 significant funding was secured under the Development Contribution Scheme 2008-2010 for the purchase/commission of new artworks for the Municipal Art Collection.

In 2019, *Under stARTers Orders* took place, coinciding with the significant redevelopment of the Curragh Racecourse in the heart of county Kildare. Twenty-one artists from Kildare and beyond created bespoke artworks on life-size resin horses to mark this milestone, while also raising much needed funds for two important charities. Four horses from the project were acquired for Kildare's Municipal Collection.



In 2020, the exhibition *Glimpses of Escape: your monochrome, my technicolour* took place in Áras Chill Dara, Naas, County Kildare. The exhibition was curated by artist Vera McEvoy and the participants of the *Making Marks with Markievicz* project, who examined artworks by female artists in the Municipal Art Collection. As part of the project, the group selected two paintings for purchase for the Municipal Art Collection.

Glimpses of Escape: your monochrome, my technicolour

30th January - 8th March 2020
Áras Chill Dara, Naas, Co Kildare. W91 X77F

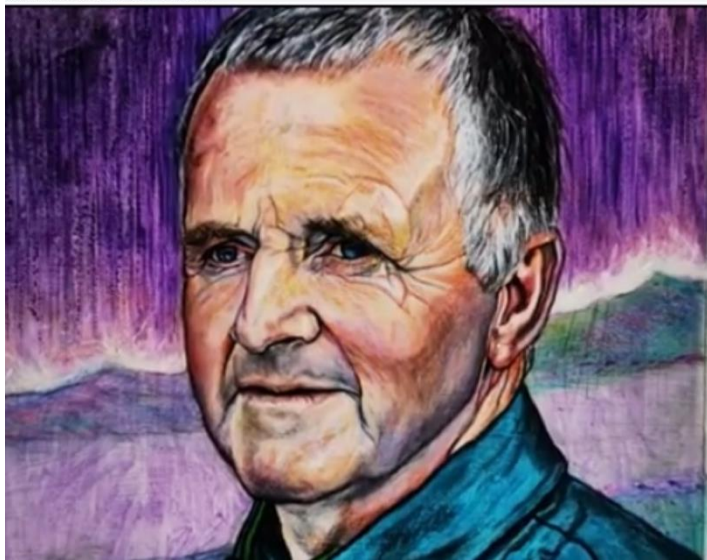


An exhibition of works by women artists from the
Kildare County Council Municipal Collection

Curated by Vera McEvoy
and the Making Marks with Markievicz group

Also in 2020, through the *Kildare Covid Heroes Portrait Project* Kildare County Council made a public call out for nominations of people who members of the public felt deserved to be recognised for their efforts to support others throughout the COVID19 pandemic. Ten local heroes were selected to have their portrait painted to become part of Kildare's Municipal Art Collection, including two postmen, a member of An Garda Síochána, health care workers and community volunteers. ³

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXEihBqMRgA>



Kildare Covid Hero Portrait: Postman John Doyle, painted by Paul Woods

3. COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

To date, the Municipal Art Collection consists mainly of small to medium scale two-dimensional work, both paintings and prints.

3.1 Landscape

Thematically, the paintings represent a broad interpretation of landscape, including two early works by Martin Gale *Watch Him Go* (1976) and a diptych *Cross Country* (1976); *The Country Road* (1963), oil on board by Patrick Collins and *Bavarian Landscape Polling* (c.1982), a diptych by Brian Bourke, a charming painting *Haycocks, Co Leitrim* (1976) by Charles Brady and a surreal acrylic-on-board snow scene entitled, *Rabbit, in Blessington Lake, Winter* (1979) by Trevor Geoghegan and *Sheltered Field*, by Seán McSweeney (1935-2018).

More contemporary landscapes in the collection are Seán Cotter's oil on canvas *Borderline Green Sky* (2002) and the photo realism in *Park Life*, oil on canvas by Paul McKinley.

A painting *Tory Harbour*, by Roy Rodgers, who was one of the Tory Island painters, is the only seascape in the collection.

3.2 Religion

Religious references feature in three works by Patrick Pye (1929 -2018), *The Agony in the Garden*, an ethereal pastel on board (1979), *Assumption II* a tempera on panel, and *Adoremus*, an etching. A gouache painting *Lazarus my brother* by Colm Lavelle (1932 -2019) is a more abstract religious work. Evie Hone's (1894 -1955) *Three Fishes* is a small stained-glass dating from the 1970's.

3.3 Political references

The print portfolio are largely abstract works from 1970s and 1980s and include some interesting political references, such as Michael Farrell's lithograph, *Storm in a Teacup* (1977) and Robert Ballagh's screen print *Liberty on the Barricades (Delacroix)* (1971).

3.4 Fine art prints

A 2005 acquisition, a series of 30 first edition prints, presented in a book, explores Indian and Irish mythology, entitled *Where Siva Meets Medb*, a project initiated by the Leinster Printmaking Studio, Clane, County Kildare. There are a wide range of other prints in the collection, mostly dating from the 1970s.

3.5 Abstract

The collection features a series of abstract paintings, created using oil on linen over board. by Paul Doran (2004). The artist used heavy layers of paint to build up the canvasses. The bright pink and red colours and abstract shapes create a fun feeling in the works.

Other abstract works include canvasses, encompassing found objects by Fergus Feehily *Book no4a* (2007) and *Sad Oval*, oil on MDF (2007).

The Collection also includes iconic screen prints on canvas by Patrick Scott *Source, Arcady III and Arcady IV* (1974).

3.6 Ornithology

Ornithology themes feature in a number of artworks in the Collection – a flock of gulls gather on a beach in Norah Mc Guinness (1901-980) *Morning Cry*, John Behan's bronze *Flight of Doves* and Sean Cotters' series of charcoal drawings.

3.7 Still life

The collection includes *A Still Life of a Mug and Eggs*, by Thomas Ryan (1929-2021) and *Tea Table* (1942), by Norah Mc Guinness. More recent examples of still life include *Blue French Chinoiserie* (2011) and *Redute Rose China* (2011), oil on canvas by Josephine Grant (b 1941).

Maud Cotter's *Objects in an act of survival* (2008), a sculptural work made from silicone, china tea sets and ceramic figurines could also be described as a still life, but quite literally, turning it on its head.



3.8 Arts movement influences and references

The influence of Post-Impressionist/Cubist movement are evident in Patrick Collins (1911-1994) atmospheric oil painting *Les Halles* (1963) and Norah McGuinness *Tea Table* (1942).

Provenance III (2005) by Laurence Riddell, a C-Type print mounted on Dibond arising from his residency in Kildangan Stud, in association with Riverbank Arts Centre pays homage to Thomas Stubbs.

3.9 Sculpture

The Collection also includes a number of small-scale sculptural artworks. In addition to the Collection, many large-scale artworks are commissioned through the Per Cent for Art and other funding schemes.

3.10 Photography

Some of the paintings in the Collection have a photorealism quality (Gale, McKinley, *Paddy in front of a Painting*, (c.1976). Shackleton Museum Athy currently houses a permanent collection of twenty black and white photographs by John Minihan, presented to 'the people of Athy' in 1996. Further works were purchased from Minihan, including a portrait of actor Mickey Rourke, holding a poster advertising an exhibition of photographs from Athy.



Kildare County Council purchased a series of photographs from Pamela de Brí. The series features twelve photographs, based in the abandoned and condemned sheds situated beside the Bus Éireann depot in Broadstone, Dublin. A film *Parallaxis*, 3.5mins looped, accompanies the photographs.

In 2021, two photographs *Aftermath of Bog Fire* and *20 Turf Footers* were purchased from local artist Shane Hynan. He was awarded the Emerging Visual Artist Bursary Award 2020 from Kildare County Council in association with Riverbank Arts Centre, for his photographic documentary work centred around local bogland.

3.11 Child-centred artworks

Artworks have been purchased/commissioned by Kildare County Council with specific locations in mind, usually libraries, and particularly library spaces for children. The concept of 'play' has influenced the selection of artworks, a good example being *Dreaming* (2005), a painting by Liza Kavanagh for Naas Library and *Carousel* (1990), three charcoal drawings by James Morrison (1954-2017). Liza Kavanagh was also commissioned to create a triptych for Athy Library *Townscape* (2011), based on workshops with children from Churchtown Primary School, responding to the architecture of Athy.

3.12 Multimedia

The collection features a number of significant multimedia works, including *Big Wheel* (2008), video projection & oil on aluminium, by Niamh O'Malley.

In 2008, Kildare County Council commissioned Pauline Keena to create a neon artwork entitled *Are You Sure You Had a Baby*, which was a departure for the collection in terms of media and content.

3.13 Acquisitions to support Kildare artists

As well as grant aid, advice and information, Kildare County Council can support the work of local artists through the direct purchase of artworks. Sarah Browne, an artist from Maynooth represented Ireland in the 2009 Venice Biennale. Kildare County Council purchased the entire Venice works 'Carpet for the Irish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale' (2009), which also included a black and white silent 16mm film work and framed drawings. The work is currently on display in Maynooth University, where it is on long-term loan.

4. IDENTIFYING GAPS IN THE MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

While reviewing the content of the Municipal Art Collection, a number of gaps in the collection emerged. To extend the repertoire of the Collection, new acquisitions should include

- Contemporary Visual Arts practice, including new media and new technologies.
- Portraiture.
- Revisiting artists whose early work feature in the collection and who have since gained a reputation in the arts world.
- Artworks from significant artists from County Kildare.

With cognisance for Kildare County Council's Integration Strategy 2021-2026⁴ and the Arts Council's⁵ Cultural Diversity and the Arts Policy and Strategy, it is intended to prioritise acquisitions that represent the lived experience of all citizens of County Kildare.

5. SOURCING WORK FOR KILDARE'S MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Acquisitions for Kildare County Council's Municipal Art Collection has and will continue to be sourced from artists in three categories:

- Professional Visual Artists
- Emerging Visual Artists
- Artists from Diverse Backgrounds

5.1 Professional Visual Artists

Within this sector, acquisitions will be made from artists falling within the categories:

- Professional Irish artists, born or living in Ireland, North and South
- Professional Visual Artists from, or living in Co Kildare and its environs
- Artists whose early/ previous work already features in the Municipal Art Collection

For the purposes of this policy, the criteria for 'professional' artists, is any artist who fulfils three or more of the professional status criteria listed below, as defined by Visual Arts Ireland.

- Degree or Diploma from a recognised third level institution
- One-person show (including time-based events) in a recognised gallery or exhibition space
- Participation in an exhibition/visual art event which was selected by a jury in which professional artists or recognised curators participated
- Work has been purchased by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client

⁴ <https://www.countykildarelp.ie/kildare-integration-strategy-2021/>

⁵ [Microsoft Word - Final CD Policy and Strategy Aug2010 OM \(artscouncil.ie\)](#)

- Work has been commissioned by Government, local authority, museum or corporate client
- Has been awarded a bursary, residency, materials grant or otherwise grant aided by the Arts Council, Arts Council of Northern Ireland or other funding body
- Has been awarded tax-exempt status by the Revenue Commissioners, or are on schedule D as a self-employed artist in Northern Ireland

5.2 Emerging Artists

Emerging artists who do not yet fulfil the criteria for professional status, but whose work is deemed of significance to Kildare County Council's Municipal Art Collection, including recent Fine Art graduates and including emerging artists from, or living in County Kildare.

5.3 Artists from Diverse Backgrounds

Kildare County Council is committed to ensuring that the Municipal Art Collection better represents contemporary Irish society and will actively seek out artwork from artists from diverse backgrounds, with priority given to artists from new communities.

This policy will take into account the grounds for discrimination in legislation. In acquiring new work, the Selection Panel will seek to ensure that the Collection includes artists from all areas of the community regardless of gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community, or socio-economic background.

6. Artworks will be acquired through a variety of procurement processes. These include:

- Direct Invitation or Purchase
- Limited Competition
- Open competitionⁱ
- Community Engagement in selecting Artworks

6.1 Direct Invitation or Purchase

The Municipal Art Selection Panel may directly appoint an artist to a commission. Where it is felt, after a period of research and discussion, that an artist's practice or work is absolutely and exclusively appropriate to the aims and objectives of the commission, the Municipal Art Selection Panel, working with curators or advisors where required, can appoint an artist directly to a commission or to work with a given budget.

Work can also be directly purchased from an artist or their agent. When using this option, selection should be made on the basis of as comprehensive as possible a survey of what is available.

6.2 Limited Competition

For commissions or opportunities of a very exacting nature, the route of drawing up a shortlist of suitable artists is carefully researched and drawn up by the Municipal Art Selection Panel. The option is also available to commissioners to assign a single selector with specialist artistic expertise to shortlist and appoint artists to work on commissions.

Through a limited competition process, artists carry out research and development and are given adequate time to prepare and submit their proposal.

Shortlisted artists are paid a fee to develop ideas for selection and payment is made to each submitting artist. This is useful whereby the commissioning body, through the research and advice of the Municipal Art Selection Panel, wants to work with a particular type of art or

artist. While this process can work very well, it is worth pointing out that the fee paid to the artist, at this stage, is not likely to be sufficient to enable the artist to guarantee the budgets or technical specifications he/she/they are proposing. Developmental projects may also require time for discussion, collaboration or negotiation with a local community in order to establish the direction or context of the project.

6.3 Open Competition

There are a variety of ways by which artists can be recruited through open submission competition through public advertisement:

6.3.1 A combination of slides and CV submitted alongside drawings and/or maquette, outline project ideas and costings, all sought from the onset.

With this method of procurement, it is very important to allow sufficient time for artists to negotiate the place and people with which the project will engage. This may include research, site visits and liaison time.

6.3.2 Competition on the basis of previous work.

The submission of slides, catalogues, published material, videos, CDs etc. along with the artist's current CV to an expert selection panel.

6.3.3 Open Anonymous Competition.

This model aims to ensure that emerging or unknown artists have a chance to be appointed for commissions. A detailed commission brief is drawn up and distributed and artists respond by submitting actual proposals. The Selection Panel does not have access to supporting material on the artist, and the decision to select is made on the basis of the quality of the idea presented and the execution of the submission.

In the case of each of the above methods, a shortlist may be drawn up and a fee paid to the shortlisted artists to undertake further research and development and develop proposals before a final selection is made.

6.4 Community Engagement in selecting Artworks

Following on from success of the *Making Marks with Markievicz* project where a facilitating artist and community group recommended the purchase of two artworks for the Municipal Art Collection, and the *Kildare Covid Hero Project* where local heroes were nominated to have their portrait painted for inclusion in the Collection, it is intended to further develop mechanisms for individuals and communities from county Kildare to actively engage with the acquisition of new artworks.

6. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection committee will consist of the Chairperson of the Strategic Policy Committee for Local Community and Culture, County Librarian, County Arts Officer, a representative from Finance Department and an independent artist.

7. MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION EDUCATION PROGRAMME

A web-based listing of each work in the Municipal Collection has been created that contextualises each work, in social history, but also in terms of arts movements or influences. While the information is aimed at second and third level Visual Art students, it should have broad appeal.

The content and presentation will be reviewed with the redevelopment of the Arts Service website in 2022.

In 2020, artist Vera Mc Evoy was nominated by Kildare County Council to participate training in dementia-inclusive visual arts programming (Azure) led by Age and Opportunity, supported by the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), Butler Gallery and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. This led to the *Making MAC* project (2021), funded by Creative Ireland, to enable McEvoy to deliver online workshops with residents of nursing homes to explore, discuss and question artworks from the Kildare County Council Municipal Art Collection, through gentle but structured conversation, during Covid19 restrictions. It is hoped to offer in-person workshops in the future.



Image: Blue French Chinoiserie (2011) by Josephine Grant

Making MAC Project

Celebrating Creativity in Older Age 2021

Are you, or your group, interested in looking at and chatting about art?

Sit back, relax and enjoy artworks from Kildare County Council's Municipal Art Collection with Vera McEvoy.

Online via Zoom. No previous art experience required. Free of charge. Contact Vera 086 2584367 or email: veramcevoy@gmail.com

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Creativity in Older Age

Claí Eilec tSánuach
Creative Ireland Programme
2017-2022

8. LENDING POLICY

From time to time, Kildare County Council will augment its Collection by the inclusion of artworks on loan from other organisations or individuals. Council is committed to providing suitable conditions for artworks on loan during transportation, storage and display.

By request, Kildare County Council may make artworks available on loan to other organisations. Details on a loan agreement will be agreed in advance by both parties. Since 2012, twelve watercolour paintings of local scenes from County Kildare by Josephine Hardiman are on long-term loan to Naas General Hospital. The paintings were originally commissioned as a series of images for a commemorative Millennium calendar.

9. DONATIONS POLICY

In order to maintain standards within the overall Municipal Art Collection, artworks that are submitted for donation to the Collection should be subject to the same assessment as artwork examined with a view to purchase.

10. SCHEDULE OF ARTWORKS

Kildare County Council will maintain an up-to-date schedule of artworks in its Collection.

11. MAINTENANCE OF ARTWORKS

Kildare County Council is committed to the ongoing maintenance - preservation, cleaning and restoration - of the Municipal Collection.

12. SECURITY

One of the intentions of the Municipal Art Collection is that it will be on display for the enjoyment of the general public. Notwithstanding this, every precaution should be taken to ensure the artworks safety. Where possible, artworks will be displayed in highly visible areas. In some instances, highly valuable works, or works of particular significance, will only displayed in restricted areas, or may be displayed from time to time, when the security can be guaranteed.

13. INSURANCE SCHEDULE

Each artwork is included in Kildare County Council's insurance schedule. The artworks will be revalued at appropriate times by professionals in this field.

14. REVIEW OF POLICY

Following 3 years of operation, a review of the policy will be brought to the Strategic Policy Committee for consideration (2025).

ⁱ The Office of Public Works, Public Art Per Cent for Art Scheme, General National Guidelines 2004