

Artist Biographies

Helen O'Leary attended the National College of Art and Design, Dublin (BA) and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (BFA, MFA). She has been honoured with la Prix de Rome, American Academy in Rome, John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship; two Pollock-Krasner awards; and the Joan Mitchell Award for painting and sculpture. Solo exhibitions include Lesley Heller Gallery, New York; The MAC, Belfast; Limerick City Gallery of Art. O'Leary is represented by Lesley Heller Gallery, New York. She lives in Jersey City, New Jersey and Leitrim.

Mary McIntyre was born in Northern Ireland, where she lives and works. She graduated from the University of Ulster, Belfast (MFA), where she is now a Reader in Fine Art. Her work was exhibited in *The Nature of Things: Artists from Northern Ireland*, Northern Ireland's first presentation at the Venice Biennale in 2005. Exhibitions include Visual, Carlow; The MAC, Belfast; Belfast Exposed Gallery; Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin; Helsinki Photography Biennial; The Courtauld Institute, London.

Born in Belfast, **Susan MacWilliam** represented Northern Ireland at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. She has been honoured with the Perspective 03 prize at Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast and was recently awarded first prize in the 2017 EIKON Award (45+) accompanied by an exhibition at Künstlerhaus 1050, Vienna. She has had solo exhibitions in Ireland, the UK, Europe, the USA and Canada. MacWilliam is represented by CONNERSMITH, Washington, DC. She is a lecturer in Fine Art at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Barbara Knezevic lives and works in Dublin. She attended Sydney College of the Arts (BA) and the National College of Art and Design, Dublin (MFA). Recent exhibitions include Oonagh Young Gallery, Dublin; The MAC, Belfast; Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin; EKKM, Tallinn; Gallery Augusta, Helsinki; Solstice Arts Centre, Navan; Tulca Festival of Visual Art, Galway; HIAP, Helsinki; The LAB, Dublin City Council; Project Arts Centre, Dublin; EVA International, Limerick.

Hennessy Art Fund for IMMA Collection

IMMA wishes to thank the artists Barbara Knezevic, Susan MacWilliam, Mary McIntyre and Helen O'Leary.

We wish to thank invited curator Hugh Mulholland (Senior Curator, The MAC, Belfast) and representative of IMMA Acquisition Committee, Clíodhna Shaffrey (Director, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin) for collaborating with the IMMA Collections team to select the 2018 Hennessy Art Fund for IMMA Collection works.

We would like to recognise Hennessy's vision in providing this essential fund, and to thank Hennessy Ireland and everyone at Edward Dillon Co. in particular Elaine Cullen and Andy O'Hara, and Vincent Borjon-Prive, Moët Hennessy.

We are grateful to Lesley Heller of Lesley Heller Gallery, New York and Leigh Conner, CONNERSMITH, Washington, DC.

We would also like to thank our invaluable IMMA members and patrons.

Have a question about an artwork? Want to know more? Ask a member of our Visitor Engagement Team, easily identifiable through their blue lanyards.

IMMA
MAIN GALLERIES - EAST WING
11 MAY – 16 SEPTEMBER 2018

Hennessy Art Fund for IMMA Collection 2018



Exhibition kindly supported by:



Front cover:
Barbara Knezevic
The Last Thing on Earth (detail), 2016
Sculptural arrangement
Dimensions variable
Image courtesy of the artist

ÁRAS NUA-EALAÍNE
NA hÉIREANN
IRISH MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART

Ospidéal Rioga
Cill Mhaighneán
Baile Átha Cliath 8
D08 FW31, Éire

Royal Hospital
Kilmainham
Dublin 8
D08 FW31, Ireland

+353 1 612 9900
imma.ie / info@imma.ie



IMMA presents the third annual exhibition of artworks purchased for the IMMA Collection with the Hennessy Art Fund. We are delighted to announce that the four artists whose works have been selected this year are Barbara Knezevic, Susan MacWilliam, Mary McIntyre and Helen O’Leary.

In 2016, Hennessy formed a unique partnership with IMMA to help fund the purchase for the Collection of important works by artists based in Ireland and Irish artists living abroad. Works are sought that show excellence and innovation within contemporary art developments, and which represent a moment of achievement within the artist’s practice. The pieces considered must have been made in the past five years and the artists must not already be represented within the Collection.

To date, the Hennessy Art Fund has enabled IMMA to purchase the work of twelve artists. In addition to the 2018 selection, works by Kevin Atherton, David Beattie, Rhona Byrne, Mark Garry, Maireád McClean, Dennis McNulty, Ciarán Murphy and Yuri Pattison have joined the Collection through this essential fund.

Elaine Cullen, Market Development Manager for Moët Hennessy Ireland, said: “Hennessy is long dedicated to discovering and nurturing gifted Irish talent, be it in literature through the Hennessy Literary Awards, contemporary music and culture at the Hennessy Lost Fridays immersive multi-media events, and through the Hennessy Art Fund for IMMA Collection to purchase important works by Irish artists for the National Collection. It is a privilege for us to enable the acquisition of these deserving works.”

The selection was made by a panel including invited curator Hugh Mulholland (Senior Curator, The MAC, Belfast), Clíodhna Shaffrey (Director, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin and IMMA Acquisition Committee member) and Christina Kennedy (Senior Curator, Head of Collections, IMMA), assisted by Claire Walsh (Assistant Curator, Collections, IMMA).

Room 1

Helen O’Leary, *Refusal* (2014) and *The Problem with Adjectives* (2017)

O’Leary’s work draws on her personal experiences past and present. The intricate wooden objects she creates may be considered as fragments of an unfinished memoir. Growing up on a farm in rural Wexford in the 1960s through the 1980s, she cites the industriousness and invention born of need, that she experienced from a young age, as traits that carry through to her artistic practice now; “I revel in the history of painting, its rules, its beauty, its techniques, but fold them back into the agricultural language I grew up with. I’m interested in the personal, my own story, and the history of storytelling.”

In the studio, O’Leary repurposes wood from previous constructions that have been dismantled, knitting pieces of wood together and working into them until a final form takes hold. She describes the frame-like structures produced from this process, such as *Refusal* and *The Problem with Adjectives*, as paintings that can stand by themselves, that have their own architecture. In a recent interview with maake magazine, the artist described

the process of making *Refusal*; “I was thinking about defeat and its opposite, seeing the dissembled emptied frame as a marker, somewhere in between losing and gaining.”

Room 2

Mary McIntyre, *The Path to the Distribution Point of Light* (2015)

McIntyre is interested in drawing relationships between the spaces she depicts in her photographic images and the gallery spaces these images inhabit. For this installation, *The Path to the Distribution Point of Light*, she has constructed a low platform, in the form of a shallow ramp that spills out from the corner of the room. The stage-like structure introduces a sense of heightened theatricality as you are invited to walk across it to view the photograph on the wall.

The photograph depicts the corner of an empty studio in an art school following the frenetic activity of end of year student exhibitions. The transition from the mess and clutter of those studios during term-time to their quietude in the summer period creates an impression of stillness that resonates in this image. Through the interaction between photographic and installation elements, this work highlights different physical and psychological states that may be experienced by the viewer; between the ‘interiority’ of individually contemplating the image and the ‘exteriority’ of heightened self-awareness as your footsteps register acoustically on the wooden platform.

Room 3

Susan MacWilliam, *Pull Down* (2016)

Conjuring up the dark spaces of the séance room, *Pull Down* intimately observes the repeated collapsing and slumping of a girl (the artist) through the viewing lens of a camera. This silent video continues MacWilliam’s exploration of the phenomena of spiritualism. It draws attention to the mechanics of looking and recording and to the role of the camera as the observer of the spirit medium within historic psychical research studies (the study of paranomal, especially parapsychological, phenomena).

MacWilliam works with video, photography and installation, investigating obscure and overlooked histories and cases of perceptual (interpreted through the senses) and paranormal phenomena. She has worked closely with prominent parapsychologists, psychical research institutes and historical archives as both an observer and a participant. Her interests lie in exploring activities and experiences that exist at the peripheries of conventional fields of science and psychology.

Room 4

Barbara Knezevic, *The Last Thing on Earth* (2016)

When it was first exhibited at The MAC, Belfast in 2016, this work was framed by the proposition: “What if this is the last thing, the final material to be pulled out of the ground, the final piece of stuff that has not already been purposed by humans?” The ‘thing’ referred to here is the multi-faceted marble object at

the centre of the work, around which a constellation of other objects are arranged. Enlisted to draw our attention to and act in service of the marble form, these ‘secondary’ objects (spotlight, photographic backdrop, Perspex plinths and other items) physically dominate the space in their excessive framing of the ‘thing’.

The geometric form of this marble object is inspired by the mysterious three-dimensional shape known as ‘Dürer’s solid’ that appears in artist Albrecht Dürer’s 1514 engraving, *Melencolia*, and has been the subject of much scholarly analysis and speculation about its meaning. Knezevic’s artworks describe the peculiar human relationship to the things around us, particularly to art-objects, and hint at the essential unknowability of matter.