

Selected works from the UCC Art Collection

Large print text

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The University College Cork art collection focuses on modern and contemporary Irish art. Artworks are sited throughout the campus to provide staff, students and visitors with a first-hand encounter with original works of art. This display invites you to consider the diversity of Irish art practice that exists within the collection, and the ways in which art connects to the Glucksman's priority thematic areas of

health and wellbeing, climate action and social justice.

Many of the artworks have been commissioned or acquired for the collection as part of the Glucksman's Art Library initiative, which provides short term loans of original art to community spaces across the island of Ireland. These collection works tour to rural schools, hospitals, libraries and temporary accommodation centres to provide meaningful encounters with art for people who do not

ordinarily or easily access galleries and museums.

You can find out more about the artists and artworks represented in the UCC art collection online at www.glucksman.org/collection.

The UCC Art Collection and the Art Library initiative is supported by University College Cork, the Arts Council of Ireland and private philanthropy through Cork University Foundation.

Seiko Hayase

Emotion Kinship – Bloom, 2026

Perspex, nuts, bolts, acrylic paint

Emotion Kinship - Spiral, 2026

Perspex, mirror, nuts, bolts, scratch, acrylic paint, gold wax

University College Cork Art Collection

Emotion Kinship- Spiral and Emotion Kinship - Bloom are a response to the lived experience of neurodivergent students and staff at University College Cork. The collaborative commission took place in Spring 2026 in

partnership with UCC Student Health. The artist researched the supports available to the neurodivergent community on campus, and with curator Meadhbh Healy, devised creative activities that enabled neurodivergent participants and their allies to express their own views and ideas.

The layered Perspex shapes suggest the overlapping biological and systemic challenges encountered by neurodivergent individuals in the wider world. The translucent surfaces are etched with drawings and handwritten notes

reflecting looping thoughts and inner monologues.

Seiko Hayase's practice explores themes of memory, perception, and the sometimes overflowing emotions of the everyday experience. Working across sculpture, painting and drawing, Hayase creates compositions that balance delicacy and structure often combining colours with layered surfaces and gestural mark-making.

Kathy Tynan

Spring painter, 2024

Fresh concrete, 2024

Oil on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

In *Spring Painter*, a young boy is framed against a graffiti strewn backdrop as his small dog forages around beside him. It is an everyday scene that suspends in time a moment that might otherwise be overlooked.

The smoking cartoon face and the pink paint sprayed outline of a large fox on the wall behind emphasise the youth and innocence of the human child and his pet.

In *Fresh Concrete* a toddler is poised to jump forward onto the sidewalk with the support of a mindful adult. The composition positions this leap centrally: the horizontal bands of sky, sea, wall and path are cut vertically by a crack in the concrete just at the boy's foot, emphasising what is likely a momentous step in his young life.

Both paintings are from a collection of works called *Meantime*, a title partly borrowed from the 1983 film of the same name by Tynan's favourite director, Mike Leigh. It is also a reflection on a question posed by Tynan's son when he was three years old. Waiting for friends to arrive at a holiday cottage in Wexford, while his mother stacked fire-logs and patted radiators to see if the heating was coming on, her son asked: 'Is it the meantime?'. The scenes depicted in this series take place in the meantime. While far more significant events take place in the wider world,

for the artist, a child grows and a terrier ages
within a familiar landscape.

Leanne McDonagh

Pavee Presence, 2020

Digital print

University College Cork Art Collection

Pavee Presence is a photographic work by artist Leanne McDonagh that captures a Traveller's stall at a horse fair using slow exposure to capture the movement, energy and vivid tones of the scene. The explosion of bright colours mixed with blurred figures and

objects creates a sense of a joyful, fleeting movement. It is in stark contrast with the predominantly black and white documentary representations of Traveller children that historically circulated in the media.

Leanne McDonagh is a Traveller woman currently living in Cork who represents and records her community through her art practice. She is the fifth of ten children and grew up a halting site, with first-hand experience of the prejudices and misconceptions that society has about

Travellers. McDonagh' recording of these moments throughout her practice preserves aspects of Traveller culture that are often misrepresented and overlooked in society, creating works that are both personal and politically resonant.

Samir Mahmood

Disassociation, 2024

Untitled, 2024

Mixed media on Wasli paper

University College Cork Art Collection

Samir Mahmood's work specifically questions whether the experience of art is relatable to the spiritual encounter, while infusing traditional Sufi and Christian symbology with a queer sensibility. In his Indo-Persian miniature style

works, he uses techniques which evolved from manuscript illumination in the 11th to 13th centuries to explore themes of transformation, transcendence and queer existence.

For Mahmood, these works “highlight our humanness and other-worldliness, as an attempt to ‘queer’ the grammar of patriarchal society.” In overlaying scenes redolent of traditional Mughal and Raj-era paintings with his own personal symbology, the iconography of one culture transitions into a new one.

Stephen Doyle

The Blue Landscape, 2021

Oil on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

Tones of Prussian blue dominate the streetscape in Stephen Doyle's painting which combines urban and rural scenes from Cork city and county. To the right are civic buildings, street furniture and people heading about their daily business. The left seems to be a vacant lot with a prominent fence or hoarding leading to a dense woodland beyond. White cloud

formations suggest gusty movement in the skies above while the large paving slabs in the foreground have bursts of colour that echo those in the LGBT+ rainbow flag, evoking the significance of Grand Parade, an important thoroughfare in the city that annually hosts the Cork Pride festival.

The Blue Landscape is a reflection on life as an LGBT+ person in Ireland and is informed by the thoughts and commentary that emerged among a group of LGBT+ participants in the Glucksman's Intersections project in 2021. Participants engaged in creative activities

including collage, photography and cyanotype, which helped provide the inspiration for the aesthetic of the commissioned artwork. The colour blue suggests both sadness and hope; despair at the binary, constructed ideologies used to police issues around sexuality and gender, but also blue sky thinking and optimism for change.

Fiona Kelly

No Such Thing as Away # 1 (Dug, formed, fired, used, discarded) 2023

Plastic, dust, glass, wire, bell jar, reconstituted concrete, bitumen screen print, salvaged shipping crate

University College Cork Art Collection

Fiona Kelly makes artworks with the aid of her foraged, ever-expanding archive of waste, transforming discarded material into precious objects. As well as sculpture, she works in video and printmaking. Her imagery is often

deliberately fragmented; the rural spliced by the industrial, and points to the fragility and tenacity of nature within large-scale construction projects.

Her works capture the rapid change that has happened in Ireland since the late 1990s, in which rural environments have become endangered through major infrastructure developments. Kelly invites us to reflect on the ongoing impact of the environmental crisis in the world around us, finding beauty in small spaces and gestures, seeding hope for a more ecologically balanced future.

Aoife Barrett

What use are you if not to be gathered, 2019

Relief print

University College Cork Art Collection

Multiple bodies curl and fall through space in repeated poses that are both acrobatic and defensive. The figures seem caught in a perpetual swirling motion, tumbling around each other within a square form, an assemblage of shapes and shadows plunged into a shared descent. The title of the print suggests the power of coming together, even

in moments of severe distress or crisis, as well as to the value of gathering human lives and experiences in art.

In her professional practice, Aoife Barrett operates a travelling print studio to enable creative participation in places of work, care, learning and play. This participatory engagement focuses on the power of community, creativity and arts and health. She collaborates with hospitals, charities, councils, community-minded groups, arts organisations and other artists, helping people to express

their thoughts and feelings by co-creating artworks.

Alice Maher

Drawing from the Thicket, 1990

Mixed media on paper

University College Cork Art Collection

This large charcoal drawing depicts the gaucheness of a child in her ill-fitting dress, uneasy in her developing body. She tears a handful of plant stalks from the ground, awkwardly knocking over the milking stool. As she steadies herself with her right hand, she

catches sight of her reflection in a pool, her long cascading hair shielding her face from the viewer. Semi-erased sketches are still partially visible in the background of the final image and convey a strong sense of motion, as well as suggesting the fading presence of childhood memories. The delicate use of red papier chine collage adds drama and emotion to the girl's movement, highlighting her anger, frustration and enthralled fascination with the transformations taking place inside her.

The drawing is part of a series of eight works by Alice Maher exploring the theme of childhood and the onset of adolescence. *The Thicket* series focuses on a young girl's discovery of the world and draws inspiration from fairytales and folklore as well as the artist's experience of growing up in rural Ireland. Maher emphasises the significance of imaginative tales in country life, where 'every stone had a story, and if it didn't, you made them up'

Amanda Coogan

Caught in the Furze, 2025

Pen and ink on paper

University College Cork Art Collection

This series of seven drawings by Amanda Coogan features dark, inky figures in various states of motion. Some appear restful while others suggest scrubbing, whipping, or falling actions. The drawings were created to denote the sequence of movement enacted in the

performance work, *Caught in the Furze*, commissioned in 2025 by Cork Midsummer in partnership with the Glucksman.

Caught in the Furze builds upon Coogan's exploration of history, folklore, and myth and her research into narratives of women on the island of Ireland. The performance, and the drawings, gesture to the Wrens of the Curragh, a community of women ostracised from society who lived in the furze bushes outside Kildare in the 19th century, surviving through shared resources, communal childrearing, and sex

work with soldiers from the Curragh military camp.

Amanda Coogan works in live art, performance, photography, and video. Irish Sign Language, her first language, deeply informs her practice. Through her body and collaborative acts, she explores gender inequality, human rights, and otherness, challenging social and political structures.

Hughie O'Donoghue

Knocknalower: Hill of the Lepers, 2001

Oil on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

Knocknalower was acquired when Professor Enda McDonagh (1930-2021), official chaplain to Mary Robinson while she was President of Ireland, was Chairperson of UCC's Governing Body. McDonagh had a keen interest in art and wrote about the work: "The subject of this painting is a hill in the Erris region near where

'Donoghue's mother was born and where he spent his summer holidays in his youth. His many paintings based in this area do not compare in volume with the war paintings based on his father's stories, letters, documents and photographs or with his massive series on the Passion of Christ. Yet there are multiple connections and cross-references in line and colour, in shape and texture between these three distinctive sets of paintings.

The connections lie buried in myth and memory, in the painterly hand and mind of

O'Donoghue himself. - In Knocknalower as in other works, he is revisiting childhood memory and myth of a neighbouring hill, so-called because it was either believed to have therapeutic properties for the sick or acted as a place of isolation for them. The picture is dominated by the elongated dead figure resting in the earth signalling the death of the local people and echoing the melancholia which his mother suffered in her enforced departure from Erris to Manchester. The visual connections with the Crucified are strong and the deaths of

his father and the unknown soldier in World War II cannot be far from hand."

Miriam O'Connor

Will you be an agent for change?, 2023

archival pigment prints

Small-scale studies for brighter futures, 2023

permanent marker on archival tracing paper

University College Cork Art Collection

These photographs were created through a collaborative commission with students from Cork University Business School that focused on the economics of sustainable growth. There are four different images of the same Irish yew tree located on the UCC campus, and colourful

tracings made by the artist of the outline of the treetop from scaled down versions of the photographs.

Suggesting links to the four business quarters of the year, the tracings mimic candlestick charts, key analytical markers associated with business for assessing the attitude, mood, and actions of marketplace traders. The Yew tree is traditionally revered for its medicinal and spiritual qualities, yet can be toxic to humans and animals alike. The artist and the students were concerned with symbolising individual resistance and taking action as a tool towards

a fairer society. The artist has stipulated that the order of the four tree photographs should change when significant world events arise, indicated the inherent instability of our natural world as well as financial markets.

What event might prompt you to change the order of the trees in this artwork?

Caitriona Leahy

Critical Zone: Bog Study I, II, III, 2020

Silver gelatin prints on resin-coated paper

University College Cork Art Collection

This triptych explores the degraded peat bogs of the Irish Midlands using a technological aerial view. Leahy first surveyed the geographical area using analogue photography. Through a process of tearing, folding and splicing the resulting negatives into complex collages, she creates new photographic images that reflect the diverse

histories and meanings contained in our peatlands.

Not unlike the bog landscape itself, which is like a mesh of tightly woven fabric, the collaged artwork is composed of assorted information and sediments such as the residue of the Leahy's own fingerprints.

This pictorial density of different layers recalls the geological strata of the actual bog landscapes and their critical role in storing carbon and improving biodiversity.

What elements would you combine in a collage to capture the diversity of the Irish landscape?

Vanessa Donoso López

Second portrait of an archaeological site, 2022

Acrylic on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

In this brightly coloured painting of jewel-like rock shards, the artist suggests the findings of an archaeological dig. There are outlines where vessel artefacts may have been, suggesting that this irradant collection of minerals is what has been left behind, calling

in to play what we might treasure in any excavation.

Vanessa Donoso López works across a variety of media, frequently creating installations from hand-made objects that explore contemporary migrant life. The artist herself lives between Barcelona and Dublin, and her practice considers how humanity traces itself across different sites, the rooting and uprooting of people, what we take with us and what we must leave behind, especially if that migration is forced. She invites us to consider the beauty

and portability of the most humble materials,
collecting vibrant stones together into a
precious assemblage of hues and forms,
shaped by human intentionality.

Sonia Shiel

Blinds Fall, 2015

Oil on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

Sonia Shiel's paintings often take the shape of terrains, portals, and props. *Blinds Fall* presents a stage-like setting, framed by pastel pink columns and a horizontal guardrail lined with miniature trees. A dimly perceptible figure occupies a window in the background, while an

amorphous cloud hovers overhead. The composition presents a series of nested tableaux, frames within frames which challenge ideas of perspectival distance.

Shiel's practice often assembles references from art history and contemporary culture to explore notions of the sublime. Through fey and menacing romantic imagery, her practice attempts to represent internalised collective fantasies and their associated anxieties. As Mary Cremin has observed in an essay on Sheil's work, "the exploration of the

carnavalesque and supernatural takes us to Sheil's underworld. It is reminiscent of the lines from Edgar Allan Poe's poem The Raven – 'Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before'."

Diana Copperwhite

Paler Prisms, 2019 *Optica*, 2025

Oil on canvas

University College Cork Art Collection

The artworks *Paler Prisms* and *Optica* are typical of Diana Copperwhite's practice – featuring the complex layering of paint in her signature luminous and high- keyed colour palette. In *Paler Prisms* a vertical composition is amassed with soft undertones and loosely rendered shapes that hover between

abstraction and representation. *Optica* similarly pushes past the abstract to an almost psychedelic construction of landscape. Her paintings are simultaneously dream-like and scientific, suggesting realities that exist beyond the world we perceive around us.

Diana Copperwhite builds up dense layers of paint before subtracting or covering them over and employs a wet-on-wet technique allowing for the fluid manipulation of surface to achieve the sense of hidden imagery in the work. Her process is highly physical and often very large-

scale requiring immense energy. She often works from a “base skeleton” of ideas that are collaged of her own photography, internet images, and sketches. Her paintings explore memory and the ephemeral nature of perception, often featuring fleeting, spectral figures that emerge and disappear.