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**South East Technological University
School of Art and Design, Wexford**

**BA Hons Art Degree Show
14 May - 30 May 2026**

Halo

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Introduction

As Lecturing Staff, we would like to congratulate this year's students and wish them every success on their journey to becoming artists.

This degree exhibition marks the impressive culmination of four years of hard work and commitment.

The students have demonstrated a sustained engagement with the language of art and their own personal research themes over the past year. We are confident that many more exhibitions will lie in store for this year's graduates.

This catalogue contains illustrations of their work with some notes and guides; we hope it will act as a meaningful legacy of the work. The work on show is both an exhibition and examination process, so you, the visitor, have a unique insight into the students' creative skill, learning and critical reflection.

The degree show exhibition is a space for the students to test their ideas and creative skills with you, the public audience. It is now an established event in the cultural calendar of Wexford. We would like to thank the director of the Wexford Arts Centre and all the staff at the centre for their support and encouragement of our students. Providing the students with their professional support is a terrific added dimension to the degree show experience.

Els Dietvorst
Course Director

Emma Daly

Clódagh Dempsey

Seán Fitzpatrick

Johanna Murphy

Matthew O'Neill

Natasha O'Neill

Jojo O'Reilly

Yvonne Power

Jan Szostek

Emma Daly

Filth

Oil on canvas/fabriziano



Emma Daly is an Irish artist whose current work centres on themes of memory, identity and how these ideas manifest within the constructs of gender. Through the mediums of painting, film, sound and photography Daly constructs narratives that rely on symbolism and subtext. In her paintings, she often reproduces images from film or TV to capture the tone of a scene or character that is significant to her exploration of identity.

Daly is conceptually inspired by artists such as Nan Goldin, Tracey Emin and Sophie Pearson when examining themes of gender and identity. Influenced by Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity, Daly explores how the performance of femininity affects one's psyche and criticises the repressive nature of gender roles. Her interest in memory and dream-like imagery is reflected in the liminal, haunting scenes shown throughout her work. She is particularly interested in investigating collective memory and how generational trauma manifests in society from a neo-colonial perspective.

In her short film, *Filth* (2026), Daly satirises the religious idea of cleanliness or purity. She uses the physical act of cleaning to represent penance for womanhood stemming from cultural trauma, particularly in relation to the teachings of Catholicism in Ireland that plague modern attitudes towards women's sexuality.

Daly's work predominantly employs figurative imagery, emphasising lighting and colour to convey a particular mood or narrative. Her paintings tend to adopt a cinematic approach, experimenting with out-of-focus scenery and drawing on gothic films and photography. Her process generally involves extensive research and planning, utilising sketches, digital drawing and animation to flesh out ideas.

Daly views her artwork as multidimensional narratives that are frequently left purposely vague to add a layer of strangeness reminiscent of the psychological thrillers that inspire her practice.

*What is Bred in the Bone will Come out
in the Flesh*

Digital prints, ink, chalk, charcoal

Clódagh Dempsey



What is Bred in the Bone will Come out in the Flesh is a series of work spanning photography, scanography, drawing and print. These works examine the treatment of the human body as a subject, but also as a sculptural medium. Drawing on ideas of restriction as a form of care and as a form of discipline, Dempsey's work occupies a space critically in-between identities, with the title of the work referring to ideas of ownership and heritage of the human body. By presenting the viewer with an uncertain view of the human form, the artist creates a tension between the observer and the observed.

Dempsey's practice begins with a series of preliminary drawings and prints which are used as reference material for her photographs and scans. By binding her subjects in fabric, the artist seeks to distort the boundaries of the human body. The creation of these bulges of flesh mutates the subjects limbs into its own organism.

The artist's work also includes ideas of fetishism and irony, particularly in relation to her digital pin-hole camera. These images are captured using a camera obscura placed on top of a flatbed scanner. This experimental camera captures ghostly, unclear images that mimic the style and aesthetic of analogue photography.

Drawing on inspiration from artists such as Sally Mann, Zdzisław Beksiński and Francesca Woodman, Dempsey is fascinated by the portrayal of the figure in contemporary photography. These artists document the body at its moment of exposure, creating an identity separate from the subject. Dempsey draws on the aesthetics and themes of these artists, pushing the bodies' boundary to its limits in an almost scientific matter. She is interested in the abnormal and macabre aspects of inhabiting a body, particularly in relation to ideas of dysmorphia and dissociation.

Seán Fitzpatrick

Fractured Liminality
Oil on canvas, paper and board



Fitzpatrick's work looks at the space between conscious and subconscious thought, drawing from personal experience, faith, memory and the changed perception of familiar places. He is interested in how the rural landscape shifts under artificial light, especially at night.

Using scenes from his immediate surroundings, moments are created that feel both real and dislocated. Driving at night serves as a recurring framework- a liminal state where attention drifts, and the mind becomes more susceptible to introspection, memory, and dream-like distortion. Inspired by directors Andrei Tarkovsky and David Lynch, Fitzpatrick uses reflections, mirrors and different viewpoints to suggest a dual awareness; one grounded in reality, the other slipping into something less tangible.

Dreams play an important role in Fitzpatrick's process. By depicting them literally, but also subtly, aiming to capture their atmosphere, quiet, surreal, and unresolved. Light becomes a key element in the paintings functioning not only as illumination but as a way of isolating parts of a scene and leaving the rest to fade into darkness. This selective nature of illumination mirrors the way memory and subconscious thought operate; partial, fragmented, and often disjointed. Working with oils on paper allows the smooth, wet and quick application of paint drawing on inspiration from artists Sebas Velasco and Mia Bergeron's work with, and use of, light.

By painting places known to the artist firsthand, Fitzpatrick anchors the work in reality, while allowing subtle distortions to emerge. These shifts are not always immediately visible but instead create a lingering sense that something is slightly off. This tension is evocative of a psychological space where familiarity and unease coexist. Using sketching to alter the composition in conjunction with subject matter taken from the artist's own photographic references creating a sense of strangeness and unease.

Johanna **Murphy**

Witness

Watercolour, acrylic, oil, fabriano paper, board, canvas,
found materials, fabric, wool, thread



Johanna Murphy is a multi-disciplinary artist living and working in coastal County Wexford. Her work explores themes of memory, imagination, place and the mundane everyday. For Murphy, the experience of sea swimming and daily beach walks near her home provide a source of inspiration, quiet contemplation and refuge. The artist draws on the beauty and wildness of the natural world and the monotony of the domestic in her paintings and is inspired by the crossover between architecture, fashion and design. Murphy takes photographs of everyday scenes and moments where light and shadows capture fleeting glimpses of wonder. Working with watercolour, acrylic, oils on board and canvas, alongside assemblage, adapting to the medium best suited to her subject matter she creates a variety of works on different scales. Murphy's practice has evolved from figuration and portraiture to her current body of abstract work *Witness*, where chance and experimentation are explored in colour, shape and form inexhaustibly to the artists surprise and delight.

The artist's process begins with notebook research and drawing through thumbnail sketches using personal photographs found and collected source material, often through beach combing, providing as starting points for ideas. In her work she is interrogating the punctum, trying to investigate the invisible, using colour, line and form in a uniquely abstract style. Murphy's work is autobiographical using layers to abstract initial interest in an image until she can convey a new impression and emotion to the viewer. Mark making can be spontaneous or halting with a bold and unapologetic use of colour, combining urgent loose gestural brushstrokes and careful delicate passages of colour.

Fascinated with series and repetition, the motif of the stripe has recently started to appear in the work without commitment to a single stylistic direction. Significant influences include the Scottish painter Joan Eardley, whose paintings of the wild coastal landscape of Catterline and community of Glasgow delve into themes of place and community. Murphy regularly returns to Eardley's mark making and use of materials and colour. She credits seeing the exhibition *That Ship on the Mountain* by the Spanish painter Juan Usle as being a revelation in the curation of paintings and photographs. Usle's work links abstract painting and close crop photographs with the visible and the imagined world. Murphy's work is evolving as her practice deepens, constantly open to innovation and the exploration of new ideas in her creativity.

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Matthew O'Neill

Adulation

Oil on canvas, zinc plate etching on Snowdon paper,

Lino print on newsprint/Fabriano paper



Matthew O'Neill is an Irish artist who is interested in exploring emotions through a figurative lens. Displayed through the dismantling and manipulation of the body, the work attempts to create a visual avenue for feelings such as love, desire, and obsession. Taking inspiration from Catholic iconography, O'Neill's work discusses the idea of love being a religion, exercised through faith and devotion to another human being. Influenced by artists such as Francisco Goya and Siobhan Kaufman, O'Neill uses himself as a reference to convey the violent, all-consuming, and destructive aspects of love.

Taking reference from religious imagery, O'Neill creates works loosely based on the seven deadly sins. O'Neill's paintings begin as a random flash of inspiration that is then developed through quick sketches into a definite composition. The lack of background in the work aims to create a disconnect between those in the paintings and those outside, allowing the audience to witness, but not participate in, the connection between the figures. On the other hand, the prints are directly inspired by well-known religious paintings and are then modified to create a new narrative.

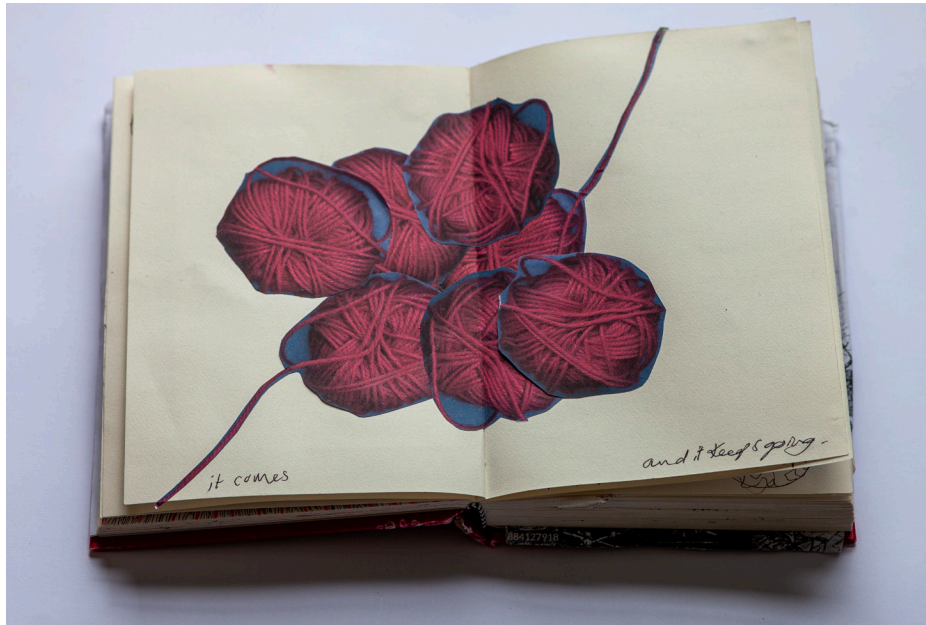
After a recent University trip to Madrid, O'Neill observed firsthand seminal etchings, drawings, and paintings by Goya, which significantly enhanced and influenced the direction of his practice towards print. Motivated by his ability to use tone to depict scenes of violence, Goya's works have been heavily studied by O'Neill to create this body of work.

The contemporary work of Kaufman's compositions and figurations of the body combining gore, horror, love and emotion became a solid foundation on which O'Neill has formulated his own works. To O'Neill, the most important part of his practice is the process. Through this process the narrative of the work is organically created and becomes something other.

Sustenance

Photographic print on Fabriano, alder wood, earth, plywood, breast milk, stone, sound.

Natasha O'Neill



O'Neill's artistic practice explores the personal relationship between maternal identity, the body, and the land, using personal experience as both subject and methodology. Working primarily with intuition through mediums like photography alongside sculpture, O'Neill investigates motherhood as a lived, embodied condition shaped by care, memory, labour, and transformations such as death and rebirth. The work is grounded in the belief that the maternal body and the earth are deeply interconnected, each carrying cycles of nourishment, endurance, vulnerability, and renewal, while also echoing underlying cultural ritual.

Within an Irish cultural context, O'Neill is interested in how land has long functioned as both a physical and symbolic site of identity, history, and belonging. Ireland's deep-rooted relationship to landscape, folklore, and ancestry informs the artist's understanding of the earth not simply as environment, but as a maternal presence—one that holds memory, grief, sustenance, and generational knowledge. This connection allows O'Neill to consider how ideas of motherhood can extend beyond the domestic and into wider ecological and cultural frameworks.

Natural materials are central to O'Neill's practice for their tactile, temporal, and symbolic qualities. Soil, organic matter, found materials, and processes of decay or erosion become ways of thinking through the instability and tenderness of both body and land. Photography functions as the primary medium allowing the artist to document, stage, and preserve intimate, transient moments, while sculpture extends these concerns into physical space, creating forms that carry weight, absence, and trace.

Though autobiographical in origin, O'Neill's work seeks to move beyond the singular self toward a more collective reflection on maternal care, inheritance, connection, and lineage. The aim is to create work that speaks to the maternal not as fixed or idealised, but as layered, vulnerable, and inseparable from the natural world and the cultural landscapes we inhabit.

The Everyday
Oils on canvas and panel

Jojo O'Reilly



Jojo O'Reilly's work is about Observation, Pausing and Simplicity. She explores the simplicity of the everyday world that surrounds us, how we see light, shape, beauty, and landscape. There is a plainness in these subjects that can be overlooked, ignored or even disregarded that O'Reilly's creative attention is drawn to.

The act of pausing is how the work makes us see, asking us to stop and understand the world, especially in the current climate of uncertainty and fragility. The work upfronts questions related to the everyday: where would we be without the richness of our day to day existence and what importance do we place and give value to the mundane.

16th-century painters like Caravaggio, Raphael, and Claesz, who painted not only great biblical scenes but also still life genre work are influences. For example when thinking about 16th century still life paintings the ripeness of fruit underneath hides, for O'Reilly, the seeds of corruption and decay. Additionally the more contemporary artists Tal R, Wolfgang Tillmans and David Hockney who uses rich texture and bold colour and whose works embody the environment in his compositions. There is also a physical aspect in the form of drawing and objectivity of the subject.

The inspiration for all these paintings is taken from what is tangible and what can become intangible. Blending traditional techniques with modern and everyday subjects that are more complex than first experienced, the underlying theme of these works is observing what is unnoticed.

Yvonne Power

SHIFT - DECAY - EVOLVE
Oil on canvas



SHIFT - DECAY - EVOLVE investigates instability and captures moments where structures appear to dissolve, erode, reform and emerge into new states. Focusing on the act of transformation Power's work captures the tension between loss and emergence brought about through change; a caught moment where an object or place adapts its appearance to become something else.

Working with oil on canvas, Power's process-led work begins with personal recollections, drawn from both photography and memory. The work is rooted in an ongoing engagement with movement, both physical and psychological which is focused on change created through human intervention and organic processes over time. The subject matter exists in a state of flux, often dissolving into the surroundings or re-emerging into new identities, referencing cycles such as the stages of life, the decay of a building, the erosion of land or simply the transition of a sky at the end of the day. Power often evokes a subtle spiritual dimension, in which shadow, light, reflection, and fragmentation suggest a presence beyond the physical. The paintings, therefore, often hover on the edge of recognition and invite viewers to manifest their own interpretations.

Contemporary influential visual artists include Daniel Pitin for his tonal atmospheric work evoking space and tension of structures in paintings such as *The Old Swimming Baths*, 2009 (oil and acrylic on canvas). Peter Doig's expressive use of colour and mark making in his memory-based paintings such as *Reflection - What Does Your Soul Look Like*, 1996 (oil on canvas). And finally, Gerhard Richter creates a sense of tension and movement between abstraction and representation in his photography and painting.

As an artist who reconnected with academia later in life, Power's art is driven by an instinctual approach, cherishing the therapeutic process of learning and making which will continue to underpin the future development of the practice.

Jan Szostek

Shattered, Being.
Glass, ink, projection



Jan Szostek's practice explores what it means to be human, examining how identity is shaped through time, experience, and transition. His work reflects the moments that define us and the ways in which we are continuously altered by our environments and personal histories.

Engaging with themes of reflection, light, and darkness, understanding oneself as both subject and material, the works fragmentation and reassembled are constantly evolving just as human beings are. This sense of process is embodied in the 'sculptural burst' expressed in the shattered glass where broken pieces are brought together to form a new, altered complete self. This use of material emphasizes that identity is not diminished by its ruptures but shaped through change.

This idea comes from living abroad in a foreign country where fluctuation within is escalated by one's new environment. Szostek's practice is pointed towards an understanding of change as both necessary and difficult. Letting go of places and past versions of oneself is central for this work. This process is not linear or seamless, but marked by disruption, reconstruction, and reflection.

Alongside this the work *Being* functions as a visual interpretation of a conceptual record of time in transition. Through its shifting surface, it captures moments of past self while reflecting on the present. This work invites the audience into a space where uncertainty meets reassurance and echoes complexity suggesting that identity is formed through fragmentation and recollection.

Like *Shattered*, *Being* is composed of moments, memories, and experiences that have been fractured and left in the past. These fragments never return to their original state, yet they create something new, inviting viewers to consider their own past processes of self-reassembling.

Szostek's practice has been influenced by destruction in art, where artists like Jean Tinguely, Gustav Metzger and Gordon Matta-Clark find their creative process and finished work to be accompanied by destruction as well as following artist Tara Donovan's interest in the use of mass-produced material.

Course Notes

The BA Honours Degree in Art was established in 2007. The course provides specialist training for a career as an artist to a professional standard. The course is structured with an interdisciplinary first year with electives of painting or sculpture for years two, three and four. Art History, cultural studies and professional practice studies are part of the course and function to complement the studio programme.

The aim of the course is to provide a learning environment for the development of independent creative individuals with the ability to sustain a unique art practice and world view.

BA (Hons) in Art SE207

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