

Press Release 6/2/2026

AICA Ireland Annual Honorary Prize

AICA Ireland is proud to announce the inaugural edition of the Annual Honorary Prize. Inspired by an initiative of the Belgian section of AICA, the scheme was established by a committee of eight members to award an artist and/or curator a symbolic prize for an outstanding exhibition each year.

This prize was established by AICA Ireland and involves active contributions from several members, distributed across all four provinces of Ireland. This committee is made up of the following members: Alan Phelan and Brenda Moore McCann (**Leinster**) Áine Phillips and Michaële Cutaya (**Connaught**) Cristin Leach and Pádraic E. Moore (**Munster**) Jane Morrow and Marianne O'Kane Boal (**Ulster**.)

In celebrating the activities of our peers, this prize draws attention to the potential of AICA and ultimately art writing in general to bring visibility, advocate for and support visual art in Ireland. In early 2026 the panel assembled the following shortlist of outstanding exhibitions that took place across the island of Ireland in 2025.

The winner of the inaugural AICA Ireland Annual Honorary Prize has been selected and we are delighted to announce that it is Aisling O'Beirn for her exhibition 'We Lose Sight of the Night', curated by Hugh Mulholland at The MAC, Belfast (17 April 2025 - 22 June 2025).

AICA Ireland Annual Honorary Prize Shortlist

LEINSTER

Ailbhe Ní Bhriain: The Dream Pool Intervals
27 March – 28 September 2025
The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin

Ronnie Hughes: Ingeminate
8-30 May 2025
The Molesworth Gallery, Dublin

Lucy Andrews: Earthly Remains
18 July – 2 August 2025
Pallas Projects, Dublin

CONNAUGHT

Sarah Wren Wilson: Caught in Blue
24 July - 17 August 2025
Custom House Westport, Mayo

Alice Rekab: Clann Miotlantach / Mythlantics

28 March – 10 May 2025

Galway Arts Centre, organised by Sirius Arts Centre and presented as part of a nationwide tour

Fiona Mulholland: Future Fossils: Junk or Jewels

4 July – 9 August 2025

The Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar, Mayo

MUNSTER

Francis Tansey: Sonorous Tones

13 September - 18 October 2025

Source Arts Centre, Tipperary

Catherine Barron: You Couldn't Make it Up

17 April - 11 September 2025

Waterford Gallery of Art

Debbie Godsell: Flail

22 February -5 April 2025

Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre, extended from the exhibition at the Source Arts Centre, Tipperary

ULSTER

Aisling O'Beirn: We Lose Sight of the Night

17 April 2025 - 22 June 2025

The MAC, Belfast

John Rainey: Decoys and Ghosts

12 April – 7 June 2025

Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast

Bernadette Keily: *ASHES AND RAIN*

8 February – 22 March 2025

RCC (Regional Cultural Centre), Letterkenny

Congratulations to all of the shortlisted artists, curators and venues

Winning artist

Aisling O'Beirn's exhibition 'We Lose Sight of the Night' was the first in a series of exhibitions which address climate and environmental change. O'Beirn (born in Galway) is a Belfast based artist, her practice explores the relationship between art and science and manifests variously as sculpture, installation, animation and site-specific projects www.aislingobeirn.com

"I cannot think of a more worthy recipient of this award than Aisling O'Beirn. 'We Lose Sight of the Night' was the culmination of many years of enquiry and collaborative partnerships Aisling has developed throughout her career. The MAC was extremely proud to have been able to present this significant body of work across our three galleries recognising not only the importance of this work but Aisling O'Beirn's immense contribution to the arts on this Island".

Hugh Mulholland, Creative Director Visual Art, Metropolitan Arts Centre Belfast

“Thank you very much to both AICA Ireland and the MAC. I am really delighted to receive this award, it is a great surprise. I'd like to thank Hugh for his longstanding faith in, and support for my practice over many years. I'd also like to thank him and the MAC team for the fantastic opportunity that the show afforded me to show an extensive body of work. Their support was superb”.

Aisling O'Beirn

AICA Ireland - AICA Ireland is the membership body for professionals working in critical discourse, research, and reflection within the visual arts on the island of Ireland. The Irish national section of the International Association of Art Critics / Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art promotes professional practice and exchange among members working in these disciplines. AICA International brings together more than 5,000 art professionals from 95 countries, organised into 63 national sections and an open section. AICA Ireland has been an active member of the International Association of Art Critics since its foundation in Paris in 1950 <https://www.aica.ie/>

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