

# The Irish Contemporaries {v}

CIACLA  
CONTEMPORARY IRISH ARTS CENTER  
LOS ANGELES

15/16 May - 6th June 2026

The Irish Contemporaries {v} is a dynamic group visual arts exhibition, celebrating the breadth and innovation of contemporary Irish visual art. This fifth edition brings together a diverse range of practices and perspectives, offering audiences in Los Angeles an opportunity to experience the vitality of Ireland's artistic voice today.



Image: Dee Mulrooney - Sli Growler (Growler's way); Photo by Kyle Ferguson



Angels Gate  
Cultural Center

18<sup>th</sup> Street Arts Center, Santa Monica

Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro

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# The Irish Contemporaries {v}

**Featured Artists: Dee Mulrooney & Gearóid O’Dea**

**Spotlight Artists at 18th St Arts Center:** Anselm and Joan McClain, Barbara Lavery, Bren Holmes, Katie Thibault, Mary J Sheridan, Robert Fox, Sionnan Wood, and Sheila McMullin & Sean McGuirk.

**Spotlight Artists at Angels Gate Cultural Center:** Arthur Rosa, Brenda Welsh, Carol Anne McChrystal, Elisabeth Banim, Inés Pesado Catrufo, Jenny Cosgrave, Jerry McGrath, Paul James Kearney, Pete Michels, Shaun O’Connor, and Sheila McMullin & Sean McGuirk.

## **About The Exhibition**

Ireland is experiencing a renewed engagement with story, identity, and contemporary lived experience, not as something distant or inherited, but as something actively shaped in the present.

In this exhibition, that exploration is highlighted by the work of Dee Mulrooney and Gearóid O’Dea, whose practices approach storytelling from distinct but connected perspectives. Mulrooney’s work draws on performance, ritual, and the body to confront themes of identity, displacement, and trauma, creating space for underrepresented experiences to be seen and held. O’Dea’s practice, rooted in mark-making and observation, reflects on memory and the act of being present, using process as a way to navigate and reconstruct personal narrative. Together, their work reflects a broader Irish tradition of storytelling that continues to evolve.

The exhibition invites audiences to consider how stories are formed, remembered, and reimagined, and how they shape our understanding of self, place, and connection. It explores the Irish tradition of storytelling that binds community, identity, and imagination. All the artists involved explore how stories, both ancestral and new, continue to shape our sense of belonging.

**Curated by Matthew Nevin & Ciara Scanlan.**

# Dee Mulrooney

*Growler will perform at both openings of The Irish Contemporaries 5*



*Image: Dee Mulrooney - Sli Growler (Growler's way): Photo by Kyle Ferguson*

**Dee Mulrooney** is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice encompasses painting, drawing, film, storytelling, and performance. Shaped by her lived experience as a woman, her work deals with themes of identity, exile, class, and displacement. She addresses complex subjects such as abuse, loss, and trauma, employing art as a medium for transformation and reclamation. By highlighting under-represented female experiences, her projects foster collective reflection and healing within the context of intersectional feminist discourse. Dee's alter ego, Growler, is an 85-year-old vulva and liminal space holder who navigates themes of sexuality, religion, and sexual violence. Drawing on elemental intuitive practices, Growler embodies the archetype of the sacred clown, using her arresting theatrical rituals to challenge societal norms and articulate truths often left unspoken.

@GROWLERSPEAKS | @DEEMULROONEY

# GEARÓID O'DEA

**Gearóid O'Dea** is a Dublin-based artist whose practice centres on painting and drawing, often extending into installation. His work is characterised by a vibrant palette and a collage-inspired approach to composition. He is particularly interested in the human figure, using it as a vehicle to explore the quiet undercurrents of an OCD anxiety disorder. During his residency with Ciacla/18th Street Arts Center in Los Angeles, Gearóid will further develop these themes while engaging with a new artistic context and community. Gearóid completed an MFA at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in 2013.



@GEAROIDODEA

# ARTHUR ROSA

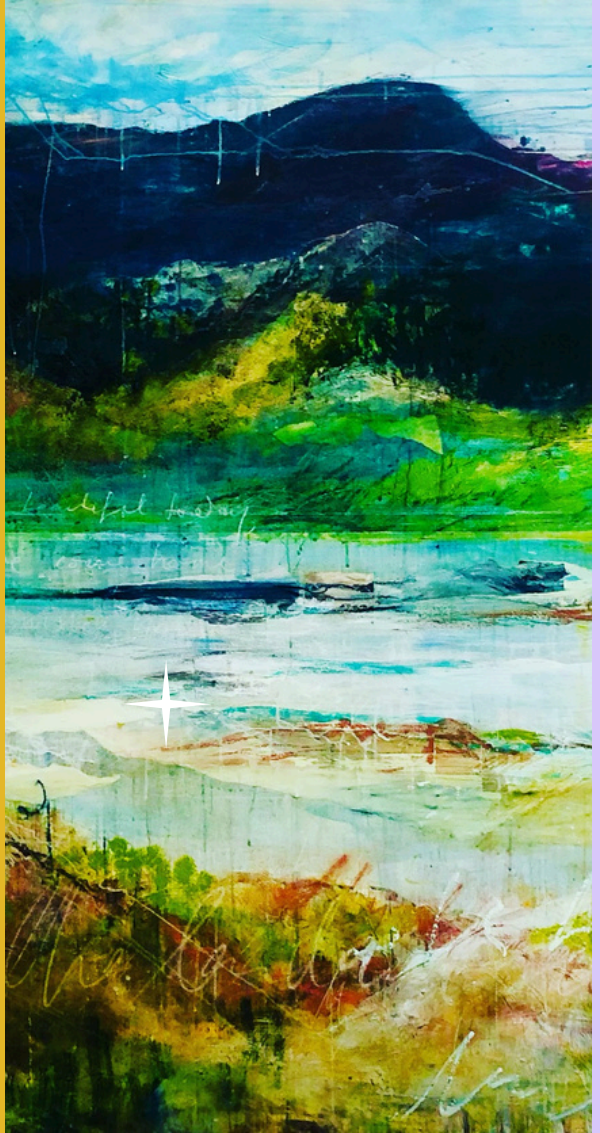
**Arthur Rosa** was born in Natal, Brazil, and is currently based in Galway, Ireland. Arthur Rosa is a self-taught and intuitive artist. His journey into painting began through music, when he formed his first band, he felt the need to translate this universe visually, creating album covers, posters and other graphic pieces from his own paintings. This is how he began to build a unique and multifaceted visual language. His artistic practice is guided by a strong commitment to creative freedom and authenticity. Employing a wide range of techniques, he explores various forms of visual expression, revealing the multiple layers of his sensibility. With works in public and private collections, he has gained recognition on the contemporary art scene as a striking figure of lyrical neo-expressionism, developing pictorial compositions rich in dreamlike intensity and emotional depth.



@ARTHURICARDO  
WWW.ARTHUR-ROSA.COM

# BARBARA LAVERY

**Barbara Lavery** grew up in Northern Ireland and studied in London at Central St Martin's Art School. Having worked at the National Theatre of Great Britain and the Abbey Theatre, the National Theatre of Ireland, she has since lived and worked in California while traveling extensively in Europe and Mexico.



@BABS\_LAVERY\_IRISH\_ARTIST

BRENDA  
WELSH



**Brenda Welsh** is an abstract expressionist painter born in New York City, New York. She studied art at the Corita Art Center and at Mt. St. Mary's University both located in Los Angeles, California. She received her Bachelor in Science and Juris Doctor degrees from Glendale University College of Law, Glendale, California. Her successful and demanding business career was the focus of her endeavors for many years. In 2002 she pursued making her art full time. Since then her work has been in over 100 exhibits and her paintings are included in private collections throughout the United States and in Europe. Welsh's studio is based in Los Angeles.

@BRENDA.WELSH\_ART\_STUDIO

# BREN HOLMES

Bren Holmes was born in Dublin, Ireland and currently resides in Los Angeles, California. In addition to photography, Brendan is also a professional singer/songwriter and a former member of the Irish Rock band the Young Dubliners. As a touring musician, he has been graced with the opportunity to see the sights of the world that many of us might never get to see. Here he tries to share that experience through his photography. He has an 'uncanny ability' for finding the beauty in the mundane or casual, where many an eye would surely pass by. Brendan is committed to keeping his pictures as honest as possible without any or little photoshop trickery, in essence what he sees is what you get. He hopes that you find the same satisfaction in his photography as he does.



@BRENDPIX  
WWW.BRENDPIX.COM

# CAROL ANNE MCCHRYSTAL

**Carol Anne McChrystal** sculptures have been exhibited in Los Angeles at Mata Gallery, Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, and Adjunct Positions, and internationally at Ateneo Art Gallery (Manila), Horse & Pony (Berlin) and Stanley Picker Gallery (London). Since earning her MFA from California College of the Arts, McChrystal has participated in numerous residency programs, including Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (US), Sitka Center for Art & Ecology (US), Emerging Islands (PH) and Cill Rialaig (IE). She has received grants from the Puffin Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, California Arts Council and Arts Council Ireland. In 2021 she received the Ecosystem X Award from Mozaik Foundation in recognition of artists using contemporary art for social change and in 2024 she was a Puón Institute Fellow at "Ecologies of Flourishing," a collaborative workshop focused on creative social survival and ecological sustainability in a time of global planetary crisis. McChrystal is based in Los Angeles, California where she is also a community organizer with the Filipino arts collective SIKLAB.



@CAROLANNEMCCHRYSTAL  
WWW.CAROLANNEMCCHRYSTAL.COM

# ELISABETH BANIM

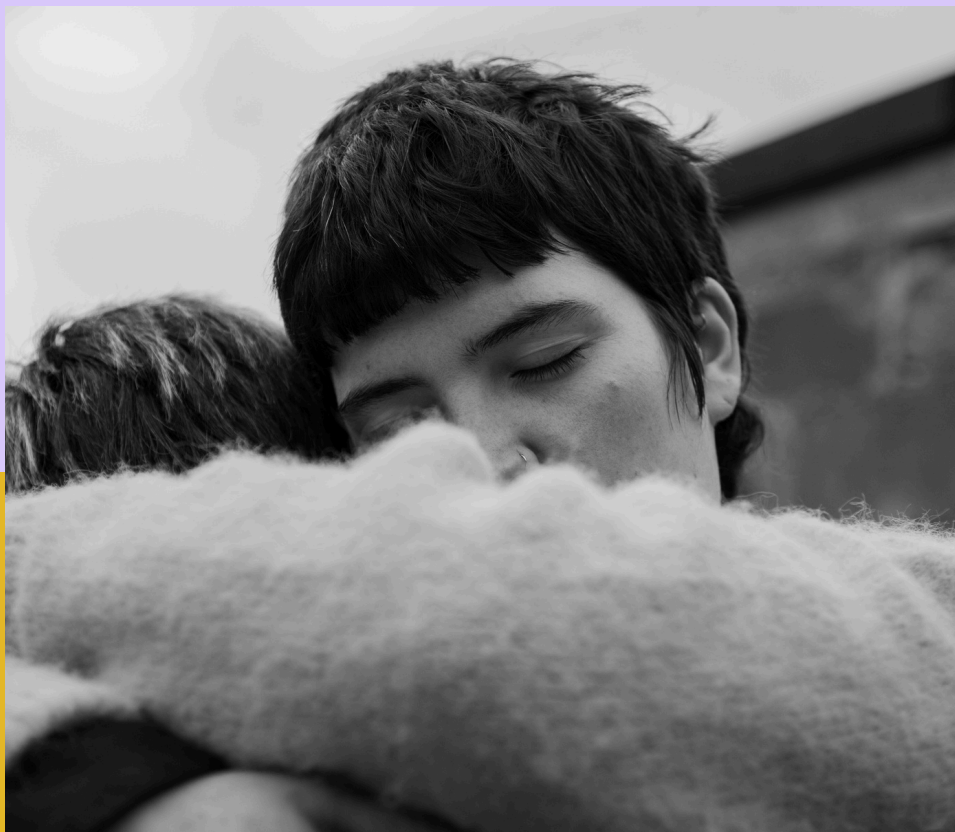


**Elisabeth Banim** is an architect and artist from Dublin, now based in Galway City and County Longford. She studied Architecture at University College Dublin and completed a BA in Contemporary Art with First Class Honours at Atlantic Technological University Galway in 2025. Her art practice explores the idealisation of place and atmosphere and the perceptive space between figuration and abstraction. Working primarily through drawing and painting and preoccupied largely with colour, materiality and the reduction of the image or object to its minimal expression, all informed by the process of making, her subject matter is concerned with ideas about representing human experience and the natural world and its phenomena in an exploration of what is behind or beyond perceived reality. Banim's work is in both public and private collections in Ireland and abroad with recent exhibitions at 126 Gallery, Galway City, the Laneway Gallery, Cork City, Luan Gallery, Athlone, Co. Westmeath and Farmleigh Gallery, Dublin in 'Connections', a cross-border exhibition of work from the OPW State Art Collection and the Department of Finance NI, and at the Outset Gallery, Galway City as part of 'Next Wave' Graduate Showcase 2025.

@ELISABETHBANIM

# INÉS PESADO CATRUFO

**Inés Pesado Catrufo** is a photographer and visual artist based in Dublin. Born in the north of Spain and now rooted in Ireland, her work explores themes of care, memory and intimacy, shaped by personal experience and her connection to the queer community. Alongside her artistic practice, Inés also works commercially, bringing the same sensitivity and attention to detail to editorial, lifestyle, and brand collaborations. After completing a BA in Photographic Media at Griffith College Dublin, she is currently undertaking a year-long artist residency at Photo Museum Ireland as one of the recipients of the museum's Early Career Artist Award 2025–26.



WWW.INESPESADO.COM

JENNY  
COSGRAVE



**Jenny Cosgrave** is a mixed media artist based in Dublin, Ireland. She has studied at SCFE and NCAD. Her work is inspired by nature, womanhood, mental health and therapeutic processes.

@COSGRAVEJENNY

# JERRY MCGRATH



**Jerry McGrath** – “I was born in Detroit, Michigan, and my life quickly became defined by motion. While my family thrived on relocating, I learned to adapt to constant change—moving from Michigan to Ontario, Canada, then to Southern and Northern California, and eventually to months on end in Ireland, primarily Monaghan and Wexford Counties. Each new landscape and culture reshaped my sense of place and, ultimately, my approach to making art. I earned my B.A., M.A., and M.F.A. in Art, a path that led me into academia and a tenured professorship at Irvine Valley College in California. After years of teaching, I felt drawn toward a different form of creative expression. Filmmaking became that next chapter. I began producing and art directing, discovering that the visual storytelling I’d always loved could expand far beyond a single frame. That work naturally evolved into screenwriting, where I could merge narrative, imagery, and the perspective shaped by a life spent navigating so many environments. Through every shift—every medium, every place—my visual art has remained the constant. It is the foundation of my creative life, the language I return to, and the first love that continues to shape everything I make.”

JOAN & ANSELM  
MCCLAIN



**Joan & Anselm McClain** – Joan, a performer, and Anselm McClain, a software developer, live and work in Pasadena. For the past several years they have developed their shared love of photography at the Armory Arts Center in Old Town, which offers a traditional black and white darkroom and a variety of related arts programming.

@JOANHAWLEYMCCLAIN

# KATIE THIBAULT

**Katie Thibault** is an Irish-American artist based in Los Angeles. She is currently pursuing a degree in illustration at California State University, Northridge, with an anticipated graduation in Spring 2026. Her work explores themes of femininity, queerness, and sense of self. Thibault works across both digital platforms and traditional media, including oil painting, while maintaining a distinctly illustrative approach throughout her practice. Her compositions are characterized by the use of bright colors and unconventional color schemes, which serve to heighten emotional expression.



@KTIBOW

# MARY J SHERIDAN

**Mary J Sheridan** is a Dublin born Irish artist living and working in Los Angeles, California. Her passion is creating the vista landscapes of her native land in oils, watercolor and charcoal. She also works professionally as an FX animator, environment designer and digital background painter for major Los Angeles based animation and film studios.



@MARYSHERIDAN\_ARTIST  
MARYJSHERIDAN.COM

PAUL JAMES  
KEARNEY



Paul James Kearney – Born in Galway, Ireland, Paul James Kearney completed his BFA in Contemporary Painting under Blaise Drummond at Atlantic Technological University in 2014, and an MA in Arts Policy & Practice (MPP) at the University of Galway in 2015. In 2023, he completed a postgraduate diploma in eCPR at the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin, under Daniel Fisher (MD, PhD) to study trauma and related disorders. Kearney works primarily through digital media, which he prints on fine art, museum-quality paper as one-off editions. He has lived and worked in Galway, Limerick, Dublin, London, and Brighton, and currently maintains a studio at MART Studios in Galway. He has exhibited in Ireland at institutions including The National Gallery of Ireland, The Royal Hibernian Academy, and the University of Galway, and internationally in locations such as New York, Los Angeles, Paris, São Paulo, and South Korea (CICA Museum). His works are held in private collections internationally, as well as in institutional collections including The Irish State Art Collection (OPW), Dublin; University of Galway; CICA Museum, Gimpo, South Korea; Villanova University, Philadelphia; and Flazathores Conseil, Paris.

@PAULJAMESKEARNEYARTIST

# PETE MICHEL'S

**Pete Michels** earned a BFA in Illustration from Jersey City State College and an MFA in Animation from UCLA. After landing a job on "The Simpsons", Pete quickly moved up the ranks to become a director on the show for 5 seasons. Pete then accepted a post as Supervising Director on "Family Guy". He directed dozens of episodes until moving on to become Supervising Director for Adult Swim's "Rick and Morty". Pete's career has taken him around the world from colleges in India to studios in Canada, Korea, and Ireland. He teaches college animation courses and paints watercolor landscapes when he can. Currently, Pete is Supervising Director on Dan Harmon's "Krapopolis" for Fox, working with Dublin's Boulder Media.



ROBERT  
FOX

**Robert Fox** – I was born in Dublin and had the wild luck to fall into an animation career and take off on an interesting adventure around the world working for Don Bluth, Twentieth Century Fox, Sony, Disney and more. I am currently working for Walt Disney Imagineering as an animatronics animator in Los Angeles.



@ROBERTFOX\_ART

# SHAUN O'CONNOR

**Shaun O'Connor** is an Irish Australian artist living and working in Los Angeles who works across a range of media including drawing, painting, sculpture and installation.



@SHAUN\_OCONNOR

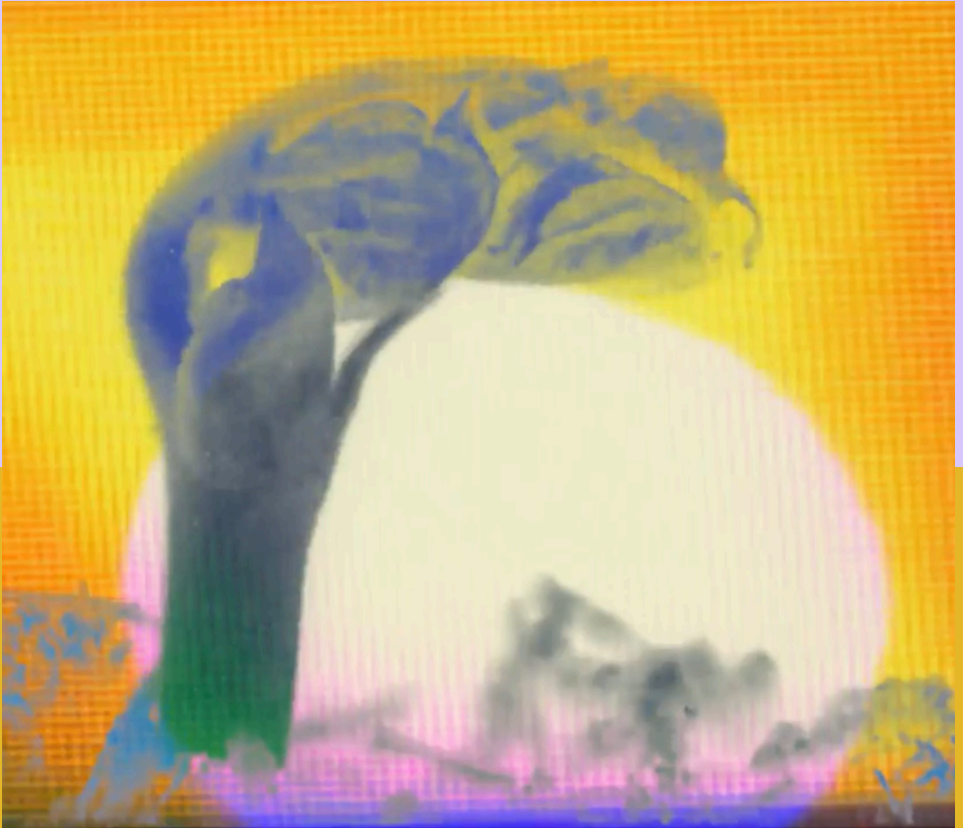
# SIONNAN WOOD



**Sionnan Wood** is an internationally exhibited artist and curator born in British Columbia, raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, and currently residing in Los Angeles. She studied art at Mills College in Oakland, the Burren College of Art in County Clare, and ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena — a breadth of training that reflects her expansive and eclectic approach to image making. Her work moves fluidly between abstraction and representation: paintings that evoke light and space are created alongside still lifes exploring themes of childhood and play. Painterly intuition and technical rigor coexist in her compositions, yielding work that is alternately moody and irreverent. She draws on the playful wit of Eleanor Antin, David Shrigley, and James Thurber, and the formal experimentation of Mark Bradford, Agnes Martin, Emily Carr, and Gerhard Richter. Her practice is deeply informed by neuroaesthetics, motherhood, and her late-diagnosed ADHD — threads that run quietly through the work, shaping both its making and its meaning.

# SHEILA MCMULLIN

**Sheila McMullin** is a poet writing at the intersection of mixed-race identity, infertility, and generational and environmental care. She is the author of "daughterrarium" from Cleveland State University Poetry Center. Most recently, she is a co-editor and contributor to the forthcoming "Comix and Community: Creative Pathways toward Health Equity" from Penn State University Press. She holds her M.F.A. in Poetry from George Mason University.



@SHE\_A\_POEM  
THEWRITEMAGICK.COM

SEAN  
MCGUIRK



**Sean McGuirk** is a video artist in Los Angeles, CA. Working with rare vintage video hardware from the '80s and '90s, he specializes in creating music videos, live concert visuals, short films, logo animations and ads that utilize unique analog and early-digital effects. Sean has directed, edited, and developed visual effects for many trend-setting artists, labels, and brands, including AFI, Jenny Lewis, Redd Kross, Snooper, Pearl and the Oysters, Kontravoid, Drab Majesty, Boy Harsher, Shannon and the Clams, Pearl Charles, KCRW, Stones Throw Records, Third Man Records, Alien Body Clothing, and many others.

@SEANSTLE  
WWW.SMCGUIRK.COM

# PROMOTING IRISH ARTS IN LA

The Irish Contemporaries {v} exhibition builds on the success of previous editions, reaffirming our commitment to showcasing the best of Irish contemporary culture in an international context.

Produced by CIACLA, a non-profit 501(c)(3) arts organization that promotes Contemporary Irish Culture and supports local communities in Los Angeles through a multidisciplinary diverse programme in collaboration with local and international cultural partnerships. CIACLA currently partners with existing venues to facilitate this program and is focused on developing a creative platform to support artists. CIACLA champions the promotion, collaboration and dissemination of Irish-American cultural contributions in both Ireland and the United States, enhancing global understanding and strengthening the ties between the two nations.

[WWW.CIACLA.COM](http://WWW.CIACLA.COM) | [@CIAC.LA](https://twitter.com/CIAC.LA)

**Exhibition Supported By:** CIACLA, 18th Street Arts Center, Angels Gate Cultural Center, MART Gallery & Studios, Culture Ireland, the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, The LA County Department of Arts and Culture, and The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council.

**Consider Supporting us by visiting:**

[www.ciacla.com](http://www.ciacla.com) | [www.18thstreet.org](http://www.18thstreet.org) | [www.angelsgateart.org](http://www.angelsgateart.org)



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