

**Kanturk Arts Festival**  
**Kanturk Credit Union, School Art Competition 2016**  
**This Year's Theme: Celebrate**  
**Adjudicator's Report**

**General remarks**

I am delighted to have been asked back, to adjudicate this year's School Art Competition. Since the inaugural Kanturk Arts Festival in 2009, I have had the privilege of seeing all of the work before it goes on public display. Once again, I have what I have previously referred to as the bittersweet pleasure of adjudicating and writing up the results of the competition. The bitter part is that there have to be those who do not win, in order for there to be winners.

My message to this year's non winners is the same as ever: Please Keep Drawing and Painting. If you need proof of the value of persistence, read on:

Last year, I had great difficulty separating two really great pictures for the overall award. Now, last year's runner-up has become this year's winner. I'm delighted to say that because of the way I adjudicate the competition, I was blissfully unaware that this had happened until I started writing my report; more than a week after the adjudication process had already taken place.

I would like to heartily thank each one of the entrants, their teachers, families and support groups! As the schools are the official channel for entry, their cooperation and the enthusiasm of the teachers is paramount to the success of this annual event.

It is good to see that this competition is so well supported.

Each year, I'm thrilled to see the fresh batch of entries and look forward to seeing them displayed in the shop windows around Kanturk.

**Remarks specific to this year's competition:** Over the years I have tried to include some feedback to entrants about the practical aspects of entering a competition such as this and even more generally, pointers on how picture-making might be approached.

This year I will make two observations.

- i) I have made reference to this before, but I think that it bears repeating. If you want to include lettering of any sort, or even, if you want to make your entry entirely based on lettering, consider that this is a *visual art* competition.

Think about the difference between seeing an image of something and seeing a word describing the same thing - it's quite a different experience! I am not advising entrants against the use of lettering; but before choosing to write a word, first consider how the *meaning* of that word might be conveyed by drawing an *image*, before deciding that *writing* the word is the *only option* open to you.

- ii) My second point for anyone making a picture, is that it is good to consider the value of making a thumbnail sketch, *before* starting out on the bigger composition.

Sometimes, an idea is good in our imagination, head, mind's eye, or whatever we choose to call it, but it inevitably changes as we put it down in a drawing.

The value of making a quick sketch of the idea, is that we now see how it will actually look, on paper. (Just make sure that the height and width are in the same scale as the paper on which the final work will appear.) We are then in a better position, if needs be, to modify the composition to clarify our idea.

Often I see an area down one side of the page just left blank, as though the person drawing had simply no idea what to put there. That would have been apparent to them if they had made a thumbnail sketch. Then, for example, they might just have made the rest of the picture bigger to take up the whole page.

See how this year's winner fills the page.

By contrast, it is important to note that sometimes a large blank area is essential to the composition of a picture. That is a conscious decision and is not what I am talking about here. I am talking about a space which is not contributing to the picture and which has appeared by accident, or lack of planning.

### **General remarks about the category and overall winners.**

Once again, there were very strong category winners. They ably demonstrated that drawing or painting skill alone is not a substitute for an active imagination and a clear understanding of the topic. It's important to make a lively interpretation of that topic.

To illustrate the point; several entries this year saw the possibilities for energetic, dynamic paintings triggered by the very visual celebrations of Chinese New Year; This was a good choice of subject, allowing imaginative treatment.

**OVERALL WINNER**  
**SIOBHÁN O'CONNOR**

Often by limiting our means we are forced to be more resourceful. This year's, overall winner is a good case in point.

Siobhán O'Connor has given us a delightful pencil drawing. Our view is a tightly-cropped, close-up of a head, taken from a slightly elevated position. The face is smiling, in a warm spirit of celebration.

Background is kept to a minimum and is dark, but with a bright aura around the head, bringing the face forward towards the viewer. Perched on the head is a small, party hat, set at a jaunty angle. The subtle drawing skills displayed by Siobhán last year are in evidence again. She maintains her ability to describe surface, the smooth skin, flowing hair, and the shiny party hat, whose spots effortlessly show us the curved surface.

Her accuracy in drawing the shape of the face and the features looks deceptively easy. She has used lighting effectively to highlight her subject. She has taken the open topic, "Celebrate" and has wisely not allowed herself be distracted by the many possible treatments open to her. Well Done!



Title: Celebratory Emotions

## CATEGORY A

*Winner:* Clídna Buttimer, Scoil Eoin Baiste



Title: Ferris Wheel

A dramatic picture with lots of action, set off by the contrasting dark tone of the sky against the bright, multi-coloured, spinning Ferris Wheel.

*Highly Commended:*

Bailey O'Driscoll, St. Colman's Boys N.S. Title: My Party

Avril Murphy, Banteer, N.S. Title: Chinese New Year

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## CATEGORY B

*Winner:* Roisín Murphy, Banteer N.S. Title: Celebration Time.

This is a lovely, cheerful picture. The people and the balloons spread out over the surface of the page to make a rhythmic pattern. Even though the word Celebrate is written across the top of the page on a banner, we can readily see that there is a celebration in progress without reference to the word.



*Highly Commended:*

Laura Enright, Kanturk Girls N.S. Title: Happy Birthday

David Lehane, St. Colman's N.S. Title: Congrats

Mark Dennehy, Kilbrin N.S. Title: Up up and away.

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## CATEGORY C

*Winner:* Miah O'Leary, Kilbrin N.S. Title: The Perfect Student

A lovely portrait of wide-eyed innocence. A strong composition without distractions, we are compelled to meet her gaze head-on.



*Highly Commended:*

Laura Mawhinney, Kilbrin N.S. Title: Moonlight Owl

Nikki Heffernan, Kilbrin N.S. Title: Sheep

Johanna Piggott. Convent Primary School. Untitled.

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## CATEGORY D

*Winner:* Jogaile Aidukeviciute, Scoil Mhuire. Title: Chinese New Year

A dramatic, fierce, Tiger Dragon whose sinuous limbs inhabit the whole picture frame confronts the viewer. The bold stripes set up further drama against the blackness. This is a very strong entry.



*Highly Commended:*

Jordan O'Shea, Scoil Mhuire. Untitled. (Circular colours on a black background)

Katie O'Connor, Coláiste Treasa. Title: Let's Dance.

Sebastian Sarma, Scoil Mhuire. Title: (untitled- Chinese Dragon)

Ava Jennings, Colaiste Treasa, Tile: Fleadh Ceoil

Grace O'Callaghan, Scoil Mhuire, Untitled (coloured abstract)

Taine Murphy, Scoil Mhuire. Untitled.

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## CATEGORY E

*Winner:* Darren O’Leary. Scoil Mhuire. Title: At View from the Bridge.

This is a fine vigorous painting incorporating several themes in one. If this sounds like a hotch-potch, it is not. From the top down, we have a firework display against a dark, black sky, below which is a broad band of grey land/riverscape, so vague as to be only a mood. Below this is a diagonal, broken – textured, grey band, indicating the parapet of the bridge, leading to the road onto which fall the shadows of the four, colourfully attired, young people chatting and observing the display.



### *Highly Commended:*

Shauna O’Connor, Scoil Mhuire. Title: When the Cats are Away.

Julia Rodrigo, Scoil Mhuire. Untitled (Night and Day Skyline and Landscape)

Jade Healy, Scoil Mhuire. Title: Celebration Reaching Save Shores

Michelle O’Hanlon, Scoil Mhuire. Title: A Glow in the Night

Sandra Karpinska, Scoil Mhuire. Title: New Year Party

Jackie Osei, Scoil Mhuire. Title: Celebrate the Colours of Life

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## **CATEGORY F**

*Category and Overall Winner:* Siobhán O'Connor, Coláiste Treasa.

Title: Celebratory Emotions. (Comments and Image are on page 3 of this report.)

*Highly Commended:*

Amy Leahy, Coláiste Treasa. Title: Victory Dance

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John Philip Murray  
Lissardagh  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016