

GALWAY ARTS CENTRE PRESENTS

# FISSURE



**MA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE  
ATU SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
& CREATIVE ARTS**



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh  
Atlantic  
Technological  
University



Ionad Ealaíon na Gaillimhe

Cheryl Kelly  
Murphy

Evan  
Murray

Kate  
Hodmon

Laurence  
Hynes

Rocio  
Romero Grau

Dina  
Abusehmoud

Mohamed  
Alkurdi

Dillon  
Cleary

Carine  
Berger

**Galway Arts Centre is delighted to present a group exhibition featuring the work of nine Master of Arts in Creative Practice students from the School of Design and Creative Arts Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Galway.**

**Curated by Soňa Smedkova.**

The title of this exhibition draws on the notion of gaps, marks, pauses, boundaries, and margins. Its purpose is to establish a common thread between each individual work and create a cohesive and immersive experience. Fissure questions the interconnectedness between humans and nature and invites the audience to reach a point where both worlds connect. The Galway Arts Centre, with its rendered limestone walls, become a perfect backdrop transforming space that aims to grasp times of unease and solitude across an array of materials from found objects to items of comfort and loss. As the audience traverses through the artistic landscape imbued with memories of the Pearse Family, they are drawn into a space dedicated to the storytelling of the well-known Lady Gregory. Her legacy is conveyed in the exhibition in a modern retelling using screens and storyboards of animation and game design environments. We are collectively asked to consider our perceptive awareness which one might feel is lost in recent years as a cause of the digital revolt.

This group of nine postgraduate students crossed the borders of their homelands in France, Catalonia, Palestine and Ireland, bringing their unique backgrounds, cultures and contrasting practices together to Fissure, to collectively produce an allegory of prospects and to populate a void. Through a diverse range of media from photography, sculpture, documentary, animation, graphic novels, Manga to mixed media and interactive installations, the artists create a new trajectory of perception. The definition of a split, a division, a noticeable crack within the landscape – creates a philosophical margin where the ecology of this nonagon of work is dissolved. The exhibition transforms what Fissure is, creating a contemporary pocket filled with juxtaposing creative matter, shaped by emerging visual artists, filmmakers and animation and game designers.

Special thanks to the School of Design and Creative Arts, ATU and Galway Arts Centre.

## **CURATOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Soňa Smedkova is a Czech multidisciplinary artist based in Galway. Smedkova gained a First Class Honours in MA in Creative Practice at the School of Design and Creative Arts, ATU, Galway. In the fourth year of her undergrad studies, she was an integral member of the student-led curating team for an exhibition for GMIT contemporary art graduates Not a Degree Show, Printworks, funded by Galway City Arts Council. She was awarded an Agility Award by the Arts Council of Ireland in 2021. In early 2022 she became a member of the Board of Directors at 126 Artist-Run Gallery and the same year she was a curator of an exhibition A Remix of Change at 126 Gallery as part of the Galway International Arts Festival. Smedkova's work was recently exhibited in a group show DÉAD in Transmediale, Berlin under the Creative Pathways Programme, funded by Irish Embassy Berlin and Goethe Institute Ireland. The show is now travelling to Dublin and will be launched as part of Culture Night at Goethe Institute Ireland.



# CHERYL KELLY MURPHY

Cheryl Kelly Murphy is a process-led artist based in Galway, originally from Dublin, Ireland. Recently she took part in Ar imeall Music Culture and Arts Festival as a part of the art crawl on July 13th July 30th, 2023. Murphy exhibited in the Galway Waves Makers Hub with the collective Making Waves in July 2021. This was in conjunction with Galway 2020 Festival. Murphy exhibited in Loam restaurant with three of her pieces as part of Galway 2020 Festival where they were permanently exhibited for two years. She exhibited there as a part of the members show Art in Mind. Murphy exhibited as part of her final year show for her honours degree in 2013. Murphy exhibited in the quadrangle as a part of an undergraduate show where she sold one of her pieces to NUIG (National University of Ireland, Galway) It was bought by the university as part of its art collection. Murphy was a member of the Galway Printmakers Lorg.

Murphy's interest is in screen printing and its process of creating bright colours combined with graphic elements which lean towards nostalgia. Collage is another chosen medium and its layering of meanings, both literal and figurative, are a very crucial part of her practice. Themes of loss and the evolution of family systems are central and convey the complex bond between mothers and daughters. There is an illustrative aspect to the work fuelled by personal narratives. Murphy attempts to capture an emotional charge and connect back to humanness using her studio as a portal for her work which is often influenced by personal narratives. She relies on intuition to drive her creative compass and her aim is to pursue socially engaged art as a part of her ongoing career. Her research is influenced by psychologists Carl Rogers and Gabor Mate and their topics on trauma, and human-centred therapy.

Website: <https://cherylkmprintworks.wordpress.com/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/ckm\\_visualartist/](https://www.instagram.com/ckm_visualartist/)



# EVAN MURRAY

Evan Murray is a visual artist with a primary focus on the realm of 3D animation and digital art. He attained a Bachelor of Science in Digital Animation Production, a degree that has equipped him with diverse skills in animation, encompassing hand-drawn, print media, games and app development. He has participated in art festivals including The Junction and Nenagh Art Festival, exploring the intersection between technology and art.

Murray merges technology and creative expression, blending traditional and computer-generated approaches. His inspiration is deeply rooted in an engagement with video games and animated films throughout history. For Murray, Fissure is an exciting opportunity to showcase his work which is a departure from his usual digital art focus. He offers a rare glimpse into the unconventional and imaginative aspects of 3D animation and offers an opportunity to celebrate the harmonious fusion of art and technology that lies at the core of his creative endeavours.





# KATE HODMON

Kate Hodmon is a multi-disciplinary artist originally from Co. Wexford, now based in Galway, Ireland. She holds a degree in Illustration from The University of Hertfordshire. Hodmon was a Limerick Figure Drawing Society member, organiser of the 2012 Galway Fringe Festival visual arts exhibition in Mary's Dominican Church Hall in the Claddagh and a founding member of Lumen Street Theatre, Limerick City in 2015. With a background in street spectacle, theatre, and film production, her practice extends beyond the realms of traditional artistic expression.

Hodmon's interdisciplinary methodologies are applied to create a personal body of work concerning the psychological theory that unconscious, automatic processes or defence mechanisms which serve to protect us from painful emotions and thoughts are created in childhood. These emotional child-led defences can still arise when triggered by an event that we unconsciously link to a stressful memory. Therefore, a reaction to the past could occur rather than reacting to what is in front of us. Hodmon uses various materials, found objects, fabric, and paper, selected for their perishable properties and ability to endure. She creates layers and degrees of translucency to evoke elusive memories or emotions that hijack us from undisclosed places. Her research is informed by the Jungian concept of the shadow self which refers to the parts of us set aside to unconsciously conform and the psychological 'void' and disconnect that this conforming can leave in our adult selves. She is also interested in the writings of Van Der Kolk, Levine, and Harris-Burke.

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# LAURENCE HYNES

Laurence Hynes is an Irish visual artist working primarily in the medium of photography. In 2022 he was awarded the Radius Project / That's Life bursary award, completing an engagement exploring the idea of place with a group of artists with intellectual disability. He is a member of 126 Artist-run Gallery in Galway, and a member of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (UK and Ireland).

His work is concerned with landscape and the human relationship with land. He is interested in boundaries in the landscape, and in the margins where the human and non-human worlds meet. He spends extended periods exploring locations, often alone in remote places and over many repeat visits, which leads to the creation of works on photographic film. Literature, poetry, and research help him to get a sense of the context of a location, but it is through physical exploration – the practice of being in place – that he responds to landscape.

His practice of spending long periods alone in the landscape has its roots in childhood. He grew up in the countryside and was always keen to explore his surroundings, roaming far – to a degree uncommon by today's standards – on foot and by bicycle. He is sure it is no coincidence that his childhood explorations among rivers, rocks, and trees are mirrored almost exactly in his adult wanderings with a camera. He acknowledges place as a progenitor of state, a there that we visit so as to be no longer here, an understanding that place can be something greater than a set of coordinates, and he looks for that affective quality in his work. He is aware of place as a repository of history, a communal archive and a physical record of what has gone before.

Website: [www.laurencehynes.com/](http://www.laurencehynes.com/)



# ROCIO ROMERO GRAU

Rocío Romero Grau is a Catalan artist established in Galway (Ireland). She graduated with First Class Honours in Contemporary Art at ATU in 2022 (Galway) and was recognized with Academic Excellence Award. The same year, she was selected for Pallas Projects Studios Open Call “Artist Initiated Program”, shortlisted for the RDS Visual Arts Awards, and recognized with an Agility Award by the Arts Council. In autumn 2022, Grau exhibited in Galway City Museum her project Turlough, a visual and musical reinterpretation of Turlough O’Carolan’s music.

She also participated in the exhibition Déad at Transmediale Gallery in Berlin, commissioned by the Irish Embassy and Goethe Institute.

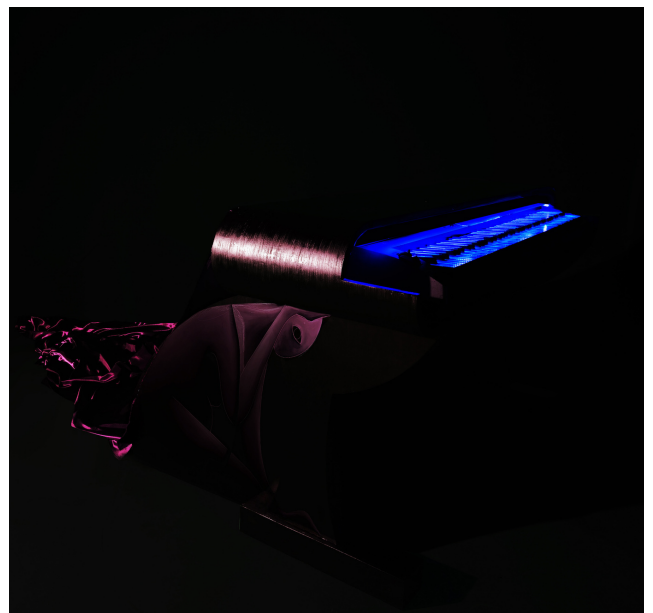
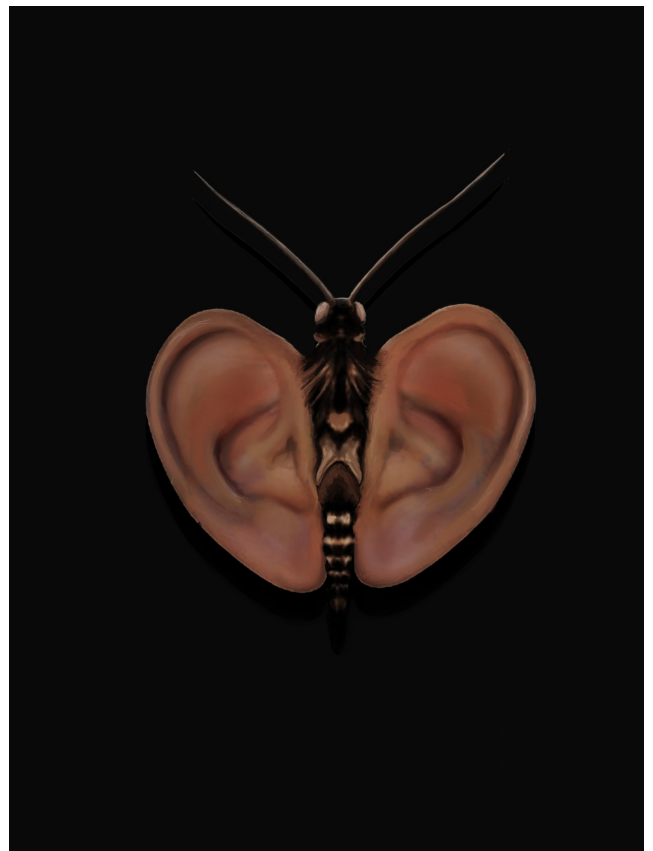
Throughout her career as a professional musician, she has successfully released five albums, each exploring a diverse range of musical styles including classical, traditional, jazz, punk, and experimental. Grau is classically trained in piano, voice, and composition, and with extended studies in contemporary music. She has performed hundreds of concerts as a leading singer in numerous projects such as The Luminous Song Concert commissioned by Llum Festival in Barcelona, Clau de Cinc Orchestra, the musical Cabaret produced by Olot’s Principal Theatre and the Cànida Memòria project, awarded by the Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries. She has produced and collaborated on projects related to social engagement, such as The Hands Sing concerts for deaf people and Exploring Banksy, a play based on the Theatre of the Oppressed for youth.

As a visual artist, Grau works with video, Virtual Reality, interactive interfaces, holograms, generative art, painting, photography, sound, and music. Conceptually, she is interested in the tension between past and future, positioning our present as a liminal state, seeking to interrogate the notion of transition and transcendence through the aesthetic experience.

Her theoretical and practical research aims to enhance the presence of our sensorial organs when engaging with art. Her practice could be defined as a multi-sensorial exploration where divergent cognitive processes may unfold by forcing non-conventional interconnections between senses.

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/ziograu/](https://www.instagram.com/ziograu/)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@ziograu5644](https://www.youtube.com/@ziograu5644)





# DINA ABUSEHMOUD

Dina Abusehmoud is a Palestinian artist, born in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and now based in Galway. She graduated in 2018 from the Department of Architecture at IUG in Gaza-Palestine. Interdisciplinarity is one of the qualities that defines Abusehmoud's career. On the one hand, she was achieving excellence in her studies and was being awarded academically competitive placements such as the Council of Ministres Fund and Hani Al-Qaddomi scholarship to cover her bachelor degree studies. On the other hand she was interested in animation and video games, environment, and feminism in the patriarchal society. She worked as a teaching assistant at the Islamic University of Gaza, a freelancer architectural designer, 2D and 3D game designer, 2D illustrator and animator. Recently, she started focusing on 2D animation. She was successfully selected in a scholarship program to study MA Creative Practice at ATU Galway- Ireland.

Abusehmoud has always been fascinated by the Japanese anime industry. This appears in the way she portrays buildings, people, outfits, and music. Lately, she published a one-shot manga titled as The Day of Clearance as a part of her MA final project.

Manga is the Japanese way of drawing comics. It has certain characteristics such as:

It reads from right to left

It has more pages, with fewer panels in each

Panels have various camera angles, focal points, and field of view

Panels focus on characters' facial expressions and emotions

It has a monogram colour set (greyscale)

It is detail-oriented, and most of the time used as a storyboard for the anime adaptation

“I believe Manga drawing is a very important stage for any animator to be able to design the scenes from scratch. It helps the artist understand better the storyboarding, camera angles, characters' introduction to the scene, emotion presentation and even how to reach the viewer's feelings”.





# MOHAMED ALKURDI

Mohamed Alkurdi is a Palestinian 3D artist based in Galway, Ireland. He graduated from architecture from The Islamic University of Gaza in 2020. Various collaborative projects such as working with V Verse company in Dubai have demonstrated to be valuable tool in gaining different experiences, especially in the field of 3D art and virtual reality. This collaborative approach allows for a greater level of creativity and innovation, as different skill sets and perspectives are brought together. In the future, Alkurdi wants to establish his own animation studio to primarily focus on 3D animation and storytelling.

Alkurdi's academic background in architecture enriches his creative practice and enables him to combine digital design, drawing and storytelling and uses his skills to breathe life into stories and capture young imaginations. Beyond static visuals, his passion is rooted in animation and storytelling. Working on various children illustration books projects such as Mr Crow enabled Alkurdi to explore the world of visual storytelling which led him to participate in Silent Manga audition in Japan with a short one-shot drama Manga story called A Promise for a Dead Man.

Film makers such as Hayao Miyazaki inspires Alkurdi to dive deep into the world of fictional storytelling. Films such as Spirited Away, Princess Mononoke, and more enriched drawing inspiration from observing little nuances around. Alkurdi's project research was inspired by the unique nature of his hometown buildings in Gaza which evoked a whole new world in which the main character interacts.

Overall, Alkurdi's experience, skills, and dedication to his craft instil confidence in his ability to deliver immersive and engaging experiences to audiences.

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# DILLON CLEARY

Dillon Cleary is a filmmaker who makes projects based on his interests: societal issues and sub-cultures. He grew up in Offaly and studies in Galway. He is university educated, with a BA (Hons) in Film and Documentary from GMT, awarded in 2020.

Cleary is working on his first short documentary project. This project is based around his interest in the societal issue of waste, specifically food and drink waste. The film explores waste systems and culture, with interviews from local experts. The film dives deep into topics such as zero-waste culture and myths around recycling. The film explores personal stories and people's relationships with rubbish, as well as a wider view of the social constructs and narratives shown to consumers through media on an everyday basis. The film will convey a disconnect between the realities of modern industrial waste and recycling systems and how it relates to consumers' everyday beliefs and actions.

Cleary hopes the project will become a launching point for future projects that will enable him to delve further into societal issues and sub-cultures, which will provide eye-opening cinematic experiences for the viewer.





# CARINE BERGER

Carine Berger is a multi-disciplinary visual artist based in Galway. She obtained a First Class Honours in BA (Hons) in Fine Art from ATU in 2022. Her work was recently exhibited at Kfest 2023, Killorglin Visual Arts Festival. Berger is a member of Clay Galway, and with eight other artists, she took part in Galway 2020, Small Towns Big Ideas program. The artist's individual engagement with local community groups culminated in Clay Journeys, an online group exhibition showcased in March and April 2021, which featured clay sculptures, outdoor installations and video works. Berger is also part of Unit 22, an artist collective which has exhibited locally around Galway city since 2018. Her work features in several private collections in Ireland and abroad.

Berger explores our ways of coexistence within the world, examining our relationship with the living and how personal experiences, cultural beliefs and scientific postulates affect our sense of place in the natural environment. She investigates the role of materiality, the human senses and psyche in shaping our perception and understanding of the intangible boundary between the natural and the man-made, the individual and the universal. The ceramic process is central to her practice: through clay she explores organic forms, colours and textural intricacies, creating biomorphic sculptures which serve as metaphors to convey notions of resilience, control, spontaneity and freedom. Juxtapositions with other elements such as wool, wood and metal, express a sense of disrupted connection, reconsidering questions of belonging and alienation, balance and tension, while blurring the line between the physical reality and our mental universe.

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