



The Golden Fleece Award (Helen Lillias Mitchell Artistic Fund) is pleased to announce its 2012 Shortlist :

- Allyson Keehan, still life painting
- Conor Walton, oil painting
- Paul Mac Cormaic, painting
- Siobhan Piercy, book making and fine art printmaking
- John Lee, furniture design
- David Eager Maher, oil and watercolour painting
- Una Burke, leather design
- Claire Kerr, oil painting
- Sean Lynch, research application

The Award ceremony will take place on Tuesday 6th March, Royal Hibernian Academy, 11AM.

Details on how to apply for the Award, as well as information on winners and short-listed candidates over the full life of the prize, can be found at www.goldenfleeceaward.com, where the shortlist will be posted on Wednesday 1st of February, with full details of the shortlisted candidates' work and applications.

The Award is an artistic fund established as a charitable bequest by the late **Lillias Mitchell** (1916 - 2000). Lillias was best known in Dublin as founder of the Weaving Department in the National College of Art and Design (1951). Following her lifelong commitment to help young artists, the Golden Fleece Award is intended to support and promote the rich diversity of contemporary Irish creativity in the arts and crafts. It is essentially an enabling award: its mission is to help Irish artists of creative excellence and innovative talent, working in all the traditional arts and crafts, needing support at strategic stages in their careers.

This year marks the **tenth anniversary of the Fund**, which has by now paid out some €200,000 in bursaries. Over the years, the Trustees, with guidance from a dedicated and highly-qualified advisory panel led by Róisín de Buitléar, have received over 700 applications from artists and researchers working in a wide range of arts and crafts : these include figurative painting in various media on a large number of common as well as unusual surfaces; bronze, cement, glass, porcelain, and stone sculpture; basketry, furniture, jewellery and tapestry design; dyeing, spinning, weaving, and conservation of textiles; blacksmithing, etching, fashion artefacts, lithography.

Once again this wide-ranging prize, unique in Ireland in that it covers both visual arts and the crafts, has attracted a remarkable range of Irish creative talents, as reflected in this year's short list. **Una Burke's** sculptural leather pieces, made using traditional leatherworking techniques, have featured in fashion, art and craft events across the world. **David Eager Maher's** curious vignettes, exquisitely compact and delicate, combine pencil work with oil and watercolour, using colonial imagery, religious symbols, Victorian dandies and iconic suggestions of imperial legacies as symbols of power and time. **Allyson Keehan's** realistic and pared-down oil painting, developed to a semi-abstract quality from the genre of Still Life, concentrates on drapery in elaborate set-ups and installations. **Claire Kerr's** small scale, intricately composed paintings aim to provoke the greatest possible sense of their visual intensity and depth of meaning in the viewer. **John Lee's** furniture pieces, between the boundaries of fine furniture and fine art, combine innovative design and exceptional craftsmanship. **Sean Lynch's** research application concentrates on nineteenth century stonecarvers James and John O'Shea, brothers who carved floral decoration and zoomorphic detail upon many important buildings in the Gothic Revival style. **Paul Mac Cormaic**, in his series of oil paintings 'Islanders', takes an analytical look at our relationship in Ireland with the sea that surrounds us, at extreme weather conditions and environmental and leisure pursuits. **Siobhan Piercy**, originally a fine art printmaker, works on complex three dimensional 'books' containing ink drawings, inkjet and screen prints, which also open and fold into sculpture forms. **Conor Walton**, in his series of large 'Allegories of Painting', uses the nude to explore the possibilities of embodying truths, meanings and values in the human figure and in paint.