



UNIVERSITY  
OF MEDICINE  
AND HEALTH  
SCIENCES

# RCSI Arts Strategy 2023 - 2025





'Laboratory' by Colin Martin

## Mission

*We believe that art can enrich the learning environment, and enhance the culture and connectivity of RCSI and our community.*

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### RCSI Art Committee

The role of the RCSI Art Committee has been to oversee the care, development, interpretation of, and engagement with, the RCSI Art Collection. The Committee seeks to be inclusive of other art forms to integrate into a broader Arts Programme. It comprises internal and external representatives.

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### Strategy Purpose

The purpose of the RCSI Arts Strategy is to provide guidance to the Art Committee over the next three years in relation to all arts related activity and collections in RCSI. It will identify opportunities to deliver upon the potential of our stated mission, and is positioned within the context of the overall RCSI Strategic Plan.

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### Strategic Priorities

**Educate:** Facilitate access to and increase audiences for the Art Collection.

**Nurture:** Develop and evolve RCSI's own understanding of art.

**Discover:** Reveal and interpret the legacy of the existing Art Collection.

**Leadership:** Support the growth of RCSI as a role model amongst peers in its arts engagement.

**Governance:** Facilitate democratic, inclusive, and transparent decision-making in the management of the Art Collection and commissioning process.

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### Art Strategy and Committee Values

#### Authenticity

We will be true to the mission of RCSI to educate, nurture, and discover for the benefit of human health.

#### Inclusivity

It is important to us that we model all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion through our activity, not least through our governance, access to the Art Collection, and representation in it.

#### Transparency

We advocate for equity of access and as such we will be open and collaborative in our approach, and clear in our decision-making process.

#### Relevance

We will ensure that our work resonates with our academic programmes, the SDGs and other key areas of strategic interest to RCSI.





'Atlas and Axis' by Remco de Fouw

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

# Educate

Facilitate access to and increase audiences for the Art Collection.

### Our Goals

- Educate and inform RCSI staff about the work of the Art Committee to secure support and understanding for these strategic priorities.
- Leverage the Art Collection for unique and resonant engagement opportunities with RCSI staff, students, and the public.

### How will we know we have succeeded?

Increased visibility and awareness of the role of art in RCSI. Improved access to the Art Collection on and offline, including the availability of in-house tours. Buy-in achieved, with influential stakeholders advocating on behalf of the Art Committee and RCSI Arts Strategy.

### Key Objectives

1. Create and support a range of activities that raise the profile and understanding of the RCSI Art Collection and the Art Committee's role.
2. Develop the fluency of Art Committee members about the Art Collection in order to influence and advocate with key stakeholders.

### Actions 2023

1. Create an Art Collection tour programme including script for delivery, tour-guiding skills training incorporating accessibility.
2. Develop a new external partnership with the National Gallery of Ireland to leverage their expertise to explore the potential of our existing collection and to inform the delivery of the RCSI Arts Strategy.
3. Develop a web presence for art on rcsi.com, populate with new and existing art-related content (e.g. Commissions, Art Awards etc.).
4. Develop a specific on-campus feature to raise awareness of RCSI Art Award.





'Windows to the World' by Miranda Blennerhassett

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

**Nurture**

Develop and evolve RCSI's contemporary understanding of art and its own Art Collection in order to support RCSI strategic objectives.

**Our Goals**

- Commit to the preservation and conservation of the Art Collection for the benefit of future generations.
- Cultivate even closer links with our alumni by leveraging our Art Collection in their engagement.
- Reflect the diversity of our student population in our collections and programming activity.
- Encourage emerging artistic talent across all art forms via new commissions/awards and developing relationships with the national art colleges.

**How will we know we have succeeded?**

- An evolving Art Collection and Arts Programme that speaks to the contemporary DNA of RCSI.
- Innovative arts programming and partnerships that are recognised externally (Business to Arts Awards, Athena Swan etc.).
- An Art Collection and Arts Programme that instills pride and belonging in our faculty, staff, student, and alumni population.
- Strong relationships with national art colleges and leading art institutions.

**Key Objectives**

- 1.** Support and strengthen policies that focus both on the preservation and protection of the Art Collection and on our commissioning best practice and procedures for new work.
- 2.** Incorporate RCSI equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives into the work that the Art Committee does, and seek opportunities to articulate it through the Art Collection and Arts Programming.

**Actions 2023**

- 1.** Develop the Alumni Awards and evolve the 'Inspiring Excellence' portraits to include an Art Commission aspect to showcase the Awardees exploring doing this in partnership with art colleges to support emerging artists.
- 2.** Draft and approve a Conservation Policy and Commissioning Policy.



'Atlas and Axis' by Remco de Fouw



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

# Discover

Reveal and interpret the Art by using the Art Collection as a tool to enrich the learning experience of both students and staff.

### Our Goals

- Reveal and interpret the legacy of the existing Art Collection.
- Better understand the context of RCSI's Art Collection and aspirational Arts Programming in an academic context.
- Unlock curiosity and creative thinking by exploring the intersection of art and science.

### How will we know we have succeeded?

- At least one Art topic is included in THEP Modules.
- Internal academic research on the history and context of the Art Collection is completed.
- An audit and updated catalogue of artworks and their origins is completed.

### Key Objectives

1. Research the Art Collection and contextualise in relation to RCSI contemporary values and policies.
2. Pilot a number of new arts initiatives with RCSI colleagues, monitor and evaluate e.g. THEP Art Module, Research Summer School.

### Actions 2023

1. Through the Research Summer School, fund academic research on the history and context of Collection highlights, and those of problematic heritage in contemporary context.
2. Library/Heritage to carry out thorough cataloging of the RCSI Art Collection.
3. Explore the inclusion of Art topics in THEP Modules and make recommendations to the Steering Group with a view to piloting.
4. Explore existing literature reviews or PhD research on contextualising legacy collections in a contemporary world.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

# Leadership

Support the growth of RCSI as a role model amongst peers in it's Arts engagement.

### Our Goals

- Define the Curatorial Policy for the Art Collection to include the approach to new acquisitions and deaccessioning, and inclusivity by design in order to ensure that RCSI is modeling the values it espouses.
- Identify new opportunities for RCSI to demonstrate it's innovative and progressive spirit while honouring tradition.

### How will we know we have succeeded?

- RCSI has a contemporised Collection and a relevant Arts Programme that reflects RCSI values and goals.
- RCSI is highly differentiated through this activity and stands out amongst peer academic institutions; it's reputation and brand profile will have increased.
- RCSI is recognised for it's commitment to instilling a culture of inclusion in it's Arts Programme.

### Key Objectives

1. Benchmark our Arts activity against peer academic and similar institutions at home and abroad in relation to Art Collections and Arts Programming.
2. Explore the value of a broader Arts Programme to include music and other Arts disciplines in RCSI public and student engagement.

### Actions 2023

1. Draft and approve a Curatorial Policy and a schedule for delivery of procedures flowing from these.
2. Commission a high-level peer review, collating case studies to assist with benchmarking and deliver a thought leadership piece for advocacy use.
3. Arising from the peer review/benchmarking study, identify the gaps in RCSI's activity and implement a plan to address.
4. Provide input into the development of the new public engagement space programming in Project Connect.





'I make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honour' by Mary A. Kelly

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

# Governance

Facilitate democratic, inclusive, and transparent decision-making and appropriate use of funds to support Art Committee goals.

**Our Goals**

- Address the composition and representation of the Art Committee.
- Understand the scope and scale of the RCSI Arts Strategy.
- Secure high-level endorsement of the RCSI Arts Strategy from RCSI President, and Vice Chancellor & CEO.

**How will we know we have succeeded?**

- Democratic composition of the Art Committee.
- Clearly defined ROI metrics, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Sufficient funding to match the scale of the ambition in the RCSI Arts Strategy.

**Key Objectives**

- 1.** Prioritise activity annually against a feasibility, viability and desirability matrix.
- 2.** Identify the expertise and resources we need to inform and support our activity and secure it through procurement or partnership. Explore funding opportunities to support the work of the Art Committee.

**Actions 2023**

- 1.** Recruit a student representative to the Art Committee, and ensure our Terms of Reference and onboarding plan are fit for purpose.
- 2.** Publish the RCSI Arts Strategy, Art Committee composition, and our Curatorial Policy on the website endorsed by RCSI President, and Vice Chancellor & CEO and review annually.
- 3.** Scope all work plans appropriately and compile an annual budget.
- 4.** Build the case for support to secure the necessary budget and resources annually to deliver upon the RCSI Arts Strategy.

# Art Committee

Summary of achievements to date and membership.

## Art Collection Management and Care

### Hang - Introduced best practice

- Streamlined Artwork on corridors of 123 St Stephen's Green.
- Brought Presidents' portraits up-to-date in Exam Hall.
- Addressed excessive signage on portraits.
- Established RCSI House Style.
- Ceremonial photographs rehang.
- Established protocols for wayfinding, plaques, signage etc.

### Managed Gift Acquisitions

- TJ Gilmartin.
- Fahrenheit v Celsius.
- African Birds.
- 'Damage', (Brain map series).
- President's signed silver salver (MP Burke, President 1952-54).
- Completed Inventory of Art Collection.
- Catalogued Sculpture Collection.
- Drafted loan agreement for custodianship of Hospitals Cup.
- Drafted RCSI Arts Strategy 2023-2025.
- Managed 10 new commissions.

## Overseeing New Art Commissions

### Art Awards

- 2016: 'Atlas and Axis' by Remco de Fouw.
- 2017: 'Windows to the World' by Miranda Blennerhasset.
- 2018: 'Nine Remarkable Women' by Amelia Stein.
- 2019: 'I make these promises solemnly, freely and upon my honour' by Mary A. Kelly.
- 2020: 'Laboratory' by Colin Martin.

### President Portraits

- 2020: Prof. Ken Mealy by Catherine Creaney.
- 2022: Prof. P. Ronan O'Connell by Nicholas Robinson.

### One-off Commissions

- 2019: Women on Walls.
- 2020: Cameron Awards, Jason Ellis.
- 2022: Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery Sculpture Busts of Nightingale and O'Farrell, John Rainey.

### Commissions in the pipeline

- Stained Glass Artwork, Gift of Association of Medical and Dental Graduates, 2023.
- President's Portrait, 2024.
- Alumni Awards, 2024.
- Project Connect Courtyard, 2025.



## Art Committee Members

### RCSI

- Laura Viani, President RCSI.
- Aíne Gibbons, Director of Development and Chair of RCSI Art Committee.
- Jessica Handy, Digital Archivist, Library.
- Liz Hughes, Head of EDI.
- Clive Lee, Professor of Anatomy, RCSI and RHA.
- Susan Leyden, Archivist, Library.
- Louise Loughran, Chief Communications Officer.
- Bryan Sheils, Head of Campus Services.

### External

- Una Sealy, Artist, RHA Member.
- Louise O'Reilly, Chief Executive Business to Arts.
- Rachel Assaf, Curatorial Projects Manager, Business to Arts.

The RHA is a prestigious contemporary art gallery and artist run academy with a long-standing relationship with RCSI.

Business to Arts is a registered charity that develops creative partnerships and provides arts and culture consultancy services to corporate patrons, of which RCSI is one.

*If RCSI is simply a collection of physical spaces, of concrete, wood, steel and glass, then its people; staff, faculty and students are the life that flow through it, keeping its heart beating. And interwoven, through this space and life force is our Art Collection. Its soul. That which is almost impossible to define but is the measure of who we were, who we are and who we could yet become.*

***Professor Laura Viani,***

President RCSI