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1. A Reflection on What Has Come to Pass

Coming to the end of my time at university, I am thankful to reflect on all the opportunities, teachings, and workshops from the past three years. All these elements of teaching in the photography department have shaped my art practice. I am excited to begin my journey as an artist post-graduation.

My art practice has taken a mainly photographic approach while I have been at university. With the help of teachers, I have been able to learn how to use analogue photography and alternative development techniques. It was through these processes that I learnt the magic of photography, and this has carried through to the way I photograph today.

When I started at Swansea College of Art, the work I was creating focused around home and the feelings that I associated with where I grew up. This took a mainly digital approach but as the year progressed, I started to experiment with analogue processes.



I started to think about how my photographic style would begin to form from analogue processes. I was fascinated by how little control I had over the final image. The image processed as a physical object before it could become digital was very interesting to me.

At the end of my first year, COVID had completely dominated education's opportunities of face-to-face teaching. My practice took shape from the emotions I felt living between two countries. Travelling back to Northern Ireland became a longing, and I found myself stuck in a deep emotion of loneliness in both places. I would always find myself stuck in one place or the other. Still, I preferred being stuck in Northern Ireland, even though the distance made it feel different. However, it is through those eyes that I have seen my home in a new way. Studying in Wales gave me the space to understand those roots and, in turn, find pride in my nationality.

An opportunity came up for creating work for Elysium's *Without Borders* project, which would show in Swansea and then make its way around the world. This was my first opportunity for showing work under a theme.

It wasn't until the second year that I started to become more experimental with materiality. Our assignment was to make a photobook. A couple of the artists who had visited and spoken were encouraging a new lease of life for the photography living in books. Paper stocks and covers were all art experiments of their own. I was inspired to use materials to communicate my relationship to northern Ireland's landscape. Through the help of the glass department, I learnt various skills in this material – resulting in the creation of a glass book.

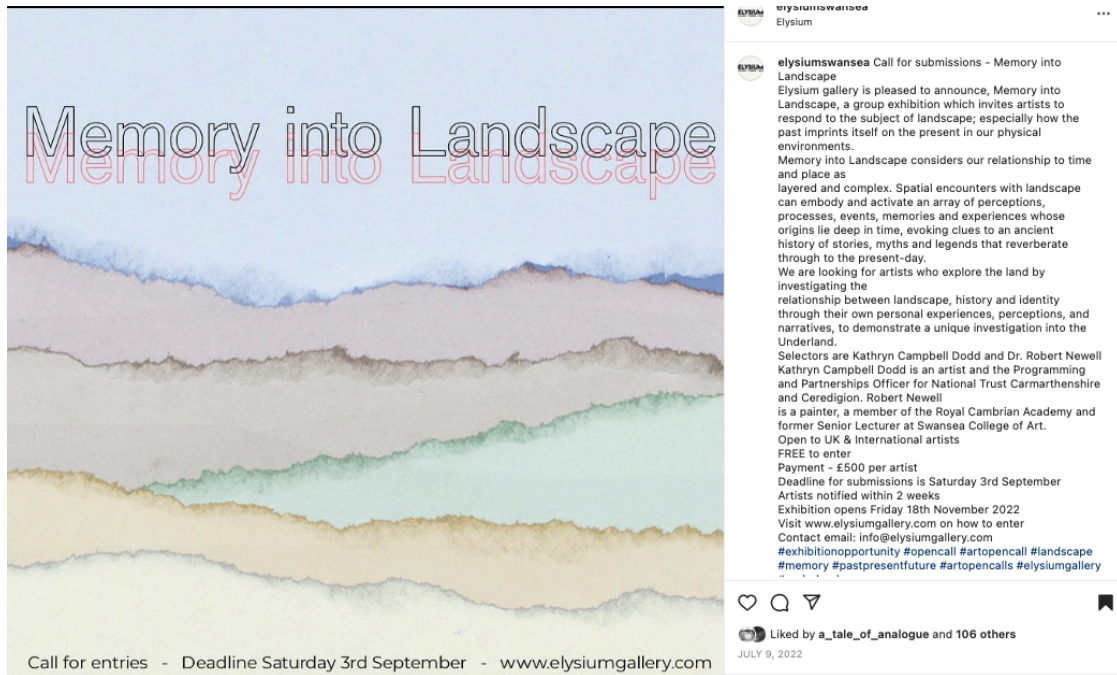


Second year also gave me the opportunity to help with the installation and invigilation of Gareth Philip's *Abysm*. Within this opportunity I was able to learn about the process of curating work to a space. Gareth explained the challenges of working under time pressures on installation day. In my post-graduate career these experiences will be invaluable for the continuation of hanging and curating work.

Since my second year I have applied to be involved in as many opportunities as I can. Most of these applications have been unsuccessful but I have started to understand the process of applying and rejection. This is a learning process and requires a positive attitude. I have learnt a lot through applying for opportunities.

The more I apply for opportunities the more I start to notice what each opportunity is looking for. I have found it good practice to apply even when I think I won't be selected. Through the chance to apply to projects I have grown in my confidence that my work will be seen and ultimately judged primarily off the way it looks at first glance. My statements, however, are just as important and this makes both sides of the application important.

2. Applying for the Memory into Landscape, Elysium, Open call September 2022



During the summer break in 2022 an open call was posted on Instagram by Elysium asking for applications from artists who create work responding to the theme memory into landscape.

I had been working predominately with Ireland's landscape for the last semester of second year. Spending my summer in Ireland, I wanted to create another project in the landscape as a head start on my final major project. I was noticing that the photography which appealed most to me was the photography which extracted storylines from the land.

I started to use the open call as a brief for my research, as the open call was sent out with a few months' notice of the deadline, I was able to begin new work with the intent of my project to be ready when the submission date was. This both benefited me and disadvantaged me.

I wanted to create new work and didn't consider already created projects that fit the open call's themes. From this, I learnt a valuable lesson about the readiness of work and working to deadlines. As this open call was aimed at completed work, the likelihood my project, which was made in just over a month, being selected would be low.

Although my work wasn't selected, I was very inspired to continue this project on to university. This open call encouraged me to have conversations about Irish Landscape in my part-time job over summer. I was starting to realise how difficult it is to manage a job alongside creative practice. Through trying to maintain this, I have started to think about how it might be possible to manage both when I graduate.

I was aware that they were only selecting five artists. I had only applied to one open call in the summer, thinking that it was the opportunity I really wanted. I could have put the work into a different open call, and I might have got a spot. This is because the selection process depends on the curators and what they are looking for.

I wasn't overly upset that I didn't get into the show because I was able to start the creation of a new project which inspired me for my final major project at university. Starting the research and visual elements of the work meant I had a head start for my final major project in the months I would be living in Wales.

3. Phonebooks in the Attic 2022

Not too long after I was declined from the Elysium show I received a message from Dan who runs Phonebooks in the Attic. As part of the launch of his online website he was collaborating with artists to have a show in Elysium. At the show, artists were welcomed to exhibit a couple of images and sell some work (with commission). There was no theme to the open call, so artists had free reign for what they wanted to display.

I decided to show the work which was in progress from the summer. Doing this allowed me to have discussions with the people who attended the show about the work that I had made. This would help me as I was moving on to the final major project in the next semester.

The exhibition was fully curated and installed by Dan. My work was printed and positioned on the wall in a way that Dan thought would suit it best. There was no frames or variety of sizing, which made the idea of a 'white cube' even more prevalent. I would have preferred to have control over my part of the work in the final exhibition, however this is a lesson that I will have to learn from open calls and the conditions that a curator may have.

The show was only open for one night and taken down the next morning, which meant that inviting people to the show was a lot tougher because if someone wanted to see the work, they only had one opportunity.

It is not common that a curator will set up a show without entries from an open call, so this was a rare occurrence. However, Dan knew me from Instagram, and it was interesting to see how networking played a part in this opportunity.

4. Social media as a Tool

Social media has played a vital role for the continuation of my photographic practice. Although Instagram has a good side and a bad side, I feel that Instagram has been very important in the past decade for networking and sharing work.

As a student, I have struggled with co-ordinating my Instagram in a professional way. Some more established artists on Instagram have laid out their Instagram as a fluid communication of their practice, with images from their projects intertwined with opportunities.

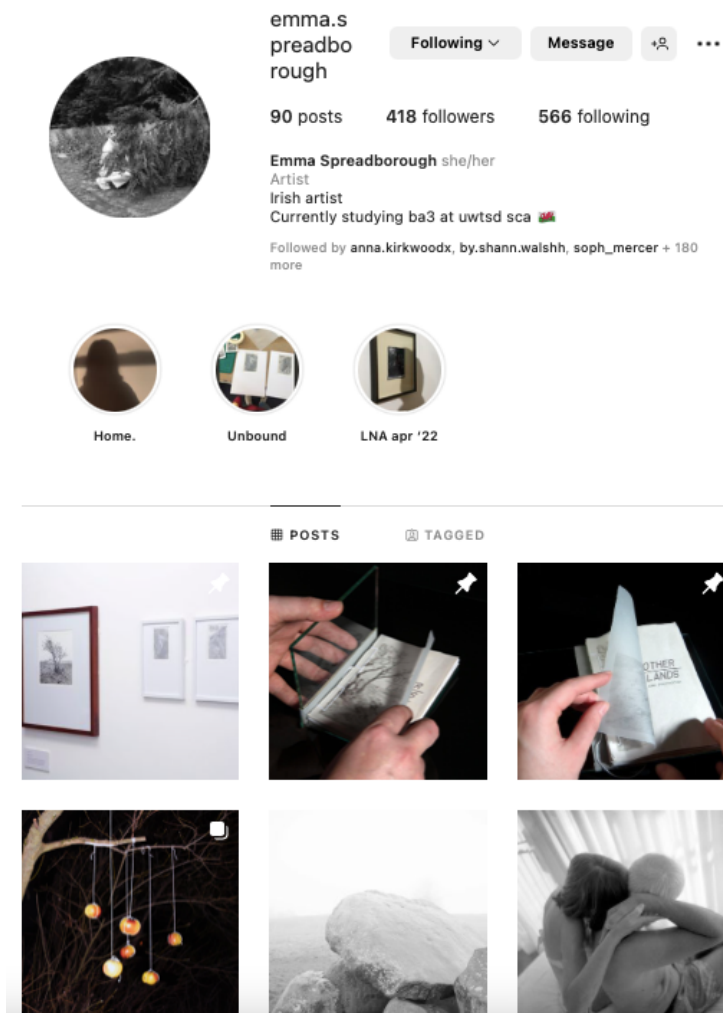
The more I use Instagram, the more I question why it matters which way I use Instagram. Of course, it is important I represent myself as someone who is serious about photographic practice but there is no reason why this can't take a more casual, visual diary approach.

I would like to work on the personability of my practice through Instagram. As the roots of my projects come from personal experiences with Ireland, it is only right that I reflect more of a personal approach to my Instagram too. I would also like make use of the stories section to share more updates, to be more personal with my followers.

In my final year at university, my final major project has dominated the content of my Instagram. I thought that my account needed to have a style, and this would speak for my art practice. Through discussions that I have had with artists about their art style, I have started to see how stagnant this makes my practice. If I am only thinking of my art as one set thing, I am limiting both my creativity and the openness of my practice. This misconception came from my perceptions of the art on Instagram that had a certain feel or emotion to them. Most of these artists were well established and had specifically chosen to present themselves that way.

Instagram's algorithm has become bias towards videos, and this may be the best way to move forward for presenting the work that I make from now on. I will have to

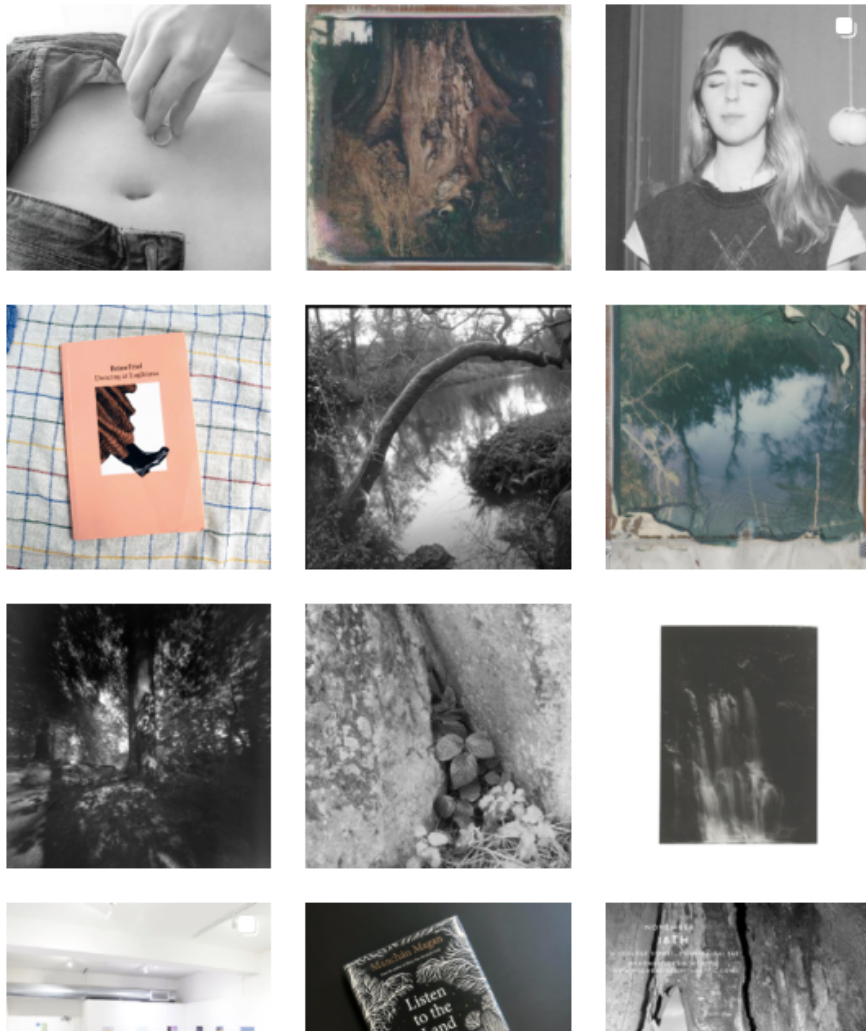
start thinking about the sustainability of my work through update videos or behind the scenes.



My Instagram currently reflects the work which I have been doing as part of my degree. I have used the pin feature so that the first images my followers see is the work which I have completed in the last year. This project sets the tone to the ideas which I have explored through my research. When I complete my degree work and have installation photos for the Swansea/ London show I will unpin the work from last year and replace it with the new work I have made.

Building up a network on Instagram has helped me to learn new skills, hear about artist talks and gain feedback on my work. When my time at university ends, having

Instagram as a tool for keeping up to date with the international art scene will be essential.



While I was writing my dissertation, I started to post some of the books that were inspiring my research, allowing my followers to see the behind the scenes of my practice. These breaks from the posting of current and archival images help me to explain some of the themes and ideas behind what I am creating. I was warned by a friend in Belfast to be cautious about how I do this and to think about if it is important that my art practice is understood so much on Instagram.

5. Young Artist of the year Award, 2023

A friend recommended an award from a local arts centre in Lisburn. The title for the award was *Young Artist of the year award 2023*.

There were a range of conditions for applications, you had to be born in the Lisburn/Castlereagh community and you must be under the age of 25. This award was free to enter and open to all art forms. The selected artist wins funding for a project, community engagements or equipment. Given that this was quite a small area to open the funding to and not well publicised, there may be a higher chance of my application being successful.

The name of this award was quite intimidating, as I don't believe that I am fully ready to present my degree project as it is not yet fully completed. Through applying to other calls for work, I know that this would be a really good way of introducing my work to new curators and becoming familiar to the process of creating open calls. I wasn't aware that the island arts centre offered opportunities like this, so even if my application is declined, I now know a new place to look for funding or open calls.

The funding would mean a lot to the development of my practice, so I worked on an application which outlined all the opportunities I have been involved in.

This was the first time I had applied for a Northern Ireland based call out, and it did feel intimidating. I was starting to question if the work was coming across too political or challenging for a mainly protestant community. It is not my intention to offend anybody through the research or nature of my work. I feel that being in Wales has made me forget slightly just how much conversation feels like treading on eggshells here. I have freedom of expression in Wales but there are different ways that I must go about this in Northern Ireland. Although the selection should still be a fair judgement and there will be lots of people making work about Northern Ireland, I felt that the work should be watered down to accommodate the possibility of a

successful application. This was making me feel conscious about the ideas I have been looking at during my degree.

I did not win the award, but this award is a yearly opportunity which I will apply to next year when the applications open.

6. Assisting in a Shoot

I was asked to help assist in a shoot for Oriel Myrddin with Artist Abby Poulson in 2022. My role was to assist in the documentation on Kathryn Campbell-Dodds performance about Cragen Beca, this took a very simple form of supporting the photographer. However, it was very valuable for both my own practice and the awareness of this avenue as an artist.

The beginning of the day was very rainy, and it was challenging to work with the limitations from this. However, I learnt a lot about being aware of the realities of photographing amid weather difficulties. I had to be aware of where Abby was throughout the event in case, she needed anything that I was carrying.

Attending this performance was also beneficial to my art practice. I started to feel a real sense of pride in the Welsh culture. This event felt like a celebration of the history of Wales, and it really struck me as something that I miss in Northern Ireland. Coming into my last semester of second year this had a massive impact on the development of my book project and the direction I moved my work. The dialogue I started to adapt to Northern Ireland was inspired by the pride of culture in Wales and how it felt to be included in that.





7. Leading Workshops at Neath Abbey



Through an opportunity at the university, I joined a group of 2 other students from my class to start workshop planning at Neath Abbey Primary school. This was an opportunity which was particularly important to me as photography was not an avenue which was explored much in my primary school or secondary school. I was not very aware of the realities of being a photographer both artistically and commercially. I think this could have been because of the availability of photography when I was in primary but the opportunity to be a part of this in the next generation's classrooms was so valuable.

So much of the work which went into the planning and preparations for the workshops happened behind the scenes, with many departments in the university. Having the ability of funding for this project allowed us as a group to feel that the university also valued what we were going into the school to achieve.

There was a lot of communication through email and trialling the equipment before our first workshop. We communicated with the forest school's teacher Philippa via email to work on a lesson plan which would take the kids out into the nearby natural environment to work with nature and the photography equipment. In the afternoon, we planned a completely different workshop which looked at photography through collage and was set indoors. This gave the children a chance to use the images they had made during the day in an imaginative way.

Our first workshop was with the year 4 class, which was made up of 29 pupils aged 8-9. This class was energetic and very excited by the prospect of using digital cameras in their class.

These are some of the collages the kids made.

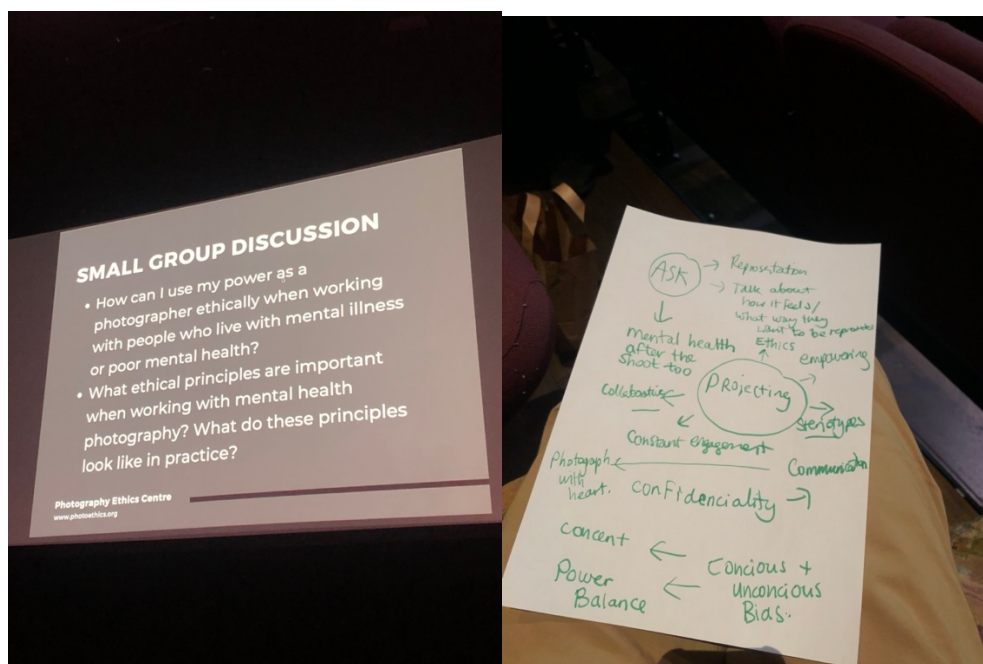




8. Healing Through Photography Conference

MONDAY 3rd APRIL 2023		
Downstairs Theatre (The MAC)	Artist Talks (Various Locations)	Workshops (Various Locations)
REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS		SUNRISE PHOTOGRAPHY AT CAVE HILL Meet at Belfast Exposed
WELCOME & FILM SCREENING Deirdre Robb, CEO Belfast Exposed		
ROISIN McDONOUGH Arts Council Northern Ireland		
PROF. DONOVAN WYLIE Photographer and Professor, Ulster University		
NETWORKING BREAK - THE MAC		
NOEL KELLY CEO, Visual Artists Ireland		
JACK MOYSE Photographer		
AILBHE GREANEY Lecturer		
	LUNCH FOR DELEGATES EXPLORING BELFAST Belfast Exposed TERESA LYLE Belfast Exposed High Street CLARE LYONS Catalyst Arts SVANTE GULLICHSEN Arts For All	
		MORWENNA KEARSLEY Belfast Exposed SAVANNAH DODD The Mac CONOR O'BRIEN & BEN MALCOLMSON Belfast Exposed MERVYN SMYTH & SAM ROBB Belfast Exposed High Street
NETWORKING BREAK - BELFAST EXPOSED & BELFAST EXPOSED HIGH STREET		
		MORWENNA KEARSLEY Belfast Exposed CONOR O'BRIEN & BEN MALCOLMSON Belfast Exposed MERVYN SMYTH & SAM ROBB Belfast Exposed High Street
ANTHONY LUVERA Photographer		
CATHAL McNAUGHTON Pulitzer Prize Winner		
DRINKS RECEPTION - HARBOUR COMMISSIONER OFFICES		
		MARITIME MILE PHOTOGRAPHY WALK

Over the Easter break a local Belfast gallery called Belfast Exposed was running a Photography conference exploring photography's positive effects on mental health. I wanted to attend this conference because there was an excellent range of speakers who were from all kinds of sectors including the arts, teaching, and research. Throughout my time studying I have shied away from projects on mental health because of a lack of awareness on how to approach the topic in a positive way. However, I was hoping that through attending this I would be able to learn more about how I can cause a difference through art to have a positive impact on mental health and representation in my work.



I am aware of how much photography has influenced my own mental health positively. Through photography I have been able to learn more about myself and the world around me. In photography I have the freedom to document this through my own perception. Through this conference I was able to learn how much the arts can really affect a sense of belonging and inclusion.



There was a wide variety of artists sharing their own experience with low mental health, the whole event had a feeling of being a safe and open space for positive

change. I was able to meet new artists from all over the world who were attending the conference and became a very good opportunity for my future career in Belfast, from both the learning and networking angles.



9. CCA Digital Residency Derry

CCA Derry put out an open call for their digital residency program where they invite artists to send in proposals for a one-week residency. Residencies are something that I am very interested in, especially the opportunity of a residency in Northern/southern Ireland. Being able to conduct research while also being in Ireland would allow me to create as I move through the week's research.

As I had only applied for one other residency in my art career, so I was not completely lost when making an application, however I did not have much experience with digital work. This was a criterion that they asked for specifically and they wanted to read details on the artists engagement with digital work in the artist statement section. I did not want this to stop me from a chance to get this opportunity, so I wrote about my experiences in the strengths of digital work and digital events I have attended. This may not be what they want to hear, and there could be conditions that for a chance to be on a residency that I must have experience in this field.

The application process and requirements of this opportunity have made me realise that my CV needs a wider range of experience. Especially working digitally, as this is the way that all forms of art is advancing.

My application:

Emma Spreadborough

Proposal

My research to this point of my practice has focused on the origins of Irish culture and the magic of Landscape within Ireland. This is an ongoing research theme which I would like to continue through the opportunity of a residency with CCA.

I propose the research into the supernatural beliefs of the Ulster Scots from 1672-1920. This is inspired by a paper written by Andrew Sneddon

and John Privilege (eds) for the University of Ulster entitled The supernatural in Ulster Scots Folklore and Literature Reader. This comes as a continuation of the understanding of how the mythological has a trace in early Christian Traditions in Ireland. This research will involve the access of archives and papers which also research the early Ulster Scots and their supernatural beliefs.

Some believed that "the Irish & Scots fairies fought regularly every year for control of the magical realms of Ulster."

Through my research I will seek to find the magical realms of Ulster and this will be a continuation of my degree show work. As an artist I am widely influenced by the books Listen to the Land speak by Máiréad Magan and Visions of the Occult by Victoria Jenkins, both books will also influence the direction of the work. I propose a photographic response to my research which may also move in the direction of film.

Artist Statement and Experience

Emma Spreadborough is an Irish artist who works predominantly in the photographic media. Her art practice is widely influenced by Irish literature, culture, and folklore. In her most recent work, You Mustn't Go Looking, Spreadborough has been inspired by the writing of Brian Friel in Dancing at Lughnasa. She uses the analogies of his writing to explore the ideas of the Irish home and landscape in the wake of recent Northern Irish history. She is currently an active member of Swansea College of Art, where she is in her third year.

Coming from a cohort of students who have struggled through the pressures of a predominantly digital university experience of my first year, I have had to adapt quickly to the usage of digital media. Through this time in university, I have been able to pick up skills with media and communications online such as Zoom and Teams which have enabled confidence on these platforms. This has been useful in the case of distance when communicating. I have attended online talks, exhibitions, and workshops. Being in attendance of these events have made me aware of the importance and diversity of using digital media to communicate to an audience.

Website: www.emmaspreadborough.com

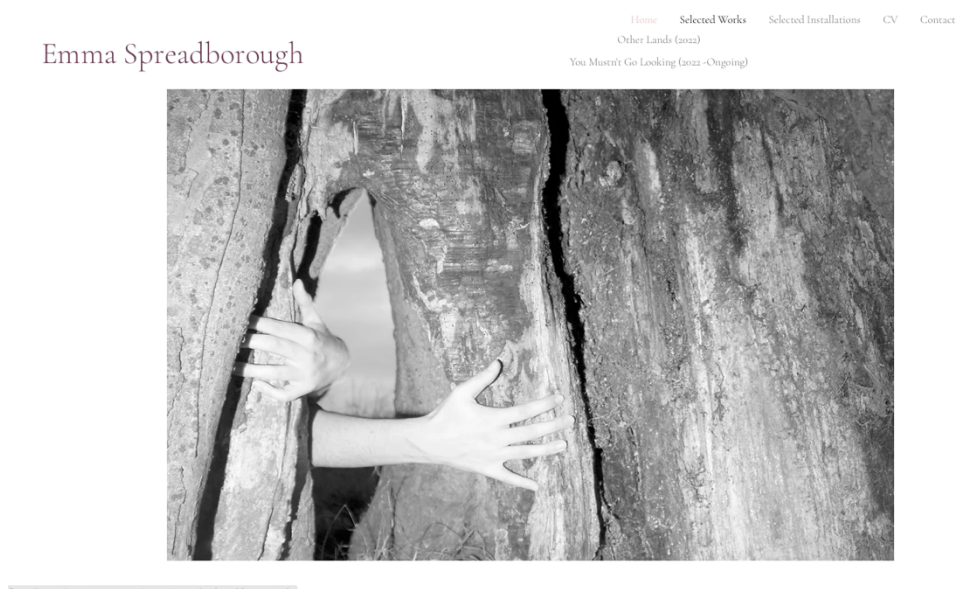
Instagram: @emma.spreadborough

I heard back from CCA and they said that my application was unsuccessful but that there would be more opportunity to apply to other opportunities in the future.

10. Creating a website

One of the main criteria that the CCA application was looking for was a website, which I did not have at the time of seeing the opportunity. I had previously made a website for a module in the second year of university which contained work from my time at university. This website was dated, and the work which was on there was not my best work anymore.

As class we spoke about the advantages and disadvantages of some website creation options. I had used WIX in previous years and this seemed to be the best way to make a website. The plan I was on was basic which meant that I still had to pay to have an ad-free website. Because a website will be very important to the continuation of my practice and my visibility in the coming year, I bought a domain. This was in time for the residency application.



The format of my website is very minimal, and it will need another revamp in the time that I have before the summer show. However, I was able to create a website which

showcases the intent behind my work and some of the most recent projects that I have created.

I bought the domain www.emmaspreadborough.com and my website went live for the application, however I will not be publishing my website on my social media until I am able to do some of the final touches which will be important for the final degree show.

My website lacks a uniqueness. It does not do much more than what a portfolio or Instagram account could do. This will be something I have to consider as I continue to evolve my website. There are aspects of my website which will need to link the viewer on to other elements that guide their experience.

My intention for having a website is to showcase work and facilitate more opportunities for showing work. This will grow my CV – which is currently lacks exhibitions. In the CV section I have included some of the opportunities which I have assisted in throughout my time at university. As I grow my CV, I will start to edit this and take away some of the less important opportunities.

11. Applying for a portfolio review at SOURCE magazine

Source magazine opened an opportunity to send work in for a zoom crit, which I entered my degree show project into. I foresee my degree show as the opening into a long-term project which I think will be benefitted massively by a portfolio review at source.

The application was free and open to all UK and Ireland artists. Each slot is 30 minutes and the artists selected will be contacted in May. Coming into a period where I will finish university and start to struggle with the lack of crits, I think this will give me a direction to aim my work when I graduate.

I still haven't heard a response back from SOURCE, but the portfolio reviews are on the 9th June.

12. Assisting at Ffotogallery

Sian Addicott contacted me about helping with the curation and installation process at ffotogallery alongside the team there. Learning to be confident in installation and curation will be very beneficial to my art career – especially the installation of group shows. Through this opportunity I have learnt how to put up a show with a range of materials (vinyl, frames, and moving image), which has allowed me to have a background in the main forms of installing a show.

Although my role did not hold as much weight as the curators, I felt that the environment was very safe for making mistakes and I learnt a lot about the tools which are needed to install a show. I was able to learn how to use the drill properly, which was my main goal for the day.

I have assisted in the installation of one other show in the past for Gareth Philips, but I did not have as much of a role with the curation. At Ffotogallery my opinion on the curation was encouraged and listened to – this opportunity gave me a good experience with how the works can communicate with each other.





13. Experience with installation shots

I volunteered to do the installation shots for the Alan Whatley award to gain skills for my own exhibitions in the future. Making the images took a couple of hours and the process was not as straightforward as I thought it would be. Knowing that you were doing installation shots that could potentially be used for the artists' Instagram was quite intimidating, but it pushed me to spend time on the photos.

I borrowed a camera from the uni but I understand how the process could be translated onto my own camera for the future. I tried to use similar exposures and editing throughout, so that there would not be any issues with colouring when an artist put the images beside each other on an application.





14. Applying for a studio space at FLAX

Belfast

My application:

Biography/ Artist Statement

Emma Spreadborough (b.2000) is an Irish artist currently living in Wales while studying her final year BA in photography in the arts at Swansea College of Art. In the development of her practice, Emma uses a mainly photographic approach with ranging mixed media, including analogue and digital photography. Her work explores the effect of Irish landscape and politics on her identity. Emma is inspired by the distance of studying in Wales and how this has shaped a new perspective of home.

On the completion of her second-year project, Emma looked at the invisible border lines of Northern Ireland and how they are situated in the landscape. This project was entitled *Other Lands* and was set in the natural park of Cuilcagh, where you can pass through Northern to Southern Ireland with the only indication being a text message. This was created as a one of one, A5 sized glass book using newspaper, oven baked paper, and tracing paper. *Other Lands'* materiality is designed as a metaphor for the Irish landscape and its relationship to the artist.

In her most recent work, Emma has been inspired by Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, where Friel writes about home life in Ireland in relation to safety, structure, and control. Outside of this is the Irish Landscape, which Friel's play regularly refers to as dangerous and Pagan. This relationship between the people, land and religions in Ireland has become particularly tricky in the North. It seems that today, the magic of the Irish landscape has been replaced by the scarring of a conflicted past.

In her new project, *You Mustn't go looking*, Emma explores her relationship with Irish lifestyle and landscape in a search for pointers of Ireland's pagan culture of the past.

Education

Emma is currently an active and passionate student at Swansea College of Art, studying in her third year as an undergraduate student. Beginning her studies after the challenging and uncertain lockdown of 2020, the art scene was still very much confined to online learning. Coming out of this experience, in the latter half of her second-year study Emma was keen to be involved in as many workshops and external activities as she could, including a lighting workshop with photographer Ossi Piispanen.

Professional Experience

In 2021 Emma was involved in the installation and invigilation of Gareth Philips' *Abysm* at Elysium, Castle Street, Swansea. This experience involved working closely with Philips during

the curation and installation of his art, while working with any creative challenges which came up. Emma also assisted in the photography for Kathryn Campbell-Dodd's Cragen Beca Parade on 1st May 2022. This performance was in association with Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthenshire.

Emma's work has been shown in Elysium and Volcano gallery as part of group exhibitions from 2021-22. Most recently, Emma also took part in showing her work at group exhibition *Phonebooks in the Attic* in Elysium Gallery, Swansea. An exhibition in 2022 which saw multiple photographic and illustrative artists display work in a pop-up exhibition.

Selected exhibitions:

2022 *Phonebooks in the Attic* Group exhibition, Elysium Gallery

2022 *Unbound* Group exhibition, Swansea College of Art

2021 *Soft Anatomy* Group exhibition, Volcano gallery

2021 *Without Borders* Group exhibition, Elysium Gallery

During her final year at Swansea College of Art, Emma has taken part in teaching a series of photography workshops at Abbey primary school, Neath. In these workshops, children 7-9 years old used the Welsh landscape to inspire their photography. These workshops began in March and are an ongoing process which has been very successful.

Expression of interest

As a soon to be graduate of Swansea College of Art, I will be moving back to Northern Ireland in the summer of 2023 and am looking to set up a studio for the continuation of my practice.

I have been looking at the facilities and opportunities of Flax and think that the space here is perfect for opportunities of community engagement. I have attended many of the exhibitions which have been set up for late night art events while I have been home. I have been very inspired by the opportunities of group shows here. I am a very passionate artist and through the flax community I believe that I could learn a lot from other artists, while also skill sharing what I have learnt at Swansea College of Art.

The continuation of my practice is rooted in the conversations I have had with other artists, and I am very excited to see where the future of art in Belfast takes me. The

conversations I have here, especially as an artist who is very engaged in making work about Northern Ireland, have shaped what I have created to date.

I will be living in Swansea until I move home permanently to Northern Ireland. Therefore, I will only be able to move into a studio at the end of June (14th). I am aware that this opportunity is for a lease at the start of May, but I am willing to pay the month of May without moving in until I am back in Northern Ireland.

Response

Studio at Flax

Dear Emma,

Many thanks for your interest in a studio with us at our Emerging Artist Programme space at 7 North Street. We are delighted to offer you the space from 1 May, if you are still interested, please let me know and we will forward the contract and further information. Congratulations.

Best wishes,
Gail

Gail Prentice
Managing Director
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I received an email from Flax which confirmed that I had been selected for a studio at Flax. This was a real encouragement as it allows me to stay within a community for the next stage of my career. The lease is for as long as I choose to stay. So, throughout the next year I will be focusing on community engagement and will work to build my CV through this. I want to be active in artistic experimentation and flax will give the space to do this.

15. My Practice

In the three years that I have been at Swansea College of Art, I have seen a parallel between the themes I have been interested in. Home, culture, and Identity have been at the forefront of the research that I carried out for my dissertation, however my research has been constantly evolving with the movement of my practice. When I leave university, my practice will be based in Northern Ireland which will massively impact my work. I will not have short time scales to create work, and I will be able to travel to the south more freely. The creation of a long-term project will be the reality of my continuation in photography when I graduate because I will have to work a day job too.

Currently in my photographic work, I have been looking at the landscape in Ireland and the history of magic which is ingrained in it. This has helped me to start seeing the North in a new way and has brought me to be interested in the culture of Ireland.

I have enjoyed the freedom of expressing my relationship to Northern Ireland while I have lived in Wales. However, I will have to be aware of the impacts of how I explain this in the future of my work. It is easy to say the wrong thing when expressing identity in Northern Ireland.

Major Skills

A key part of my time at university has been learning the skills which have helped me to open my practice in an experimental and fine art perspective. These skills have been centred around the use of analogue processes, such as using analogue cameras and developing film.

Secondary Skills

My involvement in the opportunities through university have given me a range of secondary skills, such as a background in installation shots, the setting up and execution of workshops. My assistance with galleries over university have helped me

to learn a range of skills such as drilling and installation which will be useful as a secondary skill.

Interests

My Practice's interests lie in Irish literature, folklore and landscape. Most of these themes have carried through the work I have created since applying to university. I am interested in how Irish people and culture have been represented through time, and how these representations affect the cultures that exist in the north of Ireland. Irish homelife and especially the impacts of this on my upbringing have also become a particular interest in the work that I am making.

In the last few months of research, I have started to notice the awkwardness of discussing Irish politics amongst certain people, this may also be a potential avenue to explore when I move forward with my work. I feel that this discomfort has pulled my work in a certain direction in the past, in attempts to avoid awkward conversations. I want to learn to be confident with the way that I use photography to discuss Northern Ireland, this means confronting these issues and researching further into them.

Practice and Opportunities

My practice depends strongly on opportunities. If I want to be able to fund living and art, I will have to work towards a CV which showcases that I am actively involved in the art community throughout both my time in university and outside it.

The opportunities which I have been applying for recently have been based around the continuation of my practice. I have been applying for opportunities to get my photography seen, this includes applying for portfolio reviews, magazines, and residencies.

I have been building up my experience through the attendance of events in both Swansea and Belfast, this has helped me to network and learn about new artists.

I have been applying for opportunities to assist in galleries for extra experience. This would also assist in the possibility of work in a gallery in the future.

Learning these skills gives me the chance to be self-sufficient in putting up my own exhibitions in the future.

16. Three-year Plan

With the final semester of university quickly approaching, I have been increasingly invested in my post-university plans. When I fully graduate in July, I am saying goodbye to my education in Swansea for the time being, as I plan to move back to Belfast. This will open a new art scene for me to be involved in within Ireland.

I plan to continue working on my art practice as a photographic artist within the space of Northern Ireland. This will be supported and maintained by a series of opportunities that I will be applying to be involved in. I foresee freelancing and part time work, working together for the first two years after moving back to Belfast. Throughout this time, I will work on refining my photographic outlook and setting my work up in a new community. I have applied and been accepted to Flax Belfast's artist studio, which will give me the push to be in a community and will open opportunities with workshops and group shows in the next year or so.

Currently, when I am in Northern Ireland I work as a barista in a coffee shop outside of Belfast. I have had this job since I was 16 and they have supported me for work whenever I have been home from Swansea. To have the security of a job which I can return to when my degree ends, will be a lifeline to fund my art practice. Although it is a minimum wage job, I enjoy working in set daylight hours. This will allow me to be free to do art at night. I feel that I am more productive and inspired at night so this works very well for me.

As most of my work centres around Northern Ireland and the emotion that I feel being in the landscape here after living away, I wonder if the direction of my work will be changed after living there more permanently. My graduation project has included research around Irish magic and landscape, which I see as ongoing. This will require me to research even more into these themes and travel around Ireland to complete the work that I started in Wales. As part of the development of this work I will need to be able to move around the archives of galleries in the West coast of Ireland.

The arts community in Belfast is quite unfamiliar to me, as I didn't go to university in Northern Ireland, I have missed out on meeting some of the key gallery assistants and artists who would have been useful to know post-university.

I have had connections with the gallery Belfast Exposed in the past. Belfast Exposed run a volunteering system that will help me to progress my skills in installation and invigilation. Volunteering will open conversations with artists also involved with the gallery. Belfast Exposed have a darkroom and archive which is public access with booking so these facilities may be helpful to have in the local area.

17. CV

Emma Spreadborough

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Biography/ Artist Statement

Emma Spreadborough (b.2000) is an Irish artist currently living in Wales while studying her final year BA in photography in the arts at Swansea College of Art. In the development of her practice, Emma uses a mainly photographic approach with ranging mixed media, including analogue and digital photography. Her work explores the effect of Irish landscape and politics on her identity. Emma is inspired by the distance of studying in Wales and how this has shaped a new perspective of home.

On the completion of her second-year project, Emma looked at the invisible border lines of Northern Ireland and how they are situated in the landscape.

This project was entitled *Other Lands* and was set in the natural park of Cuilcagh, where you can pass through Northern to Southern Ireland with the only indication being a text message. This was created as a one of one, A5 sized glass book using newspaper, oven baked paper, and tracing paper. *Other Lands'* materiality is designed as a metaphor for the Irish landscape and its relationship to the artist.

In her most recent work, Emma has been inspired by Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, where Friel writes about home life in Ireland in relation to safety, structure, and control. Outside of this is the Irish Landscape, which Friel's play regularly refers to as dangerous and Pagan. This relationship between the people, land and religions in Ireland has become particularly tricky in the North. It seems that today, the magic of the Irish landscape has been replaced by the scarring of a conflicted past.

In her new project, *You Mustn't go looking*, Emma explores her relationship with Irish lifestyle and landscape in a search for pointers of Ireland's pagan culture of the past.

Education

Emma is currently an active and passionate student at Swansea College of Art, studying in her third year as an undergraduate student. Beginning her studies after the challenging and uncertain lockdown of 2020, the art scene was still very much confined to online learning. Coming out of this experience, in the latter half of her second-year study Emma was keen to be involved in as many workshops and external activities as she could, including a lighting workshop with photographer Ossi Piispanen.

Professional Experience

In 2021 Emma was involved in the installation and invigilation of Gareth Philips' *Abysm* at Elysium, Castle Street, Swansea. This experience involved working closely with Philips during the curation and installation of his art, while working with any creative challenges which came up.

Emma also assisted in the photography for Kathryn Campbell-Dodd's Cragen Beca Parade on 1st May 2022. This performance was in association with Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthenshire.

Emma's work has been shown in Elysium and Volcano gallery as part of group exhibitions from 2021-22. Most recently, Emma also took part in showing her work at group exhibition *Phonebooks in the Attic* in Elysium Gallery, Swansea. An exhibition in 2022 which saw multiple photographic and illustrative artists display work in a pop-up exhibition.

Selected exhibitions:

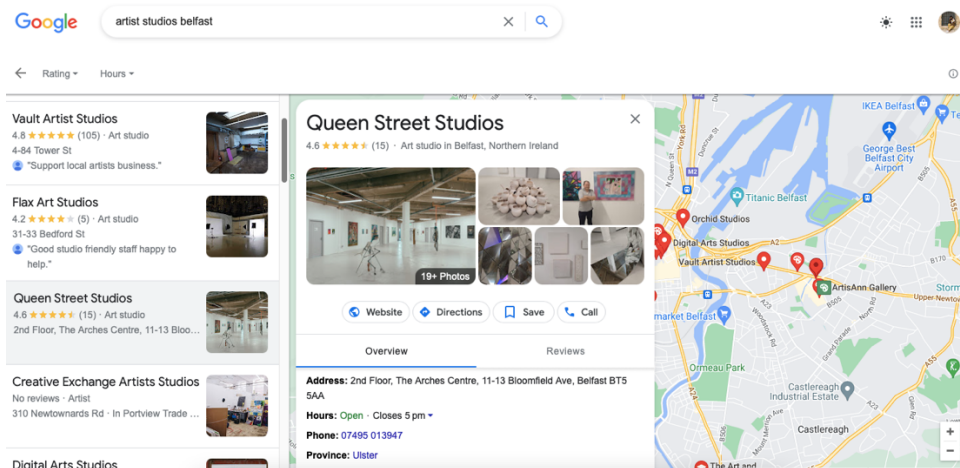
2022	<i>Phonebooks in the Attic</i>	Group exhibition, Elysium Gallery
2022	<i>Unbound</i>	Group exhibition, Swansea College of Art
2021	<i>Soft Anatomy</i>	Group exhibition, Volcano gallery
2021	<i>Without Borders</i>	Group exhibition, Elysium Gallery

During her final year at Swansea College of Art, Emma has taken part in teaching a series of photography workshops at Abbey primary school, Neath. In these workshops, children 7-9 years old used the Welsh landscape to inspire their photography. These workshops began in March and are an ongoing process which has been very successful.

18. Research

Artist Studios

Part of my post graduate plan is to set myself up as an artist in Belfast. As access to this community is through involvement in the art scene, I would like to apply for an artist studio. This will give me a workspace away from my home to set up experiments within my work. I have looked at the advantages of having a studio and have noticed that there are regular opportunities to set up group shows. This will help me to grow my CV.



There are a couple of buildings around Belfast that accommodate artists for studio space, with a variety of artist levels. Most studios are asking for emerging artists/recently graduated artists to fill new vacancies in their buildings. This gives me a good chance of getting into the application process when my degree ends.

Queen Street Studios

Queen street studios is a gallery space in Belfast which has space for 11 artists. The artists in this space are active in the community and regularly put on shows. The space is available for artists to collaborate or put on solo shows regardless of whether they have a studio here or not.

There are no notes on how much it costs to have a studio in this building, however there are reasonably sized studios available, and artists are right beside an easily accessible carpark. This is important for me as I will be travelling to a studio using a car. The opening times are quite restrictive if I am planning on working a day job which may be finishing as late as 5pm.

Studios Available



September 2022

15TH
JULY
2022

NEWS

Studios Available – September 2022

Studio Expansion – Variety of Studio Spaces Available.

QSS are excited to announce that due to an expansion we are in the privileged position to invite applications for a further 11 studio spaces in our Bloomfield Avenue location. Our studios are located on the second floor of The Arches Centre, 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AA and are accessible during the following hours:
8.00 to 23.00 Monday to Friday
8.00 to 22.00 on Saturdays
10.00 to 21.00 on Sundays.

Annual Members Christmas Exhibition and Sale

QSS Christmas Raffle Tickets £2.00



Topics

News

Interviews

Publications

Artist of the Month

Ongoing events



26 November 2022 - 02 April 2023

Ian Cumberland – Shortlisted for The Zurich Portrait Prize 2022- National Gallery Ireland

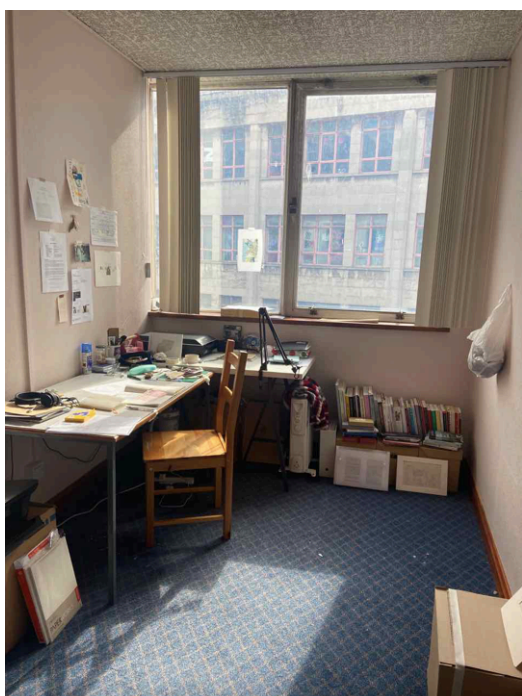
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

Flax

Flax is an artist studio block with up to 30 studios, accommodating for a range of visual artists and media. The networking here would be good for my practice, and I would be able to access a range of workshops through this. Flax, alike to Queen Street Studios, also have access to a project space that engages in new shows monthly.



Flax are actively engaged in the art scene within Northern Ireland, mentoring the artists who are in their studios. Recently, Flax have set up an initiative to bring together artists from a variety of areas in the UK including England, Scotland and Wales – as well as Bordeaux, Dunkerque, Nice and Sète in France. Here 8 artists have been selected to be involved in 2 - 3 month residencies where the selected artists will make work on environmental or societal contexts.



A studio in Flax shown on their website

Eligibility

Only artists, who have satisfied a rigorous selection procedure reflecting the quality of their work and its place within contemporary sculpture practice, as well as their need for a studio, are offered spaces. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate their commitment to a significant level of usage during their tenure of a studio.

Flax Art Studios main focus is to continue to provide a portfolio of subsidised studio provision for the needs of emerging, mid-career and established artists. those working with sculpture, installation and new/time based media.

Criteria for Selection

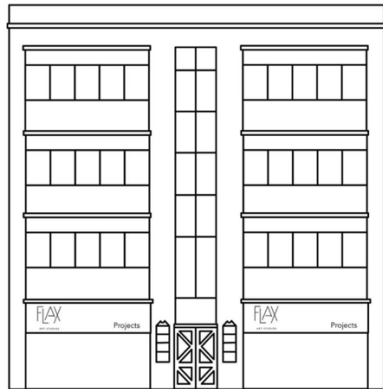
Applicants should be able to demonstrate:

Particularly

- A high quality of work
- Skills of high standard
- Their work is located within contemporary visual art
- An engagement with audiences and/or participants through exhibitions, workshops, residencies, workshops etc
- A clear vision for the development of their work and a need for a studio space
- A willingness to engage in peer or professional development and the exchange or transfer of knowledge
- How working in Flax Art Studios will benefit their practice
- How they will actively contribute to Flax Art Studios activities

As these studios are in the main area of the city centre there is no free car parking available. This could be an issue, as it would cost a lot of money to park here every night of the week. Fridays and weekends may also be tough to find parking as Belfast will be busy with nightlife. This may be something that I will have to reconsider. I am willing to trial the opportunity of a studio for the time being but will have to work hard on an application.

Flax is very supportive of recently graduated artists and emerging artists; this may make my application more appealing to the selectors of any opening. I have recently set up a website to aid me in my applications.



flaxartstudios Opportunity for a recent Graduate Artist

We have 1 space available in our Emerging Artist Programme based in 7 North St, Belfast.

What we provide:

Three floors of studio spaces to accommodate up to 30 recent graduate and emerging artists with a ground floor project space.

What we are looking for:

A recent graduate artist to join the programme

What we offer:

Studio Spaces available from 1st of June
Cost £50 per month.

To apply:

Email: flax@flaxartstudios.org and include:

Expression of Interest

Up to date CV

Biography

6 jpeg images or linked website

Artist Statement



Liked by [__rebeccaoflahertyfotos__](#) and 54 others

flaxartstudios Opportunity for a recent Graduate Artist

We have 1 space available in our Emerging Artist Programme based in 7 North St, Belfast.

Applying for Flax Studio Lease starting May 1st 2022

7:22



Liked by [connmccarrick](#) and 26 others

flaxartstudios We have 1 space coming available in our Emerging Artist Programme based in 7 North St, Belfast.

What we provide:

Three floors of studio spaces to accommodate up to 30 recent graduate and emerging artists with a ground floor project space.

What we are looking for:

A recent graduate artist to join the programme

What we offer:

A shared studio space available from 1st of May, £60 per month.

To apply:

Email: facilities@flaxartstudios.org and include:

Expression of Interest

Up to date CV

Biography

6 jpeg images or linked website

Artist Statement

View 1 comment

I saw a call out on Flax's Instagram for recent graduate artists to apply for a studio in their building in Belfast. I have been considering the advantages and disadvantages for renting a studio in Belfast, but I believe that it will advantage my art career and keep me within a strong community of people who are also well driven. There will be a range of artists working in different media in the studios and this will help me to learn skills and make friends in the art community – something I will be thankful for after losing this post-university.

19. Facilities

I have been able to supply some facilities for myself over the years, with bursaries and funding from the university. I have spent time doing up my shed to create a fully functional DIY black and white darkroom. Although I am aware of darkroom spaces in Northern Ireland, being able to have access to this process 24/7 without renting will be very beneficial. As my practice has evolved into a mixed media approach, with increasingly more analogue processes, I can continue this in my work without university facilities.

I do not have means to do colour photography, because of the nature of my shed and the temperatures that colour film should be developed at. This may be something I can start to work on, but I will need to be wary of the accessibility of developments and how much it costs to send away to England for this process to be done. This is a facility that I will miss from Swansea college of Art.

Through funding I have acquired an Epson film scanner which I can use for the scanning of film. This means that I won't have to pay for scanning as part of the development of film in the future, and if I am doing a home development, I can have digital scan of the film in good resolution without paying extra from a lab.

20. List of things which are needed to facilitate the continuation of my art practice in a Studio

Printer & Scanner

I prefer to work through printed information, so that I can display my research in a visual diary. My visual diary can be brought to art discussions and

The cost of using a printer regularly may be difficult to maintain, and I might find that I will need to be wary of what my printing budget is.

Visual diary

I want to continue to write and document my work in a visual diary. This has been a very good way of seeing the small things that I have been able to achieve throughout the progress of a project. Rather than transporting a laptop for meetings it may be possible for me to talk about my work from the research and visuals that I put into my visual diary.

Car/Transport

As I live in the country outside of Belfast, I will need to have access to the city for the use of a studio/ to travel for new work. As my art practice will be looking at themes of Ireland, I will be taking trips over the border. Having means to do this with my own transport would allow me to travel anywhere without limitations from buses.

Parking in belfast

Adobe Software

I will need to be able to financially support the use of Adobe when I graduate as it is an industry standard package. It is also needed to convert images and enlarge images for open call entries. As I usually shoot in RAW files, I need photoshop to open and edit these large files.

Cost of Adobe Software package per month: £9.98 per month

All software for: £51.98 per month

Hardrive

I will need to have access to a hard drive when I graduate as this will help insure the storage and safety of the work I am creating.

21. The Direction of my Post University Work

As I am going to be continuing my art practice when my time at university ends, I have been considering how the direction of my work will start to evolve. The university work which I am creating now has inspired me to look at the magical past of Ireland as a long-term art project. Although small projects will come along the way, for the next three years of my post graduate career, I want to focus on these elements. There are other artists which I have met and researched that have under arching themes to their practice. Obviously, over time this evolves with research and time. As I am just starting out as an artist, having a theme to help me to have direction will start me in the right direction while I work part time.

I am more inspired by the evenings and currently my photography leans heavily on the stark contrast between black and white that a flash gives. Working a part time job in the daytime and continuing my art practice at night will work very well and allow me to travel across Ireland as and when I would like.

There is a lot of ideas that my current project has brought up when thinking about Ireland. Culture is an avenue which I would like to explore more. Understanding some of the holidays which are celebrated in the southern part of Ireland, but not in the North could be an interesting avenue of mini projects.

Growing up in the North of Ireland where these holidays seem to be drowned out, I have always felt like it is a discovery or understanding, in part, of myself to understand Ireland's cultures. This is the part of me which was hidden by the destination of my upbringing.

The monolithic sites of Ireland have been incredibly well preserved, there is so much history behind their past and making a project on this would allow me to explore a lot of the areas of Ireland I have not yet seen.

I must be aware of the reality of artistic burn out when I graduate in July. Speaking to friends who have graduated from art courses, there is a lot of talk about how tiring it is to set up the degree show exhibition and the rush that gives. When the degree show is over there is a lack of equipment and community which was available in university. I am expecting to want some time to rest but I would like to stay on the wave of creation. Having the access to crits and peer discussion from the artists in Flax will help to form my work. Flax will expect me to be active in the art world, making work, leading artist talks and presenting work in exhibitions. Having an outcome for the work I create will help me to develop my practice and gain confidence in what I make. I am going to be using the last semester in university to build up my confidence in facilities/experience that I will need when I graduate. My practice has taken a largely analogue avenue while I have been at university, and I would like to continue in this direction when my degree ends. I aim to learn processes which will aid in the continuation of my work, this includes caffanol.

22. Preparations for my future career as an artist

Knowing that I will be setting myself up in the world of art when I graduate, the integration of my practice in Northern Ireland will be very important. I will have to work to make a good connection to the artists who live here, and this will be essential to the next stage of my career. I want to continue showing work, so this will be the driving force of my photography in the next two years.

A specific emphasis throughout these two years will be showcasing how I can make work for an exhibition space. This could be in the same way that Martin Seeds and Gareth Philips exhibit – ie. Using budget materials with the intention of installation shots. I have learnt a lot about the creation of projects within the time that I have been at university. Projects can range from a couple of months to years. Knowing that there is a possibility I will not have a set show/opportunity that I will be working towards post-university, I will have to create mini goals and apply frequently for opportunities.

My degree show installation shots for both Swansea and London will help me to showcase my work in an environment where I have worked to a high standard. Both the printing and aluminium mounting processes for these shows have been achieved to gallery standard. This means that the work can be applied to other shows, and I will not need to get them reprinted/mounted.

I aim to make my web and online presence more professional when I graduate. I will continue to keep up to date with showcasing behind the scenes on my research and practice, but I want to adjust my account to be more approachable for getting work.

My website will be a vital part of continue to be a record of selected work, installation shots and CV but this will be seen mainly through applications I make. I have put my website onto the bio of my Instagram account however over the next few months my website will be changing with updates of installations and new updates to my CV.