

# NATIONAL COLLEGE OF & DESIGN

COLÁISTE NÁISIÚNTA EALAÍNE IS DEARTH  
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

Annual Report 2023 - 2024



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Director’s Foreword

I am proud to share this **Annual Report** for the financial year 2023 - 2024, which provides a snapshot of the energy, ambition, and achievements of the National College of Art & Design (NCAD) during this year. NCAD continues to stand as Ireland’s leading art and design institution, shaping creative leaders who challenge, inspire, and redefine the boundaries of creative practice.

In 2023 - 2024, we strengthened our global standing, ranking **23rd in Europe and 60th worldwide** in the **QS World University Rankings** for Art and Design. Our student body remains as diverse and dynamic as ever, with **1,454 enrolled students**, including a growing international cohort from **42 countries** and growing numbers of students following flexible, part-time routes of study. Their talent and dedication are reflected in the impact of our graduates,

who continue to shape Ireland’s creative sector - accounting for **40% of Fine Art and 25% of Design graduates nationally**. Their work is recognised globally and again in 2023 our graduates dominated global student awards.

This year also marked a critical transition as we near the completion of our **Futures Bold and Curious** strategy (2019 - 2024) and embark on a new strategic planning process for 2025 and beyond. **Futures Bold and Curious** created a roadmap for significant strategic development in the College as we have built our research capacity, supported innovative teaching and learning across the College and deeply embedded our commitment to connecting our work with different communities in Ireland and globally. This ambition is underpinned by our ongoing developments to ensure

that we are a cohesive and effective organisation that has the resources we need to fully realise our potential. Significant progress was made in this year to develop a clear vision for our Thomas Street Campus, with better and additional space created through a combination of reimagining of our existing Campus and newly built facilities. Implementing this vision through a four phase capital development programme is a priority for the College in the coming years.

NCAD is an active community of students and staff who are committed to ensuring that NCAD is an inclusive space that enables bold curiosity, inclusivity and transformation. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to this NCAD community and our extended community of many partners who share our commitment to ensuring

that Ireland’s society is enriched by a creative force that drives change and impact across society.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the Higher Education Authority and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the members of NCAD’s An Bord whose oversight, guidance and enthusiasm is a vital contributor to a dynamic and successful NCAD.

Finally I would like to thank the students of NCAD - their energy, creative vision and dedication is the lifeblood of the College and inspires us on a daily basis.

**Professor Sarah Glennie**  
Director



1,454

students, with

14%

from international backgrounds across

42

countries.



Recognised as Ireland's top Art and Design institution, ranking

23rd

in Europe and

60th

globally (QS World University Rankings)

2024



Chairperson’s Foreword

It is with great pride that I present the **NCAD Annual Report 2023 - 2024**, a reflection of a year marked by progress, creativity, and ambition. As Ireland’s leading institution for Art and Design education, NCAD continues to shape the future of the creative industries, equipping students with the skills, confidence, and vision to make meaningful contributions to society.

Members of An Bord oversaw the delivery of NCAD’s ambitious strategic plan **Futures Bold and Curious** which has enabled the College to take clear strides in the area of research, teaching and learning and global connectivity. The impact of those achievements are detailed in this report. We have also worked closely with the executive to continue the important work over a number of years from a challenging financial position to one of stability and to ensure that NCAD is effectively managed with robust and transparent governance processes in place.



On behalf of my colleagues on An Bord I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the NCAD staff. We recognise the extraordinary hard work that takes place across the College on a daily basis to create a dynamic, inclusive and ambitious learning and research environment. We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to the HEA and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for their ongoing support of NCAD.

The 2023 - 2024 period was one of change for An Bord with a number of board members coming to the end of their tenure and new members taking their seats at the table. I would like to thank all my colleagues on An Bord for their incredible dedication and support of the College; their insight is an invaluable resource and we are extremely grateful to them for their commitment.

**Dr Carole Pollard**  
Chairperson Designate

Key contributor to national creative industries, producing

40%

of Fine Art and

25%

of Design graduates





About the National College of Art & Design

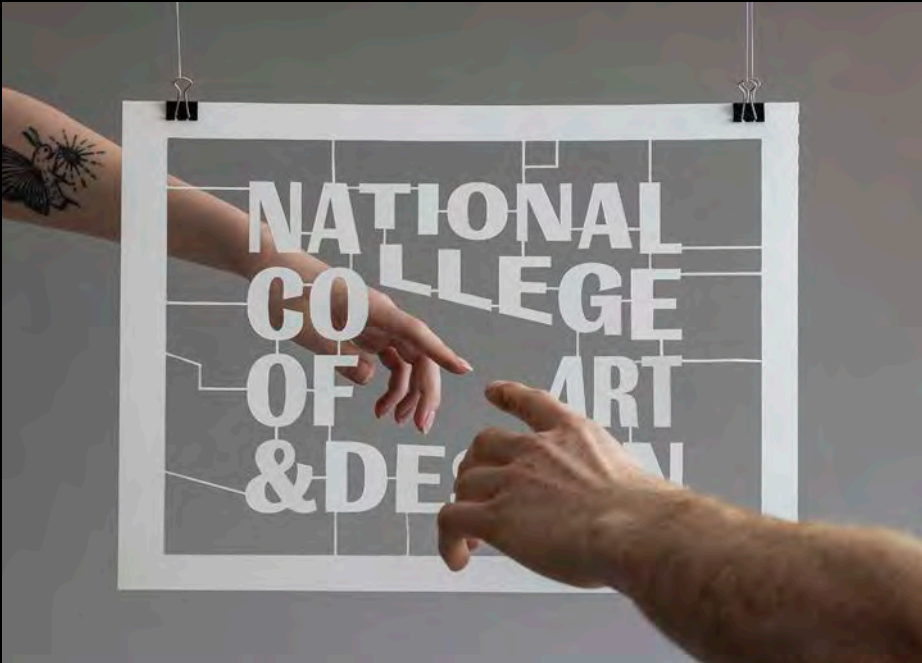
Founded as the Dublin Society Drawing School in 1746, today the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) offers the richest and most diverse education in Art and Design in Ireland. Our vision is to **change the world through bold and curious thinking, making and doing** and at NCAD we educate students to be a creative force equipped to create impact and change across society.

We understand that creativity is at the bedrock of a better future, and recognise that the creative sector, as one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy, is uniquely placed to contribute to Ireland’s economic growth and goals as a sustainable society. Creative practice is a source for innovation and new thinking as well a driver of social cohesion, well-being and identity. NCAD graduates drive Ireland’s creative and cultural sectors which

currently contribute 3.7% of GDP and this is set to grow.

The College has four Schools; Design, Education, Fine Art and Visual Culture, and has 1,300 full time students and a further 700 hundred students who are taking evening courses.

The Board and staff have a shared belief in the transformative potential of an NCAD education to equip our graduates with the bold curiosity and the new thinking which society critically needs. We are ambitious to find new ways to work with each other and the wider community, to continuously redefine and expand the boundaries of creative practice, to make a difference and, as our mission states, to change the world.



## Strategic Developments

Continued implementation of the **2019 - 2024 Futures Bold and Curious strategy**, focusing on bold and curious learning and research, connections beyond the Campus and operational excellence.

Strengthened research collaborations, including projects on **sustainable medical devices, urban permaculture**, and **diverse practices in Visual Culture**.

Expanded **Studio+** and internship programmes, enabling **70+ student mobilities** across study exchanges and Erasmus placements.

Doubled faculty participation in **Erasmus-funded international exchanges** and launched partnerships with global institutions such as **Sichuan Fine Arts Institute**.

Awarded an **Athena Swan institutional Bronze award**.

Advanced **Campus development**, improved operational efficiency, and integrated sustainability goals through NCAD's **Climate Action Plan**.

Continued strong governance, with transparent reporting and financial stability.







**NCAD Strategy 2019 - 2024,  
Futures Bold and Curious**

**Mission**

Changing the world  
through bold and  
curious thinking,  
making and doing.



**Three Areas of  
Strategic Focus**

- Embed Bold and Curious Learning  
at our Core**
- Connect and Be Connected**
- An Effective Organisation**

Futures, Bold and Curious sets out the mission, values and strategic focuses that have shaped the work of the College since its launch in 2019.

In the context of NCAD’s history as a provider of education for more than 250 years, this Strategic Plan considers what it really means to be an institute of Art and Design in contemporary Ireland. As an institution, we asked ourselves what will the world into which our students will emerge be like, and what can we do to help prepare them to meet that future with confidence, ambition and impact?

The College started the important work of developing our new strategic plan in January 2024 to be launched in autumn 2025.





## Futures Bold and Curious – Strategy in Action 2023 - 2024

### Embed Bold and Curious Learning at our Core

#### Bold and Curious Research

Research at NCAD is connected and collaborative, and highlights of our work with partners nationally and internationally continues to showcase the broad ranging societal impacts research in Art, Design, Visual Culture and Art Education can have:

NCAD DesignLabs received funding from the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund as part of a consortium led by Tympany Medical for the Solascope project to develop the world’s first sustainable, panoramic endoscope. This project will see NCAD researchers continue to drive better, more sustainable healthcare through the design of circular medical devices.

As a partner of the L’Internationale Museum of the Commons project, funded by the European Commission through Creative Europe, NCAD established the Urban Fields residency to explore new thinking in sustainable practice linked to local urban permaculture, food networks and community activism. Urban Fields has further activated NCAD FIELD as a site of novel ecology and a completely unique pedagogical space in an Irish third-level context, with researchers-in-residence examining nature-culture interactions and co-creation through the lens of human and more than human worlds.

Through a postdoctoral appointment supported by the Research Ireland Enterprise Partnership Scheme, NCAD and IMMA are partnering in the development of a feasibility study for the establishment of the first community-led and feminist-led art resource centre on the island of Ireland. This resource has substantial potential to amplify underrepresented voices connected to cultural production and activism.



#### Research that connects

NCAD made our research public through hosting three research symposiums, which brought leading international and local practitioners into conversation with community groups, students and public audiences to share live and collaborative research: *Counter-Infrastructures* examined resilient activist art practices, *Rewild Dublin?* considered the role of urban rewilding in climate change mitigation, and *Text/Textile* explored the material culture of the Liberties and how language and textile arts meet.

#### Effective research structures

NCAD staff were supported to actively engage with their own development as researchers through the introduction of the Research Support Panel, a peer-to-peer research learning resource; the inaugural NCAD Research Development Week, offering 11 training sessions on research skills for staff; PhD bursaries for staff members to advance their research practice; and the awarding of 12 research seed funding grants to prime future research activity.

#### Bold and Curious Learning

The enhancement of Teaching and Learning in the College is supported through a wide range of professional development opportunities. Activities ranged from guest presentations and workshops, focused working groups, funded teaching and learning projects and a teaching and learning symposium that celebrated some of the excellent learning and teaching work being done within the College.





Library / NIVAL

NCAD houses two world-class libraries for the study of international and Irish Art and Design: The Edward Murphy Library and the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL). The development of confident library users is at the heart of what we do, working with students at all levels and across disciplines to gain practical research skills.

The libraries provide support for academic work, encouraging students to explore their personal interests through engagement with an extensive collection of books, journals, digital resources and the unique special collections at NIVAL. Acquisitions highlights in this period include; cartoons for stained glass by Evie Hone; a journal by artist Norah O’Kelly containing sketches by Sir William Orpen and Harry Clarke; the archives of the Bell Gallery Belfast; the archives of artists Edward Delaney and Veronica Bolay; and the records of the Frank X Buckley and Michael Burns Art Collection.

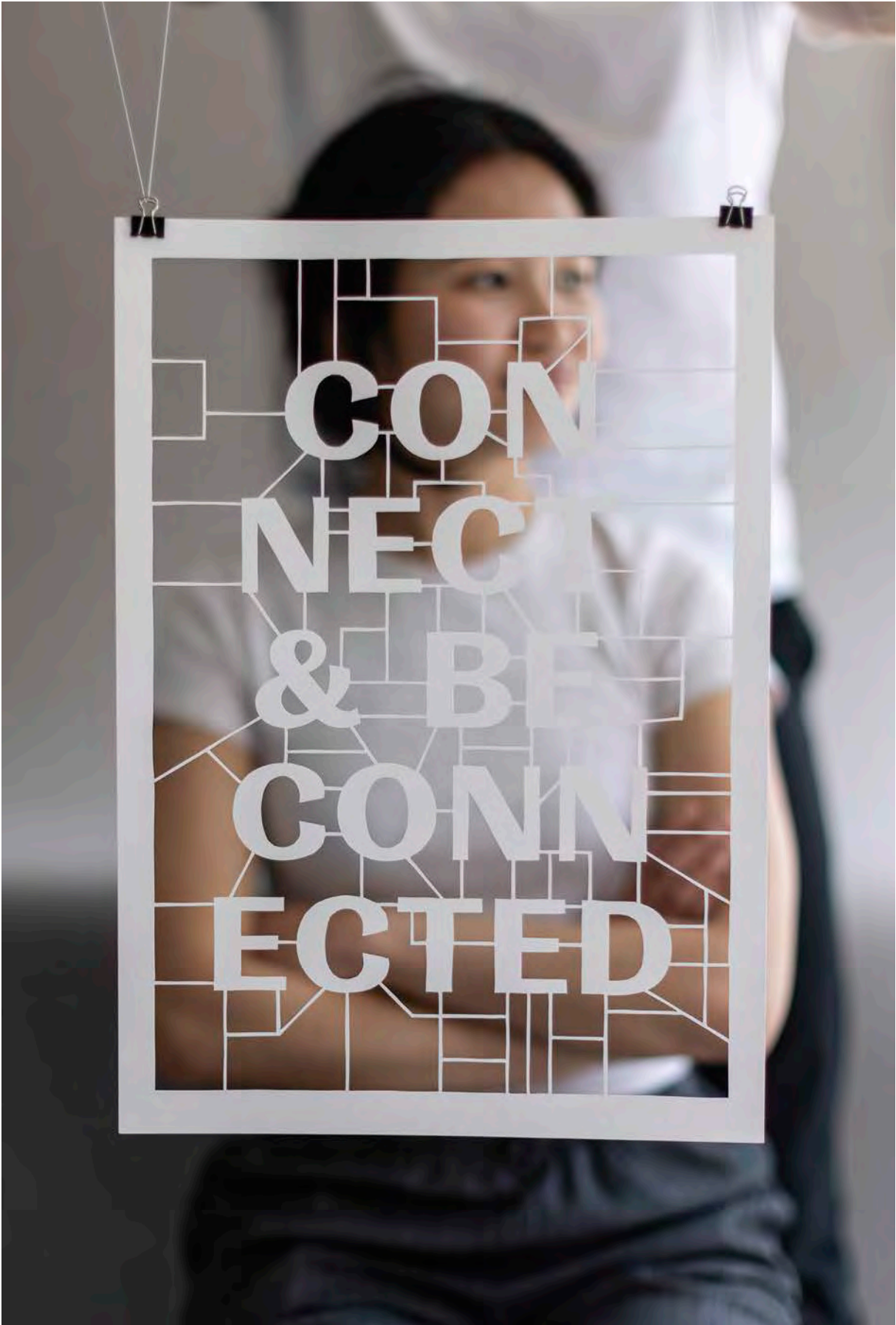
*Archiving Plurality: a collaborative process* is a research project led by Alessia Cargnelli for NIVAL, with the objective of further facilitating access, inclusion and visibility of artists and designers from diverse cultural backgrounds and nationalities currently underrepresented in the collections. A set of recommendations has been drafted for improving collection policies and developing more inclusive services.

Student Experience and wellbeing initiatives

Funding from the HEA’s Healthy Campus initiative allowed us to pilot an innovative *Food and Care* workshop with artist Jennie Moran to welcome new students during their induction. The Students’ Union also mandated a Neurodiversity Social Group and the JAM - Just A Minute card was launched. In addition to one to one counselling, the service offered an innovative peer led project, the *Body Project* to support students to navigate body image ideals as well as Art Therapy workshops and mindfulness classes. NCAD students contributed to NCAD’s Autism Acceptance Festival exhibition and supported the work of the Access Service through engaging with Dublin Learning Festival events with Spirasi, Rialto Youth Club and TUSLA. Students experiencing financial challenges continue to be supported by the student assistance fund, 1916 Bursary and laptop loan scheme.







Connect and Be Connected

Real world learning

NCAD’s Studio+ programme is an exceptional initiative offering students an optional additional year of immersive, real-world learning experiences. The programme prepares students to better meet evolving global workforce demands by integrating societal, industry and cultural partnerships. NCAD Studio+ creates a bespoke learning experience that combines academic rigour with professional exposure. By seamlessly connecting creative education with societal, cultural and industry needs, NCAD’s Studio+ programme develops adaptable, innovative professionals ready to make meaningful contributions.

Highlights of the year included impactful projects delivered by the Product and Interaction Design students with Engineers Without Borders, Smart Dublin, RCSI, and Accenture, addressing critical societal challenges. Communication Design students designed Dublin Marathon medals and collaborated with Dublin City Council Culture Company, demonstrating practical design applications. In total 52 Studio+ students gained internship work experience nationally and internationally. The Rialto Youth Project and NCAD marked ten years of collaboration with a retrospective exhibition at NCAD Gallery and commissioned a short film to mark this milestone.

Globally connected

As we roll-out the College-wide Global Strategy, we are intentionally growing NCAD’s global presence through a cohesive approach to the internationalisation of our Campus and community. We launched a pilot partnership with Keystone Education Group to expand our reach to ever-greater numbers of non-EU, international students. This outreach will be furthered through innovative initiatives such as our first Articulation Agreement with Sichuan Fine Arts Institute (SCFAI), which we formalised with our partner and the Irish Ambassador at the Embassy in Beijing in 2024. We renewed and initiated participation in prestigious national schemes, such as: the Irish Fellows programme (DFA & ICOS), Government of Ireland Scholarship, China Merit Scholarship (Enterprise Ireland), and Claddagh Scholarship (Enterprise Ireland) programmes to bring a rich diversity of students to our community. This year, we welcomed students from Palestine, Canada, Vietnam, and Italy through these programmes.

Alongside this work, we are internationalising NCAD’s student, staff and alumni experiences at the College. In this year we doubled the number of staff mobilities through Erasmus funding, which enabled 13 faculty members to travel and strengthen their connections, and the College’s partnerships, across Europe. Our student exchange programme continues to thrive with strong incoming and outgoing Erasmus student mobility.



NCAD WORKS and CEAD WORKS 2024

NCAD WORKS and CEAD WORKS 2024 took place in June. The official opening was marked with a performance from the Malva Ukrainian Choir Ireland. NCAD WORKS provides a portal to the full breadth of work by our extraordinary graduates from across our four schools of Fine Art, Design, Education, and Visual Culture and encompasses students graduating from our broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and CEAD programmes.

It was accompanied by a dynamic programme of live and online events, bringing together graduates, artists, curators, industry experts and the public, creating a forum to discuss many of the concerns raised by students’ work.

NCAD In Public

The 2023 - 2024 programme included Elaine Hoey’s solo exhibition *Bone of What Absent Thing* (3 November-15 December) which questioned violence towards women and the negative representation in the ancient myth of Medusa. This was complemented by Nikolas Ryan’s *Transition to Transcendence* (3-10 November), an interactive, immersive VR work and meditation through a personal experience with Evangelical Queer Conversion Therapy.

The spring trimester included two further student projects: *Horizontalius* (14-28 March, Gallery) an installation by Graham Holbrook, the paired student art practice of Arlo Graham and Nicole Holbrook, positing the ideology of horizontal collectivism in creating a more inclusive and democratic society with values based on collaboration and a shared leadership unified through cooperation and care. Culminating in Mollie Mia Murphy’s *Aithníonn Ciaróg, Ciaróg Eile* (28 March-12 April, Foyer), an installation weaving Irish oral history into visual forms to explore and lament on the effects of the early 19th century Ordnance Survey on Irish contemporary and environmental landscapes.

The NCAD Gallery Incubation Residency 2024 was awarded to recent graduate Louis Scully. This led to Scully’s first solo exhibition *Empathising with the Enemy* (17 September-18 November, Gallery), a lens-based project developed through forging a network of solidarity activists’ and organisations located in Palestine and Israel.







**Selected Student and Alumni Awards and achievements**

10 graduates shortlisted in the Arts Thread Global Design Graduate Show 2023. Two highly commended and one regional winner of the Global Undergraduate Awards 2023.

Four NCAD alumni and recent graduates won the DCCI Future Makers 2023 Awards.

Five NCAD graduates received the DCCI Future Makers Student Awards.

DBE graduate Megan Thomas was a finalist in the prestigious Mittlemoda Fashion Award with 26 finalists from all over the world.

Four students from BA Graphic Design were shortlisted for the Best Student Book from the British Book Design & Production Awards 2023.

Recent BA Graphic Design with Critical Cultures graduate Lorna Quinn’s work State of Affairs was inducted into the European Craft Library.

Two NCAD MA Service Design graduates and one MA IxD graduate won the Service Design Student Award for 2023. NCAD graduates have won this international award for the last three years.

NCAD Design graduates received 32 shortlists for the IDI Graduate Awards 2023, the most of any institution on the island of Ireland, with 10 winners and 14 commended entries.

RDS Visual Arts exhibition ran at IMMA and exhibiting artists included 7 NCAD Fine Art students out of a total of 15 exhibitors.

Final Year BA Graphic Design student Beth Snelling was shortlisted to represent Ireland as part of the Roger Hatchuel Academy for the Cannes Lions Jury.



An Effective Organisation

NCAD continued its work to ensure that it is a cohesive and effective organisation with the infrastructure it needs to meet its ambitions and potential. Following a detailed Campus Feasibility Plan developed by TAKA and Clancy Moore Architects in collaboration with the College, NCAD submitted a Preliminary Business Case to the HEA for a four phased Campus Development Plan which will see the creation of better and additional space on our Thomas Street Campus through a programme of refurbishment and new build.

Improvement of the working environment continues in advance of this with the development of a rigorous and robust health and safety culture, completion of our Health and Safety infrastructure capital project and ongoing small capital projects on Campus. Organisational developments included the implementation of CORE HR through a shared services project led by the DFHERIS and continued investment into our ICT infrastructure.



Green Campus

During 2024 NCAD initiated a Climate Action Roadmap and launched our Green Team from the start of the term in 2024. The Green Team is composed of a cross-college mix of administrative, educational, and technical staff, ensuring diverse input and collaboration. A significant challenge in reaching our goals is maintaining and upgrading heritage buildings which presents a considerable challenge, particularly as the college aims to balance their preservation with the needs for energy efficiency. The task of decarbonisation - in line with the targets set - poses additional challenges in older structures which were never designed with modern environmental standards in mind. The challenge posed by reaching our Climate Goals will be met through Campus development.

A mixture of initiatives were launched in Education and Training and an application for “Green Campus” award with An Taisce.

Governance Structure

NCAD operates within a defined statutory and governance framework that ensures accountability, transparency, and the effective delivery of its academic and strategic mission. NCAD’s governance structure aligns with the Code of Governance for State Bodies (2016) and is underpinned by the National College of Art and Design Act, 1971, as amended, and the Higher Education Authority Act, 2022.

An Bord

The primary oversight authority of NCAD is An Bord, which is responsible for the strategic direction, governance, and performance of the College. Established under the NCAD Act, 1971, An Bord has a statutory role in overseeing the management of NCAD and ensuring the College fulfils its mission in the public interest. The updated HEA Act 2022 reinforces accountability and alignment with national higher education priorities, further shaping the governance responsibilities of An Bord.

An Bord includes representatives from academic staff, students, external stakeholders, and ministerial nominees. It meets regularly to:

- Approve strategic plans
- Oversee financial performance and risk management
- Monitor academic quality and institutional performance
- Ensure compliance with evolving legislative and regulatory requirements.





**Academic Council**

The Academic Council, established in accordance with the 1971 Act, advises on academic matters and ensures academic integrity and quality across all programmes. It plays a key role in curriculum development, quality assurance, and research oversight. Membership includes heads of academic departments, elected academic staff, and student representatives.

**Committee**

The work of An Bord and the Academic Council is supported by the Audit and Risk Committee who oversees the financial reporting, internal controls and risk management.

**Relationship with University College Dublin**

NCAD is a Recognised College of the UCD (University College Dublin) and this relationship supports the validation of its academic programmes, quality assurance processes, and collaborative initiatives. NCAD remains academically autonomous while benefiting from shared governance protocols and quality frameworks.

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Diversity and Respect remain core values at NCAD. Advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion, as well as eliminating bullying, harassment, and discrimination, are enduring priorities for our College. We continue to diversify our student body through initiatives such as the Higher Education Access Route and the Disability Access Route to Education. Our commitment to addressing inequalities is further reflected in our Athena SWAN Gender Equality Action Plan (2022–2026) and our Ending Sexual Violence Implementation Plan.

With the recruitment of a full-time role in EDI & Sexual Violence + Harassment Prevention / Response in September 2024, we will only see this work grow – including the development of NCAD’s Race Equality Action Plan.

Students and visitors are encouraged to see progress in this area on our website. Staff can also access our dedicated EDI Space on Workvivo for regular updates.





# 2023 2024





# NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

## COLÁISTE NÁISIÚNTA EALAÍNE IS DEARTHATHA NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

Coláiste Aitheanta,  
An Colaiste Ollscoile,  
Baile Átha Cliath

A Recognised College of UCD

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