

# Artlink Bursary Winners Announced

**THREE BUDDING** Buncrana artists, **Sebastian McLaughlin (17)**, **Kate Boucher-Hayes (17)** and **Orla McNelis (10)** and are the gifted recipients of the first ever Bursaries awarded by Artlink. The Bursary Awards were created to mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of Artlink, a community-based arts project based at Tullyarvan Mill. Buncrana Credit Union made the idea possible by sponsoring the award and their representative, **John McLaughlin**, made a special presentation to the winners on Monday evening.

The bursary winners, who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, ability and interest in pursuing a career in art, will receive unlimited access to all of Artlink's courses for one year, access to all the facilities and equipment at Artlink, a selection of materials and guidance and career advice from experienced and qualified teaching artists. According to Aeidin McCarter of Artlink, the organization hopes "that these bursaries will serve to encourage these young talents and enable them to pursue art as a career."

**Sebastian McLaughlin** received the award for demonstrating exceptional dedication and ability in painting. Although Sebastian has been drawing since he was three or four years old – he used to faithfully watch all the Loony Toons every Saturday morning and his first masterpiece was *The Tasmanian Devil* – he only started painting this year. His first attempt were colourful landscapes but he says now that he is more confident with the technique he prefers doing portraits. "I just think that people are much more interesting than scenery. I like to try to capture their character." Sebastian intends to make the most of his access to the Artlink facilities because he doesn't really paint at home. Although his mother was very supportive as he was growing up, keeping him equipped with a steady supply of markers and colouring pencils, perhaps she's not quite so keen on the idea of Sebastian re-decorating the family home with oil paint! Sebastian intends to pursue art in a serious way – he is hoping to be accepted to a course in Belfast or Galway next year, and to possibly go on to the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.

**Kate Boucher-Hayes** received the award for her skill and achievements in photography. She says that first became interested in photography about three

years ago, when a friend gave her a digital camera for Christmas.

"Living out in Porthaw, I was inspired by the land and sea around me, and never short of things to photograph."

After about a year, Kate says that she became frustrated with the quality limitations of her digital camera and, at this stage, she invested in a Canon 300 with two special lenses. While she still enjoys photographing nature, like Sebastian, she now prefers to photograph people, especially close friends. "What I love to do is to try to capture the way I see that person, to sum up their personality in one picture. Last year, Kate was asked to take a special set of pictures as part of a national design competition that some friends entered. She has also spent time on work experience at the Memory Factory and is the school photographer for Scoil Mhuire. Kate is delighted that she will now be in the position to have practically unlimited access to Artlink's darkroom. "It's great – all I have to do is ring them and ask if it's okay to come down – then I can work away." Before discovering Artlink's facilities at Tullyarvan Mill, Kate was limited to having her film processed at the local chemist just like the rest of us. Being able to process her films herself gives her much more control over the detail and quality of the finished photograph.

The third and final award was given to a young talent who has demonstrated exceptional ability and dedication for her age, particularly in the art of ceramics.

**Orla McNelis**, who is in fifth class at St. Oran's N.S., got her first introduction to the Artlink studios about three years ago when her mother was doing a course there and parents were invited to bring their children along for one of the weeks. Her older sisters, Ciara (17) and Claire (15) has also taken courses with Artlink and no doubt contributed to

Orla's enthusiasm for the project. Her first course included all different art forms, including colouring, painting and clay-modelling. Although she enjoys all aspects of art, Orla says that she "doesn't draw that well" and she is most interested in making things with her hands, which immediately drew her to ceramics and pottery.

Her first projects were clay Jack O'Lanterns made especially for Halloween, a fruit bowl (a 3D still life!) and finely decorated autumn leaves. She kept up the holiday theme and made a beautiful 'pinch pot' Santa carrying gifts and a tray of biscuits for her family's Christmas table. However, Orla's passion is mainly devoted to dinosaurs. She hopes to be a paleontologist one day. Many of her ceramic sculptures are of dinosaurs in their natural setting – in grasslands, by lakes and next to active volcanos. She says that she has always been interested in learning about dinosaurs and has read countless books on the subject. Orla also enjoys working with textiles and has made a number of special tea-shirts, with prints, stencils and special designs, at Artlink.

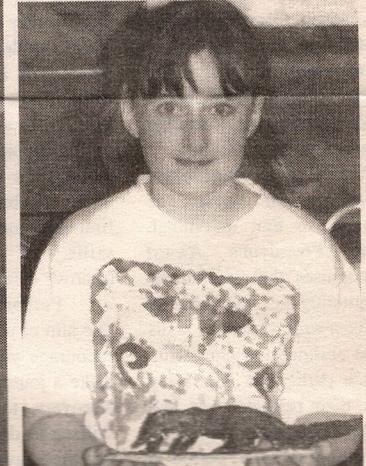
Lisa Spillane-Doherty, of Artlink, said that they hoped that "this opportunity will enable her to develop her skills far beyond that of her peers." Lisa added, "We at Artlink are delighted to be able to offer an opportunity like this to these young artists and are grateful to the Credit Union for making it possible for us to do so."



A photograph by Kate Boucher Hayes



An oil painting by Sebastian McLaughlin



Orla McNelis with one of her ceramic dinosaurs and modelling her personally designed and printed t-shirts



Orla McNelis, Sebastian McLaughlin and Kate Boucher-Hayes with John McLaughlin from the Buncrana Credit union (sponsors) Aeidin McCarter and Lisa Spillane (Artlink)