

Work of Limerick artist features at prestigious exhibition



London-based artist, Joe Duggan is originally from Limerick city

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A LIMERICK contemporary artist has had his work featured in one of the most prestigious open submission exhibitions in the world.

Raheen native Joe Duggan's work is on display in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 2021, which opens in London this Wednesday. It runs until January 22, 2022.

The competition, which has been running each year since 1769, is a celebration of contemporary art and architecture. Joe says he is delighted to be one of 1,300 submissions selected, out of 16,000 entries.

"I applied with my sculpture by sending in a picture of it. I then made it through to the next stage, where they took a look in person. It's only the top people who decide who gets in. It's a democratic exhibition with such a high profile," said Joe, whose entry has garnered a five-star review from the Guardian and four-stars from the Telegraph.

With his work now reaching a high-platform, Joe explained his love of art emanated from popular culture in Limerick, drawing on the influence of TV, magazines, religious art, literature and poetry.

Intrigued by the visual and alternative, it was art class in Ardscoil Rís on North Circular Road where Joe first put a paintbrush to paper, capturing an essence of creativity that would lead to his chosen career path.

Emigrating to London three days after his Leaving Certificate in 1991, Joe studied at the Royal College of Art where he graduated with a Masters in Fine Art Photography. He works from his studio in the east of the UK capital, and has since refined his work, merging into a variety of media forms including video, sculpturing and writing scripts for short stories.

“I’m still finding the links between these mediums, and this is the key to my practice. It’s the idea that leads to the work. A lot of my work involves heading onto the street and photographing people.”

“Limerick is still a huge source of inspiration for me in my work, as what happens when you are young always stays with you. I am working on a project Portrait of a People. This looks at the idea of family universally. It’s very poetic and I shot a lot of it when I returned to Ireland to visit relations,” he told the Limerick Leader.

Joe is also running a solo exhibition entitled Material at the Swiss Cottage Gallery, supported by the Irish Embassy in the UK.

In this he has used recyclable materials to create a body of sculptures looking at societal values in a wry way, which he stated is “characteristic of his work.”



This sculpture, No. 17 (pictured above) from the Material exhibition, is the piece of art displayed at the RA Summer Exhibition 2021.

“Used materials seem natural. Maybe its something from my mother’s generation, where nothing went to waste as things weren’t so readily available. I collected the materials for this sculpture from skips and from the streets of London.

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“To me, they are just another material, and it sits nicely with my strongest philosophy of using things to their maximum and finding the value in the everyday,” he concluded.

For more information visit JoeDuggan.co.uk or follow Joe on [Instagram](#).