

An Exhibition of Prints  
created by First Year (2024/2025)  
Occupational Therapy Students  
February to April 2026



# Welcome

The first year of the Occupational Therapy undergraduate course at UCC focuses on occupation and health. Students are encouraged to learn more about themselves as occupational beings and extend this understanding to their family, friends and the people with whom they will work in the future. First year is all about 'what people do' and the world in which they do it.

Each year, the first year Occupational Therapy students also have the experience of 'doing' creative activities in module OT1005 Creative Occupations and Health. There is a long history of the use of art, craft and creative activities in Occupational Therapy, dating back to the foundation of the profession in 1917 with an understanding of the power of occupation and the harnessing of people's creative energy. It is argued that occupational therapists need to understand the centrality of creativity to health and well-being, just as they understand the centrality of occupation in daily life.

Each year there is a designated theme for the students to explore in their creative activities. The theme for this cohort's creative activity sessions and resulting exhibition is 'What Matters Most'.

In Occupational Therapy, we believe that "occupations" are all the ordinary and extraordinary activities that make up our days. Occupational Therapists consider how energy is both spent and created by people as they do all that they need, want and have to do in their daily lives.

## About Cork Printmakers

The Occupational Therapy students employed a range of printmaking techniques in their exploration of the theme 'What Matters Most'. Over a six-week period, they worked at Cork Printmakers, which gave them access to technical support, equipment and materials. They explored monoprint, collograph, drypoint and reduction linocut. While developing their practical skills, they creatively delved into the theme in a personal capacity, while also researching artists who work in the field of printmaking.

Cork Printmakers is a print studio and gallery providing artists with a creative and well-equipped environment in which to work and offering audiences a diverse and inclusive environment in which to experience, appreciate, understand and enjoy art. As a resource organisation, it generates professional development opportunities to members. Through its showcasing function, it produces and presents art and critical discourse in the context of a curator-led programme. It plays a key role in the cultural ecology of Cork and is recognised for its activity in Ireland and internationally.

# Artists' Reflections

## **Isobel O Leary**

### ***Wonder***

I chose this print of a fairy perched on a crescent moon as of all the pieces I composed, it spoke to me the most. The theme of 'What matters most' is reflected through this piece, as it reflects imagination and childhood, something invaluable that seems to be lost with time. In a world where technology causes children to age beyond their years and childlike wonder dissipates, I made this piece in the hope to inspire a revival of fantasy and seeing the wonderful in the ordinary.

## **Kailey O'Shea**

### ***A Perfect Penny***

This is my beautiful little sister Penny. Penny made me a big sister after eighteen years of being an only child. I had absolutely no idea what I was doing at first, the idea of siblings was kind of alien to me. I worried that I wouldn't do a good job as her big sister, because I didn't really know what sisters were supposed to do.

However, I fell right into the role as soon as I met her, if I do say so myself. It is no surprise that she is now the thing in my life that 'Matters Most'. I think she will mean the most to me for the rest of our lives. We basically speak two different languages at the moment, (she's 18 months old, her English isn't very good yet), but that really doesn't matter. We have our own way of communicating. Her muddled together syllables make perfect sense to me. I love nothing more than chatting nonsense to her while she sits on my bed, attentively watching me do my makeup or my skincare. Occasionally coming over to where I am standing, she will look up at me, big blue eyed, and ask me for some moisturiser, foundation, basically whatever is in my hand that has caught her eye. Of course, I oblige. How could you say no to that face?

These moments of friendship between the two of us take the place of a silence that used to fill my bedroom while I did these mundane, everyday tasks before Penny came along. These are the simple moments that now matter the most to me. Similarly, in the past if I had some free time and wanted some fresh air, I would go outside for a walk by myself. Now, however, Penny and I go for our walks together. Her little legs can't go very far yet, so this is usually just around the garden, or in the instance of where this photo was taken, around the playpark. It doesn't matter that I cover half the distance in double the time. What mattered most to me in the moment that I took this photo was Pennys laugh, her happiness.

Now, don't get me wrong, not all of our moments are full of love and friendship. Recently she shattered a snow globe that I had brought home all the way from Greece as a memento from a holiday. You know as well as I do that perfect is not the word I would have used to describe her in that moment. However, after all,

these material things in life are not what matters most. What matters most is family. What matters most is my sisters laugh, happiness and health. What matters most, is Penny.

### **Eva Nolan**

#### ***Home is where the heart is***

Through our printmaking exhibit, we were given the opportunity to explore the meaningful theme of 'What Matters Most'. The piece I selected for the exhibition was created through the technique of dry point. For this piece, I decided to create an image of my family home. I believe family is the most important thing, and it is what matters most to me. Rather than creating a picture of my family, I decided to do my house instead, as this is a place where family and friends come together to make one big family in my life, creating a sense of belonging and love. I decided to name this piece of art 'Home is where the heart is', as I believe it is not the building that makes a home, but the people who come together to make it a home. Engaging in the creative occupation of printmaking has allowed me to deeply reflect on my life and what matters most to me.

### **Sandra O'Mahony**

#### ***Mo thinteán féin***

For this exhibition, I chose an oak tree to represent my home, Oakmount. The oak tree isn't just a symbol — it's a reflection of what matters most to me: my roots, my community, and the sense of belonging that comes with knowing where you're from. Oak trees are strong, deeply rooted, and enduring — just like the connections I have to my home. Oakmount has shaped my identity in quiet but powerful ways. It's the familiar streets, the people who know your name, the memories tied to every corner. Like the branches of an oak stretching toward the sky, my experiences there have helped me grow — but the roots always pull me back, reminding me of who I am and where I began.

Living in Oakmount with my family has made that bond even stronger. The laughter shared around the dinner table, the everyday routines, the love that fills our home — these are the things that have grounded me. My family is the heart of Oakmount for me, and together, we've created a space filled with warmth, support, and memories I'll carry forever. This tree stands as a reminder that what matters most isn't always loud or flashy — sometimes, it's the steady presence of home, the comfort of familiarity, and the strength we draw from our foundation.

### **Charlie Donnelly**

#### ***Still Waters***

This exhibition is called "Still Waters." It is a depiction of the meaningfulness of the ocean in my life, the seascape features a single boat sailing through the calm

ocean, set against a backdrop of distant hills. The viewer is offered a sense of peace and stillness, as if a moment suspended in time.

The simplicity of the lone boat against the vastness of the water speaks to the feeling of being small in the world but not lost. Instead, it reflects a purposeful solitude, a time of quiet that allows for reflection, clarity, and connection.

Reflecting on how allowing times of purposeful peace can allow for healing and growth.

Nature, especially the ocean has always been a place of healing and introspection for me. The ocean, in particular, holds symbolic meaning to me, as it is a space where I feel both humbled and whole. I have spent a lot of time growing up on boats, surrounded by family and friends. The lone boat represents a journey as it sails through the sea, It is impacted by the external factors such as the wind, as such, life can be moulded and altered by the external factors. but the boat is not just on a journey through a physical landscape, but an emotional and spiritual one. It is about navigating through life's still moments, where there is no noise to distract from your thoughts.

These are the times that often define who we are the quiet mornings, the long walks, the internal conversations no one hears but us. In a world that often celebrates noise and speed, this artwork is a reminder of the power and necessity of stillness which is something very meaningful to me. The hills and trees in the background serve as anchors to the scene unchanging, grounded, and distant. They remind me of the people, memories, and places that stay with us no matter how far we drift through life. There is meaning in separation, the space between the boat and the hills creates room for reflection, showing that sometimes we need distance to appreciate what we carry with us.

“Still waters” ultimately is meaningful to me because it captures a state of mind I return to often, in a world of chaos the desire to slow down, to drift gently through thoughts and memories, and to find peace, healing and growth in the process. It is a tribute to the beauty of being alone, but not lonely of finding serenity in uncertainty and in recognizing the quiet. Through this piece, I hope viewers can also reflect on what is meaningful to them as they shape their own internal landscapes and ensure that they take time to slow down and appreciate the beauty of quietness which often goes unnoticed.

### **Hannah Walsh**

#### ***Strings of Home***

This piece reflects what matters most to me, family, tradition, and the joy of shared music. Inspired by the Irish flag, the print is filled with symbols of traditional Irish music. Representing some of the instruments that each of my family members play. Though my siblings and I all live away from home, with two of them in Australia now, music continues to connect us. Playing together when we could was a way for us to stay close to one another. The print doesn't just celebrate the music

we play but the bond it represents. It creates a sense of home for all of us and that is what matters most to me!

### **Caoimhe Berrigan**

#### ***French Horn***

My exhibit is an image of a French Horn. Music is a central part of my life. I have played the French Horn since I was ten years old in a band. Playing music allows me to express my creativity, switch off from any stress and gives me a reason to meet with friends. I was delighted to get the opportunity to reflect this in this image, which I produced during the printmaking sessions.

### **Kelly Cashman**

#### ***Buddy***

My chosen exhibit is a dry point print of my pet budgie, 'Buddy'. I spent time carving out the intricate details that are unique to my budgie to capture the essence of Buddy. The colour of this exhibit is simple yet intentional. My own budgie is blue and white and often spends time on a branch in his cage. I believe the simple design truly portrays the essence of my budgie as he leads a very simple yet enjoyable life. My exhibit relates very well to the exhibition theme, 'What Matters Most', as to simply put it, my pets matter the most to me. For the whole six week process of printmaking, I focussed all of my artwork on my pets, including my dogs and budgie. This is very meaningful to me as I now have created art for my pets that will last a lifetime. I am very proud of this exhibit and am delighted to have it be part of this exhibition.

### **Alison Power**

#### ***Family***

The theme that was assigned to us during our printmaking sessions was 'What Matters Most'. The print I chose depicts an image of myself and my family. I found it difficult to decide on what to do during my printmaking sessions but finally decided on this because family and the people around us play an essential role in our everyday life and influence who we are, what we do and the environment around us all of which are topics we have been learning about in depth this past year. Since starting this course I have become more aware social, environmental and personal influences on occupation and occupational engagement and family are our first introduction to society and have some influence on the environment we grow up in and development which we learned about in our lifespan development module in first semester. In short, my family and the people around me matter the most to me and play a significant and positive role in my life by providing stability and comfort.

## **Ruth Callaghan**

### ***Lighthouse of Memory***

For the exhibition, I have chosen my dry point print of the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, which is located off the coast of West Cork. Dry point quickly became my favourite technique during the six-week workshop. The process involved a sharp etching tool used to directly scratch an image onto a sheet of acetate. This took a great deal of patience, focus and control.

This piece relates to the theme “What Matters Most”, as it resembles a deep and personal connection to my childhood, instilling guidance and hope. During the summer months, my family and I would often visit the lighthouse, and the memory of those boat trips - the thrill of the waves and the sense of adventure remains vivid and meaningful. Throughout the printmaking workshop, the process of creating this piece allowed me to reflect on these cherished memories. The lasting impact of my fond childhood memories is what truly matters most to me.

## **Katie O’Keeffe**

### ***The Heart of my Home***

My final exhibition piece was a lino print of my springer spaniel, Maizy. When I heard of the theme ‘what matters most’, I immediately knew what I was going to choose. Maizy represents What matters most to me is family, love, and connection. Maizy is more than a pet; she is a cherished member of our household whose presence brings joy, comfort, and companionship to our daily lives. Capturing her image through printmaking allowed me to reflect on the emotional bond we share, and the deep impact pets can have on our lives. This piece highlights the importance of honouring the relationships that bring meaning and warmth into our lives.

## **Alice Meagher**

### ***Cam Teallaigh***

When I first heard of our theme ‘What Matters Most’ I immediately thought of my home and my family, and I wanted to reflect that in my piece, “Cam Teallaigh”. Through the use of drypoint, I created a piece that pictures my house, surrounded by nature and beauty, with the sun rising in the background. This printmaking experience taught me how I often take things for granted despite how lucky I am. I have grown up in this house since I was a child, surrounded by love, laughter, and happiness. It is a place of comfort and solitude, all of which I wanted to reflect in my artwork. The sun rising represents the happiness I find at home, while the house standing alone within the fields represents the peace and safety that constantly surrounds me. I chose the name because it felt perfect to describe this

piece and the thought that went into it, translating to “home-bird”. Even as I grow up, I know I will always be able return home and find the loving place I had during my youth.

### **Ciara O'Brien**

#### ***Sunflowers***

I chose to create a bunch of sunflowers. It was the start of spring when we started the printmaking sessions. On my walk down, I could see flowers sprouting along the grass. It was a sunny day and seeing these changes in the environment made me realise that nature matters a lot to me. They also represent growth. I chose to design a print based off these important realisations. The simple black and white colours reflect the simple beauty I see in nature. I chose sunflowers specifically as there is lots of sunflowers in my garden at home. All these factors influenced me when choosing the design for the exhibition.

### **Muireann Cronin**

#### ***A Window Scene***

With the hustle and bustle of the busy life we all live especially when figuring out what your routine looks like as a first-year college student ‘what matters most’ as a guideline in our printmaking experience is a thought-provoking title. When I think of what matters, the most predominant subject in my mind at this point of my life is Home.

Even though I adore my time I spend living in Cork Monday to Friday in my apartment independently, I grew a sense of appreciation and adoration for my home. Home for me is what matters most as it almost acts as a safety net. When I return home on a Friday to my family in my rural country home, I feel whole, and time slows. The chaotic dynamic of family life with people coming and going and the warm feeling it provides between sitting for dinner together, laughing and catching up on our day.

For this piece I used dry point etching which I find shows the ruggedness of the natural mountain scape and all that goes with the countryside. This scene reminds me of when I stand at my kitchen sink looking out the double window at the landscape. To me this scene encapsulates the peace and comfort which home brings to me.

Home matters most to me because of my family and my community there is just something so special about the feeling of the countryside community which becomes more treasured when you depart from it and so much sweeter when you return.

## **Orlaith Power**

### ***My Golden Retriever Buddy***

#### **What Matters Most - Buddy**

For my exhibition piece I have chosen my Golden Retriever whose name is Buddy. I created Buddy using a technique called dry point. It took time and precision as I used a needle to engrave my design into the acrylic. The dry point allowed me to capture the detail of Buddy's fur which is so soft. Once the design was made I rolled ink on it and printed this out onto paper. I enjoyed this activity greatly as it was intriguing to see how the print would turn out.

When given the theme “What Matters Most” for our printmaking process I knew straight away that Buddy would be a perfect match. Since moving away from home for college I missed my dog greatly. My favourite time of the week is coming home from college and being greeted with a wagging tail at the door. Since being away from home during the week it has made me appreciate my home and my dog more. Buddy gets me up in the morning and out into the fresh air as I bring him on walks. He has encouraged me to explore new places such as the beaches and mountains. Buddy provides unconditional love and is a great companion to have in the house especially when no one else is at home. Buddy is part of our family and really means a lot to me.

## **Lucy Mannion**

### ***Gradski Zvonik***

My chosen exhibit was a picture of the top of a clocktower, this was a picture I had taken the year before while I was on holidays in Dubrovnik. It was a dry point piece, and I added some yellow ink which I thought would give a vibrant pop of colour. I wanted the image to have an old-fashioned aesthetic that would reflect the historic architecture in the old town. The reason I choose this piece is because I thought it strongly related to theme of “what matters most”.

One of the most important things in my life is travelling to new countries and learning about new cultures. Travelling and meeting new people gives you the opportunity to learn and grow as a person. This picture reminded me of the joy and excitement I experience when travelling to unfamiliar places. While creating this piece I was able reflect on the memories I have while traveling and how important they are to me.

## **Anna Moynihan**

### ***Purpose in the Pause***

Purpose in the Pause explores the tension between striving and stillness, perfection and presence. As an occupational therapy student, the theme What

Matters Most resonated deeply- not in grand achievements, but in the quiet strength of everyday moments.

In the print, multiple hands stretch upward, symbolizing the pressure to constantly achieve and exceed expectations. Above them, an imperfect, smiling sun floats peacefully, surrounded by scattered stars. Its misaligned rays and calm expression reflect the beauty of imperfection and the value of simply being.

This piece echoes Wilcock's (1999) model of Doing, Being, and Becoming- reminding us that meaningful occupation is not just about action, but identity, reflection and growth. The sun doesn't strive; it glows by just existing. Similarly, Patrick Kavanagh's words- "Through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder"- highlight how joy and wonder live in life's small, familiar spaces. This work is a reminder that what matters most isn't flawlessness, but presence, connection and the quiet power of the now. There is, truly, purpose in the pause.

### **Christina Conway**

#### ***Reaching For What Matters Most: A Drypoint Reflection on Music and Meaning***

The piece I have chosen for the exhibition is a drypoint print showing a girl reaching out toward floating music notes. I created this artwork to reflect the exhibition theme "What Matters Most." For me, music has always been something particularly important. It helps me feel calm, express my emotions, and connect with my sense of self. The image of the girl reaching out symbolises that feeling of needing or longing for something meaningful something that brings comfort and joy during difficult or busy times.

Drypoint was a new technique for me, and I found the process quite peaceful. The act of scratching the image into the plastic plate was repetitive and gave me space to think. I enjoyed focusing on each line and detail, even if it did not turn out perfectly. In fact, the small mistakes in the print reminded me that life, like art, is not always perfect but that does not make it less meaningful. Each mark added to the story. This really connected with the message of my piece: that even small or quiet things like music can have a significant impact on how we feel.

This print also helped me reflect on how important creativity is in my own life. Before starting the six-week printmaking workshop, I had not made much time for art or music in a long while. Life had become so busy with studying and daily tasks. But doing these creative sessions reminded me how good it feels to make something with my hands, and to be in the moment. I've even started adding small creative activities like drawing and listening to music back into my weekly routine. It's helped me feel more balanced and connected to myself again. The girl in the image also represents me in a way reaching for something that matters, even when it's not always easy to hold onto. I think a lot of people can relate to that feeling. We all have things that help us feel grounded, and for me, music is one of those things. I wanted to capture that personal connection and emotion in my print.

Creating and sharing this piece has reminded me that creative activities are not just useful for clients in occupational therapy, they are also important for us as individuals. This experience has helped me understand how occupations like art and music can support wellbeing, self-expression, and identity. I now see how powerful it can be to use creativity as a therapeutic tool, and how these small but meaningful activities can help people stay connected to what matters most in their lives.

## **Roisin Spillane**

### ***Family Tree***

My design represents a symbol of a family tree. The image is based on the tree of life, an ancient Celtic symbol which represents balance, harmony and growth. However, I made a few creative differences in drawing out my own version. I chose this symbol as it reminds me of a charm I once had on a bracelet, which was sadly lost around a year ago. The charm was originally a Christmas gift from my aunt. I loved wearing it as a reminder of the support from my family that I am so lucky to have. Since the charm is now lost, having this print brings me a new reminder. As I grow older I see less value in things like jewellery. Material things may eventually get lost and lose their meaning. What matters most to me is having loving, supportive relationships, and people I can turn to in need. For me this means my family, not only blood relatives but those who have shown up for me so consistently that they have become equally important.

## **Saoirse Doyle**

### ***Nature Walks***

For our printmaking exhibition themed ‘What Matters Most,’ I took time to deeply think about what genuinely matters the most in my life—what could I not live without?

After moving from the countryside to the city for college, I came to a clear realization. What matters the most to me is being able to walk outdoors in nature. Growing up living amongst windy backroads, birds chirping, mountains, flowers, and endless greenery, I never fully appreciated how lucky I was to live in such a beautiful place until I no longer had it at my doorstep.

The print I created for the exhibition, titled ‘Nature Walks,’ depicts a windy footpath surrounded by nature. The image reminded me of the narrow road I live on. Being able to walk outdoors and hear nature is something I cannot live without. It has helped me through stressful times in the past and is beneficial to both my mental and physical health. My print reflects home and the calm and healing nature provides, which is what matters most to me.

## **Laura Whitehead**

### **Companion**

In making this print of my dog, Missy, a black Bernedoodle, I found myself reflecting on how much space she holds in my life, without ever needing to say a word. Her steady companionship is simple, but it holds weight. Her routines, her stillness, the way she follows me from room to room; it's all subtle, but it means everything. While carving her image, I realised how much comfort and stability she brings me by simply just being there. It made me think about how often we overlook the small, familiar things that shape us.

## **Anna Nic Sheain**

### **Daisy**

The six-week printmaking experience provided me with valuable insights and opportunities that taught me countless lessons into my self as an occupational being, the importance of creative occupations and my occupational identity. We did three unique styles, all of which I found thoroughly enjoyable and interesting. In this paragraph, I will discuss the specific piece that I chose for the exhibition and why.

The second style of art is one that particularly stood out to me as I found it really allowed us to engage with our physical motor skills and I enjoyed taking part in this art style. We were required to trace an image onto a transparent piece of plastic then we would then roll with ink and print onto a piece of paper. We were required to choose an image that held meaning in our lives and for me that is my cat.

The reason why I chose my cat is because the value and importance that pets hold in our lives is often undermined. However, they are the sole beings that do not judge us for who we are and that love us unconditionally. Pets offer moments of happiness and gratitude to those in their lives and they care for humans just as we care for each other. My cat in particular has always brought me joy and a sense of comfort. Although she may not be the most affectionate animal, there is a shared sense of understanding that she cares for us as her owners and that we care for her. Whether it be her lying at the end of my bed when reading a book, or coming to comfort me in times of need, my cat has provided me with a sense of love that I did not expect an animal to when she first arrived in our home.

Before my cat became a staple member of the family, I held a hatred for cats and much preferred dogs. I never understood why cats held such a demeanour, however, after having my cat for nearly three years I can certainly say that my mindset has been shifted. She is an integral part of our family and makes our household a happier place.

I decided to base this piece on my cat as I wanted to mark my shift in mindset. It felt like a turning moment for me that I could dedicate an entire art piece to not only any cat but a cat that I loved after hating them for so many years. Doing this piece meant a lot to me and I am great fun to have been a part of the experience.

## **Aoife Mc Namara**

### ***Lola***

We were given the theme of 'What matters most?' for our printmaking sessions. This caused me to really think about what I would miss most if I was to lose something right now. I instantly thought of my family, friends and my dog Lola. We got Lola as a puppy during covid lockdown. Our parents surprised us! I am obviously being biased here but Lola is the best dog and friend I could ever ask for. She accompanies me on long walks down the field. When no one else wants to come with me I can always count on her to join me. She lies beside me on the couch while I watch tv. She welcomes me home with her cries after I have been away for a week at college. But most of all Lola is my best friend. She is so intelligent and always knows the best way to cheer me up when I am upset. She would spend hours outside with me when I am kicking a ball off the wall with no complaining. She really is one of the people who matter most in my life.

## **Luis Patrick Miranda**

### ***The World is Beautiful***

The theme "What Matters Most" took me quite a bit of deliberation at first. The first things that came to my mind were things such as family, friends, music and other similar topics. These things are extremely important to me, but I ended up focusing on depicting the aspects of the human condition that I feel matter the most. It felt right to me.

I think the world is beautiful. I hope to be able to maintain that view and help others see it too. As my print depicts, there are many beautiful sights and landscapes to admire in the world, yet along with that there are also many amazing people, diverse cultures, stellar creations and a whole lot more in the world to see. The world's beauty exists in the mundane too through pleasant mornings, pleasant teas and much more.

The print is reminiscent of a particular time I was reminded of the world's beauty, looking out into the endless sea with the gently resting above. Even with all of the struggles, disappointments and stresses of daily life along with the terrible things happening all around the world, I want to stay, live and see more, I hope that other people do too and for those that do not, I hope to at least do my best and try and remind them of the world's beauty.

## **Ciana O'Sullivan**

### ***Solace***

A reflection on peace, heritage, and symbolism.

Through the making of this piece, reflections on "what matters most" manifested in connection, identity, and the quiet spaces where we feel most ourselves. This piece

depicts a lone stag standing in rich grass, with gaze lifted toward the sky above him. Imagery of the stag has long been woven into Irish folklore and mythology as a creature of quiet stoicism, resilience, and dignity. This image, for me, is symbolic of a reclamation of culture and guardianship of heritage. Through occupation, I found space to reconnect with Ireland's identity, while honouring a tradition of storytelling that has long endured the passing of time. "Solace" speaks to the comfort found in stillness, and the healing that can come from reconnecting with ourselves, and our culture, through the act of creation.

### **Chris Quinlan**

#### ***Jessie***

I decided to include my dog Jessie in my print because she is very special to me. Jessie has been a faithful companion for many years, providing me with comfort and encouragement during difficult times. Having a print made of her was a way for me to show my emotions and illustrate how much she means to me. By making a print of her, I was able to reflect on how much she means to me and the positive effect that she has had on my well-being. This piece is not just about my dog, but about the bond that we share and the sense of emotional security that she inspires inside of me.

### **Eabha Cunningham**

#### ***Always By My Side***

In response to the theme "What matters most," I created a linocut print of my dog, Teddy. As soon as I began reflecting on the theme, Teddy came to mind without hesitation. He represents love, loyalty and comfort, qualities that have been a constant in my life. Whether it's our peaceful walks together, his excited welcome home greetings or the way he senses when I'm feeling low and quietly lies next to me, Teddy has been by my side through everything.

The process of creating this print was very personal. I started by drawing him from memory, then carefully carved the image into lino, thinking about all the special moments we have shared. Each cut reminded me of his unique character and the calm he brings me. As I rolled on the ink and pressed the final image, it felt like I was capturing a piece of what truly matters most to me.

I named this piece "Always by My Side" because that's exactly what Teddy has been, my constant companion. The title reflects both his physical presence and the emotional support he gives without needing words. Whether I'm celebrating good news or going through something difficult, Teddy is always there. Creating this print felt like a way of honouring the quiet, everyday love that means the most.

This was the piece I felt most confident in during the module and the emotional connection made it even more meaningful. Through linocut, I discovered not just a creative skill, but a powerful way to express love, memory, and identity, reminding me how creative occupations can connect us to what matters most in our lives.

## **Laura Linehan**

### ***What value, inspiration, and motivates us matters most***

The theme of this year's exhibition, "What Matters Most", initially evoked a mix of apprehension and excitement, apprehension toward the unfamiliar environment and task, and excitement about the opportunity to be creative. I designed an image of a queen bird protecting her eggs in a nest, representing my core values, which are family, education, and security. I was symbolised as the queen. However, linocutting proved to be physically challenging as a left-handed person and even led to injury. This struggle became a metaphor for the difficulty of protecting what matters most. The piece sparked varied interpretations from peers, highlighting how creative work invites multiple perspectives. Upon deeper reflection, I recognised that my values consistently centre around my three children. They inspire my pursuit of higher education and motivate my ongoing personal growth. This experience reflects Wilcock's (1998) concept of becoming, as I continue to evolve as a parent, student, and future occupational therapist.

## **Lily Daly**

### ***In Motion, In Meaning***

My exhibit, "In Motion, In Meaning", shows two people dancing, connected both physically and emotionally. They are dancing together, while swirling lines wrap around and between them, symbolizing the strong bond they are sharing. These swirls are like energy, feelings, and connection. The colours, bright, flowing, and overlapping, reflect each person's emotions, blending and interacting as they move. More than dance, this piece is about being present, and engaging in an occupation that is fulfilling both emotional, socially and creatively. It fits really well with the theme "What Matters Most" by emphasizing how important human connection and emotional honesty are. It shows our basic need to belong and how shared experiences, especially around movement and creativity, can help us reveal our true selves.

With this artwork, I wanted to celebrate the relationships and moments that shape who we are and stay with us.

## **Tara Gleeson**

### ***Eighteen Years of Zoomies***

When we were asked to explore the theme of "What Matters Most," I found myself unsure where to begin. I kept searching for something deep or profound, but nothing felt personal enough. Then I happened to notice the keyring on my car

keys, a small photo of my dog who passed away two years ago. He was 18 years old when he passed and so had been a massive part of my life growing up, and in that moment, it became clear what I wanted to focus on. I titled my piece "Eighteen Years of Zoomies", because it captures both the length of time we had together and the energy he brought into every day. He was full of life, always moving, always excited, and always there.

Whether it was racing around the garden or curling up beside me after a long day, he was a constant presence in my life. He made the ordinary feel special, just by being part of it. As I worked on the piece, I spent a lot of time thinking about those small, everyday moments, the kind that don't seem like much at the time but mean everything when you look back. I remembered the fun, the comfort, and the way he could lift my mood without even trying. It reminded me how powerful those quiet connections can be.

Creating this piece helped me reflect on the value of companionship, and how the relationships that matter most are often the ones that are simply there, steady and full of love. What matters most to me is that sense of connection, and the joy found in the little things. That's what this piece is about.

## **Nicola Guinane**

### ***A sunny morning in Salthill***

My chosen print is the dry point etching piece I did. It is a picture of a sunny morning in Salthill in Galway. Going along with our theme of "What Matters Most", this picture shows a new beginning to a new day, a day spent with loved ones enjoying my favourite place. It is more than just a picture of a new day, but a fresh beginning. Where the sea air hits your face and the crowds sing and dance. What matters most to me is that when things do not go how I plan, I can go to a place such as this one to remember that life has unlimited opportunities and I have freedom to choose my own path.

## **Doireann Hogan**

### ***Human connection***

The piece I selected for the exhibition was created through the medium of monoprinting, featuring a person, flower and sun. Each of these individual elements carries personal significance, tying into this year's theme of "Things That Matter Most". The person symbolises the friendships I hold in life, the flower a metaphor of beauty and growth in life and the sun represents the light and positivity friendships contribute towards my life. Combined, these elements are the core roots behind human connection, personal growth and life satisfaction - the things that hold the highest importance to me. The outline representing a human is located within the left corner of the print, a smile beaming from the stickman's appearance. Human connection plays a dominant role in my life, as I love surrounding myself with my loved ones, providing me with a constant form of

belonging. The smile places emphasis on the joy these relationships bring into my life, how I have trouble removing the smile bracing my cheeks when in the company of others. The flower is a symbol of growth and beauty as we find ourselves changing and developing into new individuals with each passing day. The height of the flower mirrors the figure, representing in a unique way that as we grow and change in life, the true friendships we formed will remain with us. The sun establishes the joy and brightness human interaction, and friendships provide within our existence. Like the way the sun fuels the earth, friendships provide you with an irreplaceable strength to conquer anything you set your mind to.

### **Mae Irwin**

#### ***Frankie***

The theme for this year's art exhibition was "what matters most". The first thing I thought of when I heard this was my dog, Frankie. Frankie has been a part of our household for as long as I remember. He has been present on countless Christmases and birthdays. Whenever I feel upset, I often find myself sitting by his 'corner' in the kitchen. As he is getting older now, it is hard to imagine what things will be like when he is not there, as he is engraved into our daily routines. From the walks every morning and evening, to the dinner times where he sits perched under the table. When deciding on something that matters most to me it wasn't difficult to begin drawing his picture. I felt like I could reflect on the memories I have with him, as I drew his familiar fur. Making this print of him has helped me to reflect on the good times we have spent together and accept that the aging process is a natural part of life.

### **Eanna Walsh**

#### ***The Freedom to Be***

The original image was sourced online, then altered and simplified for print and to portray the most important thing. Freedom is often mistaken for escape, breaking away from something, while this figure shows a different kind of freedom. The kind that comes from being rooted in oneself even while everything else is in motion. It's the freedom to feel, to breathe & to move through life with connection to that and those that help you flow. A moment of harmony between a person & one of the most powerful natural elements in our world. This print captures what might just be the most important thing: The Freedom to be.

To be afforded the freedom to stand in who you are, even when the world bears down around you like a wave demanding action. Here, in this still motion, we see a wave rider connected to the world around them reminding us of a deep truth: the most important thing is the freedom to simply be. To move with life not against it. To exist fully and be grateful of that privilege. Quietly bold, present, grounded & free.

## **Aisling Whooley**

### ***Rooted in the Sea***

I chose a boat on the water because the sea has always been a big part of my life and who I am. I live by the sea, and my dad, uncles and grandparents have all worked on the water, so it represents my family's history, traditions and livelihood. I also work with my dad on our fish farm, which has strengthened my personal connection to the sea and made me value the work that happens there. Many of my happiest memories are connected to the water, through sailing, swimming and spending time with my family. For me, the sea represents a place of both hard work and a place where I can relax, switch off and be calm. It is a place that holds meaning, comfort, and a strong sense of belonging for me.

## **Lauramai Leahy**

### ***Heart Bar***

This year's exhibition theme, "What Matters Most" gave me the chance to reflect on something that's quietly shaped my life: Growing up around horses. My piece, 'Heart Bar', takes its name from a particular kind of horseshoe that Buzz, my horse, must wear. Buzz and I were born in the same year, and I genuinely can't recall a time without him. Growing up around horses can make their presence seem so natural that you don't realise how much they mean to you until you take the time to give it serious consideration. Horses are incredibly emotionally intelligent animals. Simply being around them brings me a sense of calm and comfort. They've provided a space for quiet connection, especially during periods of turmoil like covid. Through riding, training and competing, I've built confidence, developed resilience and made lifelong friendships many of which began through a shared love of horses. All of that is encompassed in Heart Bar. It represents not only Buzz but also each experience, insight, and bond I've gained from working with horses. The image was created using intaglio printmaking, a technique where I carved the design into an acetate sheet, applied ink over the surface and carefully wiped it away, leaving ink only in the carved lines before pressing the final print. Like working with horses, the process itself was both physical and reflective, requiring patience, care and presence.

Cover Print  
Orlaith Power  
*My Golden Retriever Buddy*

## Further Information

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