

Images of Research

If a picture paints a thousand words, then the Images of Research competition proves that UCD researchers here have plenty to say. The competition, now in its second year, invites researchers to submit images that represent their work and engage the viewer to find out more about the story behind it.

It's the brainchild of Dr Aoibheann Gibbons, UCD's Director of Research Strategy and Planning, whose background encompasses scientific research in the arts and digital media. "I recognised when I came to UCD that there's a wealth and diversity of activity here and it spans across all of the disciplines and many main subjects," she says. "But for communication, it was very difficult to obtain images of representations of research work here. Those that did exist were strongly based in the life sciences and that's only one dimension of research in the university. The competition aimed to widen inclusivity and to communicate, through visual means, research stories from all of the disciplines and to have a rich and engaging way of telling those stories to a broader audience and to the public."

"This year's call resulted in over 600 images from science, humanities, arts and business being submitted, each one with a short description of the research story it represents. Not only do the images give a flavour of the diversity of research to a broader audience, but

entering the competition can encourage researchers to think about communicating their work in a different way", says Dr Gibbons.

The judging panel, chaired by Dr Gibbons, included multi award-winning photographer and President of the IPPA, Gerry O'Leary, artist Leah Hilliard from the National College of Art and Design, Willie White (Artistic Director of the Project Arts Centre), Anne Hodge (Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Ireland), art historian Dr Lynda Mulvin, communications director Elis O'Brien and JP Donnelly (Group Chief Executive of Ogilvy Ireland).

"The idea of the panel was to bring people who had the depth and range of experience to make them credible evaluators and judges of the images," she explains. "Panel members individually selected their shortlists of favourites online, based on composition, originality, impact, technical quality and effective portrayal of research. Shortlisted images were then printed out and the panel met to evaluate the images again."

"Images can look very different online and in printed form; sometimes your favourites change on the day, and people feel quite strongly about the ones they like, it's a very passionate discussion at times and that makes for a really good outcome", says Dr Gibbons.

As well as the diversity of research images on offer, she notes that the international dimension stood out too. "The global nature of the range of research really comes through. People are travelling to distant places, including the Arctic, Myanmar, Jordan, Iceland and Belize, to carry out research in the field, often in collaboration with other groups."

This year's short-listed entries, including the winner by Maria Cederlund, UCD Conway Institute (see photo 3), will be produced as framed prints and will be on display in UCD Research Office. They will also be made available to other locations throughout UCD, through the UCD collection curator. Selected images will be featured in a 2008 Images of Research calendar, and more images will be available through the research portal as a resource to UCD staff for profiling and promoting research underway at the university.

The Images of Research competition is overseen by an advisory committee of UCD staff and includes: Dr Ann Lavan, Dr Brian Caulfield, Eimear O'Connor, Dr Hans-Benjamin Braun, Prof Pat Guiry, Dr Robert Sands and Dr Lynda Mulvin.

Claire O'Connell (BSc 1992, PhD 1998) is a freelance journalist.

Entrants

- 1. Entrant:** Cormac Nolan (Life Sciences, School of Biology & Environmental Science)
Title: *Sleeping with the Anemone*
Research story: *This Caribbean spotted cleaner shrimp uses its bright colours and white antennae to attract clients to its anemone. "I spotted this one in the shallows after a research dive collecting fish in Turneffe Atoll, Belize"*
- 2. Images of Research Winner**
Entrant: Maria Cederlund (Life Sciences, School of Biomolecular & Biomedical Science)
Title: *Gene expression in zebrafish embryos*
Research story: *The violet stain shows where the gene mab2112 is expressed in the 28 hours zebrafish embryo. Expression domains include the eye, tectum and neural tube*
- 3. Entrant:** Daniel Cantero Lauer (Engineering, Mathematical & Physical Sciences, School of Architecture, Landscape & Civil Engineering)
Title: *Bridge's Soul*
Research story: *It is the relative error of the UNB (Under Vehicle Bending moment) for different frequencies of sine wave road profiles, taking as reference the response for 1cm amplitude*
- 4. Entrant:** Elizabeth Shotton (Engineering, Mathematical & Physical Sciences, School of Architecture, Landscape & Civil Engineering)
Title: *Arnarstapi, Iceland*
Research story: *From a collection of images of settlement and landscape patterns undertaken by students and staff from schools of architecture in Ireland, Iceland, Norway and Canada as part of the North Atlantic Rim Research Collaborative*

