

# News Release

## 70th TEXACO CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

### Antrim student is overall 2024 Competition winner

**Dublin, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024** – Young Antrim artist, Charley Bell, a 17-year old student at Methodist College Belfast, has been chosen overall winner of this year's 70th Texaco Children's Art Competition, taking first prize in the senior 16-18 years age category.

Her winning work, for which she receives a prize of €1,500, is entitled 'Anticipation' and is a painstakingly detailed portrait study in coloured pencils.

In choosing it as the overall prize winner in the Competition, Final Adjudicator and Chairman of the judging panel, Gary Granville, Professor Emeritus of Education at the National College of Art and Design, described Charley's artwork as "an exceptionally well executed portrait, that tells of an 'aged serenity', of a full life with a wealth of experience and wisdom."

"There is a subversive energy, irrepressible optimism and underlying joy in the image that belies the stereotypical portrayal of aging. This wonderful work of art well-deserves the top award in this year's Texaco Children's Art Competition," Professor Granville added.

No stranger to the Competition, Charley was also the overall Competition winner last year as well as winning Special Merit Awards in both 2020 and 2021.

The middle child of three, Charley first discovered her passion for art at a young age and went on to develop an ability to express herself more through her art works as she progressed through Grammar school. From an artistic family, older sister Carrie has won numerous Special Merit Awards in the Competition, whilst younger brother Rory has received a Commendation. With one year left to complete in school Charley believes art will play some role in her future down the line.

The inspiration for her prize-winning portrait came when she discovered a photo of an old woman and felt the emotion in her face would be fascinating to bring to life. "I like working with portraits and when I saw this photo the detailed expression on the woman's face jumped out at me immediately. I knew it would be a challenging and interesting artwork to take on," Charley explains.

In winning the prestigious overall prize and first place in the Category A age group, Charley and her fellow winners fought off the challenge from the young artists across Ireland who took part in the Competition. Amongst them are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and the fifteen Special Merit awards recipients in each of seven categories for which prizes are presented, including a category reserved for special needs children.

In **Category A** (16-18 years), other top winners were Donegal student, Weronika Jarowinska (age 16), a pupil at Loreto Secondary School Letterkenny who won second prize (€1,000) for her work entitled 'Man to Machine'. Third prize (€750) went to Clare student, Eimear Fitzgerald (age 16), a pupil at Ennis Art School, for her work entitled 'Best Friends'.

In **Category B** (14-15 years), first prize (€450) was won by Galway student, Darragh Granahan (age 15), from Gort Community School, for his work entitled 'Unconditional Love'. Second prize (€350) went to Donegal student, Kerri Doherty (age 15), from Abbey Vocational School, Donegal Town, for her work entitled 'Granda's Turn!'. A previous winner, Kerri won third prize in the 12-13 years age category in 2022 and a Special Merit Award in category B last year. Third prize (€250) was won by Limerick student, David MacAodha (age 15), a pupil at Coláiste Íde Agus Iosef, Abbeyfeale, for his work entitled 'A Forgotten Life'. David won a Special Merit Award in the 12-13 years age category in 2021.

In **Category C** (12-13 years), first prize (€350) went to Mayo student, Charlotte Greham (age 12), from Breaffy National School, Ballina, for her artwork entitled 'Inspiration'. Second prize (€250) was won by 13-years old Laois student Beth Phelan, from Paint Pots Art Group, Ballyfin, for her work entitled 'The Farmhouse'. Third prize (€200) went to Meath student, Nicole Doherty (age 13), from Clarke Art Studio, Ratoath, for her work entitled 'Contemplating'. Nicole won first prize in the 9-11 years age category in 2022.

In **Category D** (9-11 years), first prize (€250) has been won by 11-years old Clare student, Emily Coffey, a pupil at C.B.S. Ennis, for her work entitled 'Gone But Not Forgotten'. Second prize (€200) was won by Cork student, Philippa Costello (age 10), a pupil at Watergrasshill National School, for her work entitled 'My Community'. Third prize (€150) went to Kildare student, Danil Korolko (age 10) from Chóca Naofa Kilcock, for a work entitled 'The Big Bang'.

In **Category E** (7-8 years), first prize (€200) was won by 8-years old Clare student, Sinéad Azkorbebeitia, from Ennis Art School, for her self-portrait. Second prize (€150) was won by Westmeath student, Nicholas Glynn (age 8) from All Saints' National School, Mullingar, for his work entitled 'Lost Little Lambs (Moate Park, Roscommon)'. A previous winner, Nicholas won Special Merit Awards last year and in 2022. Third prize (€125) went to Dublin student, Sophie Wardell (age 8), from Oakmount Crèche, UCD, for her work entitled 'The Electric Bolt'.

In **Category F** (6 years and younger) – the youngest age group in the Competition – first prize (€150) was won by 4-year old Louth student, Tadhg Traynor, from Rainbow Club, Drogheda, for his work entitled 'Dog'. Second prize (€125) went to Donegal student, Charles (Dominic) Gallagher (age 6), a pupil at St. Mary's National School, Lifford, for his work entitled 'Moving Oceans'. Last year, Charles (Dominic) also won second prize in the same age category. Third prize (€100) was won by Cork student, Sofia-May Kenefick (age 6), a pupil at Blarney Street C.B.S., for her work entitled 'The Emotion Picture'.

In **Category G**, first prize of €1,500 was won by 18-years old James Moonan, from The Arthouse, Drogheda, for his work entitled 'The Wren's Nest'. A multiple previous winner, James also won first prize in Category G of the Competition in 2023, 2021, 2020, and in 2019, second prize in 2018, and Special Merit Awards in 2022 and 2017. Second prize (€1,000) went to Antrim student, Zara Craig, (age 16), a pupil at Ballyclare High School, for her work entitled 'L'Ombre'. Also a multiple previous winner, Zara won first prize in the same category in 2022, second prize in 2021, and Special Merit Awards in 2020 and 2019. Third prize (€200) was won by Dublin student, Sofia Regan, (age 12), from Blackrock, for her work entitled 'This is Me'.

## **Comment – James Twohig**

Paying tribute to the young artists ‘whose imagination, creativity and love of art have been at the heart of the Competition since its inception seven decades ago’, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations at Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited – the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand – expressed gratitude to the parents, families and teachers who “encourage children to see in art an outlet through which to demonstrate their individuality and unique talent and ability”.

“Despite the many worldly attractions and devices that vie for the attention of today’s youth, it is extremely gratifying to know that many continue to show an enduring interest in art and to demonstrate their ability in the magnificent prize-winning entries we see today,” he said.

## **Judging**

Final judging was carried out by the Chairman of the judging panel, Gary Granville, Professor Emeritus of Education at the National College of Art & Design. Supporting him in the adjudication process was a group of preliminary judges, each one a distinguished figure in the world of art in Ireland. They are: Dr. Denise Ferran (artist, art historian, and former President of the Royal Ulster Academy); Eoin Butler (artist and lecturer in visual arts); Marie Connole (artist, teacher and previous Texaco Children’s Art Competition winner); Noelle McAlinden (artist, curator and creative adviser) and Hetty Lawlor (artist, previous Texaco Children’s Art Competition winner and Sky Portrait Artist of the Year finalist).

## **Ireland’s longest-running Sponsorship**

The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is popularly regarded as the longest-running sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland, with an unbroken history that dates back to the very first Competition held in 1955. This year, as has been the case throughout its life, it has been a platform on which young artists have had their talents recognised and a springboard on which many have risen to national prominence. Aside from giving students the space to give expression to their talent and skill, the Competition has focused a spotlight on the quality of art teaching in Irish schools and the importance that the educational establishment attaches to the subject of art education.

Past winners whose early interest in art and the arts may well have been encouraged by their participation in the Competition include artists, Robert Ballagh, Bernadette Madden, Dorothy Cross, and the late Graham Knuttel, fashion designer Paul Costelloe, and artist and former broadcaster Thelma Mansfield. Other notable past winners include former Minister, Ruairi Quinn (a four-times winner), communications consultant and broadcaster Terry Prone, Former ICTU Secretary and Chairman of the Pension Authority David Begg, actress Jean Anne Crowley, musician Ethna Tinney, Trinity College Professor of Contemporary Irish History Eunan O’Halpin and the late novelist Clare Boylan.

ENDS.

## **Editor’s Notes:**

1. The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. For further information about the Competition, contact Ashley Hall at Hall PR on 01-660 9377 (office) or email [pr@hall.ie](mailto:pr@hall.ie). For more information on Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, contact Bronagh Carron on (+353) 01 6258208 or email [bronagh.carron@valero.com](mailto:bronagh.carron@valero.com)
2. Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, a subsidiary of Valero Energy Corporation, markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand. There are close to 150 Texaco-branded service stations in Ireland and around 830 in the UK. Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited also provides aviation refueling services at Dublin and Shannon Airports, has an extensive commercial and industrial fuels business and holds an equity stake in one fuel storage facility in the Republic of Ireland. For more information, visit [www.texaco.ie](http://www.texaco.ie)
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