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**65th TEXACO CHILDREN’S ART COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

**Wexford student is chosen overall 2019 Competition winner**

**Dublin, 16th April 2019** – Naoise Hennessy, a 16-year old student from Craanford, near Gorey, has been chosen overall winner of this year's 65th Texaco Children's Art Competition, taking first prize in the senior 16-18 years age category.

Her winning entry entitled ‘Lifelines’ – described by competition adjudicators as ‘a finely detailed study that so perfectly captures the features and character of the subject’ – is a portrait of an elderly lady delicately reproduced using watercolour pencils throughout.

Youngest of four children, Naoise is well known to many in Wexford and beyond as an All-Ireland medal winner and goal-scoring forward on the County’s under-16 camogie team.  A pupil at Coláiste Bhríde in Carnew, she is said by her mother Marie to be a girl who ‘loves art in all its forms’. Expressing herself as ‘overjoyed’ when told of her achievement, Naoise attributes her success to the guidance she receives from her art teacher, Mr. Eugene Lynch and the staff at her college – her original introduction to art having come from her national school teacher Ms. Katriona Flynn.

Praising what he termed her ‘fine and detailed execution of what was an extremely challenging subject’, the Chairman of the judging panel, Gary Granville, Professor Emeritus of Education at the National College of Art and Design, described Naoise’s winning entry as ‘a truly lifelike and painstakingly executed work worthy of a place in any public gallery’.

In winning the coveted first prize, Naoise fought off competition from the over 25,000 young students from across Ireland who took part in the Competition. As her first prize, she receives a cheque for €1,500 plus a visit to Tokyo in August at the invitation of the International Foundation for Arts and Culture where she will be guest at the 20th International High School Arts Festival being held in Japan’s National Arts Center where her winning work will be exhibited. Next month, she will be presented with her prize at the prize-giving ceremony being held in Johnstown Estate Hotel, Enfield, when all of the 126 winners, from seven categories, will be in attendance.

Also in **Category A**, second prize (€1,000) was won by Lauren Dolphin (age 18), a pupil at Saint Raphael's College, Loughrea, Co. Galway, for her self-portrait while third prize (€750) was won by Emma Harris (age 17), a pupil at St. Brigid's College, Loughrea, for her work entitled ‘After The Flood’. No strangers to the competition, both Lauren and Emma won Special Merit Awards in previous years – Lauren in 2017 and Emma in last year’s Competition.

In **Category B** (14-15 years), the €450 first prize was won by Waterford student Nadia Stefaniak (age 15), a pupil at Abbey Community College, Ferrybank, for her work entitled ‘Colour Blast’, while second prize (€350) was won by Natalia Connolly (age 14), a pupil at Presentation College, Hacketstown Road, Carlow, for her work entitled ‘Through The Alleyway’. No stranger to the competition, Natalia won a Special Merit Award in last year’s competition. Third prize (€250) went to Anya Clarke-Carr (age 15), a pupil at Clarke Art, Ratoath, Co. Meath, for her work entitled ‘Gannet On Clogherhead Beach With Ping Pong Bat’.

In **Category C** (12-13 years), first prize of €350 went to Lea Moloney (age 13), a pupil at St. Joseph of Cluny, Killiney, Co. Dublin, for a work entitled ‘My Ouma’. Another past winner, Lea won a Special Merit Award in both 2016 and 2017. Second prize (€250) was won by 12-year old student Anna Dunlea, a pupil at Fossa National School, Killarney, Co. Kerry, for her self-portrait, while third prize (€200) went to Laura Holloway (age 13), a pupil at Loreto College, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, for her work entitled ‘My Friend Alice’.

In **Category D** (9-11 years), first prize (€250) was won by 10-year old Amihan Navarro, a pupil at Guardian Angels’ National School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, for a work entitled ‘Little Me’. Second prize (€200) was won by Walt Russell (age 9), a pupil at Scoil Assaim, Raheny, Dublin 5, for his work entitled ‘A Painting Of Me Painting’. A previous winner, Walt won second prize in category D of last year’s Competition and a Special Merit Award in 2017. Third prize (€150) went to Bora Ozalp (age 10), a pupil at Rolestown National School, Rolestown, Co. Dublin, for a work entitled ‘Battle Through The Broken Window’.

In **Category E** (7-8 years), the first prize of €200 was won by 8-year old Alfie Whyte, a pupil at Cloughoge Primary School, Newry, Co. Armagh, for his work entitled ‘My Brother Charlie’. Second prize (€150) was won by Eve Aherne (age 8), a pupil at St. Marnock's National School, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin, for her work entitled ‘Busy Bee Do Not Disturb’, while third prize (€125) went to Síofra Nic Pháidín (age 8), a pupil at Scoil Lorcáin, Baile Na Mánach, Co. Dublin, for her work entitled ‘Kanzi The Cockapoo’. No strangers to the competition, both Alfie and Eve won prizes in previous years – Alfie won a Special Merit award in last year’s Competition and second prize in category F in 2017, while Eve won a Special Merit Award in 2016.

In **Category F** (6 years and younger), the youngest age group in the Competition, first prize of €150 was awarded to 6-year old Laurie Hehir, a pupil at Ennis Art School, Co. Clare, for her work entitled ‘Cow In Blue’, while second prize (€125) was won by Fallon Murphy (age 6), a pupil at Creative Kubs, Kenmare, Co. Kerry, for a work entitled ‘Fallon's Portrait’. Third prize (€100) went to Milo Mulkeen (age 4), a pupil at Seapark Montessori School, Clontarf, Dublin, for his work entitled ‘Parrot Minding His Nest’.

In **Category G**, reserved for entries from young artists with special needs, first prize of €400 was won by 13-year old James Moonan, a pupil at The Arthouse, Drogheda, Co. Louth, for his work entitled ‘Old Friends’. Second prize (€300) went to Carlow student Amy Dawson (age 15), a pupil at Naomh Bríd, Tullow Community School, for her work entitled ‘Frida’. Both James and Amy both won prizes in previous years – James won second prize in the same category in last year’s Competition and a Special Merit Award in 2017, while Amy won a Special Merit Award in 2014. Third prize (€200) went to Ryan King (age 9), a pupil at St. Ita's School, Drogheda, Co. Louth, for his work entitled ‘A Ship's Voyage’.

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. Assisting him were preliminary judges Dr. Denise Ferran (Artist, Art Historian, and former President of the Royal Ulster Academy), Eoin Butler (Artist & Lecturer in Visual Arts), Seán Kissane (Curator: Exhibitions, IMMA), Aoife Ruane (Director, Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery, Drogheda) and Colleen Watters (Head of Learning & Partnership, Ulster Museum, Belfast).

Announcing the awards at a reception held in The Morrison Hotel in Dublin today (Tuesday, 16th April 2019), James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations for Valero – who market fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand – pointed to what he termed ‘the groundswell of artistic talent’ to be found amongst Ireland’s young people. ‘Despite the numerous other attractions that exist today, it is extremely gratifying to know that our young people continue to show an enduring interest in art and to demonstrate their ability in the magnificent prize-winning entries we see today,’ he said. Paying tribute to the winners, Mr. Twohig thanked the many teachers from schools throughout the country who have given their support to the Competition throughout its 65 years history.

The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is popularly regarded as Ireland’s 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 Graham Knuttel, Robert Ballagh, Bernadette Madden, Dorothy Cross, fashion designer Paul Costello and former broadcaster and artist Thelma Mansfield. Other notable past winners include former Minister, Ruairi Quinn (a four-times winner), communications consultant and broadcaster Terry Prone, 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 65th anniversary this year. For further information about the Competition, contact Don Hall (mobile 087-2552699) or Ashley Hall (mobile 086-3127774) at Hall PR on 01-660 9377 (office) or email pr@hall.ie. For more information on Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, contact Bronagh Carron on (+353) 01 6258208 or email bronagh.carron@valero.com
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