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# News Release

## 67th TEXACO CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

### Donegal student is overall 2021 Competition winner

**Dublin, 14 September, 2021** – P.J. Doherty, a 16-year old student at St. Eunan's College, Letterkenny, has been chosen overall winner of this year's 67th Texaco Children's Art Competition, taking first prize in the senior 16-18 years age category. His winning work, for which he receives a prize of €1,500, is entitled 'Me And My Dad' and is a portrait study in coloured pencil of the artist and his father, Patrick.

In choosing it as overall prize winner in the Competition and the first prize entry in the senior Category A age group, Final Adjudicator and Chairman of the judging panel, Professor Declan McGonagle described P.J.'s piece as "a powerful double portrait, achieved using a dramatic lighting effect." Through it, P.J. reveals a technical skill that Professor McGonagle said, "is harnessed to the depiction of the two personalities and their relationship."

No stranger to the Competition, P.J. won first prize in the 14-15 years age category in 2020 for his self-portrait.

Youngest of four children, P.J. hails from an artistic family, having developed his love of art 'from a very young age'. He credits his mother Martina for helping to encourage his passion, admitting 'she has always been creative, both with painting and working with pottery'. Now beginning 5<sup>th</sup> Year, P.J. has ambitions to further his interest in art when he finishes school, seeing it forming part of his future.

His inspiration for his prize-winning portrait came to him when he noticed his father sitting by a lamp and was attracted to 'the diverse range of light sources coming from it', which he says gave him 'the opportunity to work with an assortment of warm yellow and orange hues, combined with blue and purple tones'.

In winning the coveted overall prize and first place in the Category A age group, P.J. and his fellow winners fought off the challenge from the young artists from 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 Anya Clarke - Carr (age 17), a pupil at Clarke Art, Ratoath, who won second prize (€1,000) for her work entitled 'Self Portrait: Online School In My Pyjamas'. A previous winner, Anya won third prize in the 14-15 years age category in 2019 and a Special Merit Award in 2020. Third prize (€750) went to Matthew Clifford (age 17), a pupil at Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana, for his work entitled 'Morning Squeeze'.

In **Category B** (14-15 years), first prize (€450) was won by Kerry student Clodagh McCluskey (age 15) from Presentation Secondary School, Tralee for her work entitled 'Feathers'. Second prize (€350) was won by Emily Rong (age 15), from Alan Keane Art School, Foxrock for her work entitled 'Coco'. Third prize (€250) went to Xinru Zhou (age 14), a pupil at Holy Faith Clontarf Secondary School, for a work entitled 'Pineapple Slice'.

In **Category C** (12-13 years), first prize (€350) went to Philippa Dunlop (age 12) from St. Andrew's National School, Malahide for an artwork entitled 'My Self Portrait'. Second prize (€250) was won by 12-years old student Ailbhe Treacy from Lissenhall National School, Nenagh for her work entitled 'Life Going On', while third prize (€200) went to Allison Joyce (age 12) from Rush National School, for her self-portrait entitled 'Best Friend At The Beach'.

In **Category D** (9-11 years), first prize (€250) has been won by 11-years old Mae Cowper-Gray, a pupil at Scoil Bhríde, Kilcullen, for a work entitled 'Missing Ella (Lockdown Loneliness)'. Second prize (€200) was won by Cate McCashin (age 11), a pupil at Harold National School, Glathule, for her work entitled 'Surprised By Snow'. Third prize (€150) went to Gabriela-Maria Ticala (age 11) from Stanhope Street Primary School in Dublin City, for her work entitled 'My Grandfather'.

In **Category E** (7-8 years), first prize (€200) was won by 8-years old Wicklow student, Ella Kelly, from Saints Michael and Peter Junior School, Arklow, for her work entitled 'Red Apple'. Last year, Ella won a Special Merit Award in the same category of the Competition. Second prize (€150) was won by Laraib Aslam (age 7) from Presentation Junior School, Mullingar for a work entitled 'Cliffs Of Moher'. Third prize (€125) went to Éanna Ryan (age 8), from Scoil Chríost Rí Boys National School, Limerick, for his work entitled 'Diving Deep'.

In **Category F** (6 years and younger) – the youngest age group in the Competition – first prize (€150) was won by 4-years old Muhammad Hadi Qureshi, from Parish Community Woman Centre, Mullingar, for a work entitled 'Dog (Finger Print Art)'. Second prize (€125) went to Kelly Hynes (age 5), a pupil at Anne Kelly School of Art, Craft & Design in Clonaslee for her work entitled 'Easter Egg Hunt At Grannys'. Third prize (€100) went to Maximilian Hui (age 5), a pupil at The Kiddies Klub, Castletroy, for his work entitled 'Springtime Egg Laying'.

In **Category G**, reserved for entries from young artists of all ages with special needs, first prize of €400 was won, for the third year in succession, by 16-years old James Moonan, a pupil at The Arthouse, Drogheda, for his work entitled 'Heron On The River Boyne'. A multiple previous winner, James won first prize in the same category last year and in 2019, second prize in 2018 and a Special Merit Award in 2017. Second prize (€300) went to Zara Craig (age 13), a pupil at Ballyclare High School, for her work entitled 'New Beginnings'. Zara has won Special Merit Awards on two previous occasions, last year and in 2019. Third prize (€200) went to Elisha Brady (age 15), a pupil at The High School, Ballynahinch for her work entitled 'Apollo And I'.

### **Comment - James Twohig**

Paying tribute to the winners, not least those in younger age groups and special needs categories, James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations for Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited – the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand – congratulated the young artists who, he said, "continue to demonstrate their skills and ability in the incredible prize-winning entries we see this year."

Celebrating an unbroken 67 year history, the Competition was conducted this year in the face of school closures and other limitations applying over the past 12 months – which required amendments to the announcement of winners, presentation of prizes and other activities which are traditionally held in April and May each year. To that end, Mr. Twohig praised the artists, their parents and teachers for what he calls “their enthusiasm and continued interest in the Competition, as a platform on which they can showcase their imagination, exercise their creativity and display their very exceptional talents.”

### **Judging**

Chairman of the Judging Panel and Final Adjudicator is Professor Declan McGonagle, former Director of the National College of Art & Design and a prominent figure in Irish contemporary art. Supporting Professor McGonagle 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 & Lecturer in Visual Arts), Seán Kissane (Curator: Exhibitions, IMMA) and Aoife Ruane (Director, Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery, Drogheda).

### **Exhibition**

From September 14 to October 2, Drogheda’s Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery is hosting an exhibition of the top 126 winning paintings in this year’s Competition. Admission is free and further information is available at [www.highlanes.ie](http://www.highlanes.ie)

### **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 Graham Knuttel, Robert Ballagh, Bernadette Madden, Dorothy Cross, 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, 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 67th anniversary this year. For further information about the Competition, contact Ashley Hall (mobile 086-3127774) 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 780 in the UK. Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited also provides aviation refueling services at Dublin and Shannon Airports, has

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