

Art for Action Transcript

1. Cristian Keller

What is this series?

This series is about my personal experience being neurodivergent in the modern world. Being late diagnosed, it can be difficult to express my true thoughts without the feeling of scrutiny creeping in. This is why I'm very proud to be part of an exhibition that uplifts artists in the same position as me and strives to spread the positive message of unity.

What is art to me?

As you may be able to recognize from the poems in this series, art is to me what it is for most - an outlet for your soul. However, I believe it can be used to promote positive change and feelings, and this angle, to me, is when art is at its finest.

What role does art play in building an inclusive future?

As previously mentioned, art's promotion of positive change is crucial in building something beautiful. Perhaps one day the right words, or lyrics, or any sculpture of feeling can tug the heartstrings of those who never knew they had any to begin with.

Christian Keller - Neurodivergent Artist Series – Q & A

ALT Description: An image with an orange border featuring text blocks describing a neurodivergent artist's experience, their view on art, and its role in building an inclusive future. Below, there's a photo of a water lily pond with large green leaves, a red flower in the foreground, and a plant label reading "Victoria cruziana." The design highlights unity, personal expression, and the impact of art on positive change.

Christian Keller - Neurodivergent Artist Series – Shimmer

ALT Description: A split image featuring a poem titled "Shimmer" by C. Keller on a cream background with red borders at the top. The poem reflects on the passage of time, self-reflection, and the search for meaning. Below the poem, a vibrant photograph showcases a serene lake surrounded by a forest of autumn-colored trees with their reflections mirrored in the water. A small house with red and white accents sits peacefully by the lakeside under a bright blue sky.

Shimmer

And all day that were and when,
I never took it, all, within the clock
Hung and dragged by the minute's hand,
Too slow to reveal life itself,
The blood streaks lead to full circle.
In never ending thought of something new.
And off in search of higher waters,
They brave the sea once more for cod.
But conned by the loch's promise of forever,
They're drowned by their own conscience,
Living in time, in essence, but,
In never ending thought of something new.

C. Keller

Christian Keller - Neurodivergent Artist Series - The Impossibility of Severing One's Self (TIOSOS)

ALT Description: A split image featuring a poem titled "The Impossibility Of Severing One's Self" by C. Keller on a cream background with green borders at the top. The poem explores themes of escape, connection to nature, and inner peace through vivid imagery and introspection. Below

the poem, a serene photograph shows a misty forest with tall evergreen trees partially shrouded in fog, evoking a sense of calm and introspection.

The Impossibility Of Severing One's Self

Escape is often defined as a freedom of the will

An essential in your finest hours

My brain however works different to 'ours'

I eat the Earth and chew the pill.

When I cry I have to write

I know I'll never reach the scenes of the screen

The field, the forest, calling me

To end the noise that plagues the plight.

But could I take the noise's end?

Nature tells me whispers I know

All too well. The dove or the crow?

Or the gruesome cliff, and edge.

But as I lay in heaven's bed I feel the breeze

Warmed by the blue and the flowers I owe

The feeling of peace as my leaf is blown

As my words and I float among the trees.

C. Keller

Christian Keller - Neurodivergent Artist Series – Windmill

A split image featuring a poem titled "Windmill" by C. Keller on a cream background with blue-gray borders. The poem reflects on the timeless presence and contemplative nature of a windmill, exploring themes of stillness, science, and the significance of silence. Below the poem, a black-and-white photograph showcases two traditional windmills by the water, with rippling waves in the foreground and soft clouds in the sky, creating a serene and nostalgic atmosphere.

Windmill

And splayed in hayfield, time nor place
I and all stop to watch it mill
Its great structure intimidates face
And crane enough to up to thrill
But today it's not fortune that keeps pace
I must admit when thought is killed
I yearn to know the cold embrace
For each to know how each is still
A signal wisp, wistful, whispers science
They're still capable of any
A single sound amidst the silence
Is more palpable than the many.

C. Keller

2. Joanne Touhey

What does art mean to you?

To me, art is a voice beyond words. It is a way to express emotions, experiences, and perspectives that cannot always be easily shared. Art connects us, even when we face barriers.

In your opinion, what role does art play in building an inclusive future?

Writing allows us to share personal stories that might otherwise go unheard. By giving voice to our struggles and perspectives, written or visual art becomes a bridge to understanding. It's a therapeutic and healing process that opens doors for empathy, helping others connect with different experiences. In this way, art plays a crucial role in building a more inclusive and compassionate future.

Very brief description of work

My piece, "In the Silence, We Hear," is a visual and poetic reflection on hearing loss. It features a poem paired with the word "inclusion" in sign language. The piece expresses the quiet strength of those, including myself, who navigate a world without full hearing.

Joanne Touhey – In the Silence, We Hear

ALT Description: An illustration titled "In the Silence, We Hear" featuring hand signs forming letters of the alphabet in Irish Sign Language (ISL), with hands of diverse skin tones. Below the illustration, a poem explores themes of living in silence, navigating a quiet world, and embracing differences. It emphasises that silence is not emptiness but full of unspoken meaning, calling for understanding and breaking through barriers together. The design combines accessibility awareness with inclusivity and empowerment.

In the Silence, We Hear

(Displays fingerspelling in Irish Sign Language for "Listen.")

You live in the space between words

~

People think you don't hear them, but you do

~

Sound slips through your fingers like water

~

You have learned to navigate this quiet world, to read lips like pages and feel vibrations of words

~

You're not less, just different

~

You don't need to be fixed—just understood

~

Silence isn't empty; it's full of what goes unsaid

~

Together, we can break through the silence

3. Sadbh Caulfield

What does art mean to you?

Art means a lot to me. It's helped me in many ways. It's emotional, cathartic, therapeutic, a job, a hobby etc. It is something that I can turn to with any emotion and create a piece that means something.

What role does art play in building an inclusive future?

Art is a universal language. In some form of media, we can all enjoy and interpret art. It is a platform that can access all marginalised people and breakdown stereotypes. Art comes in all forms, echoing society. It creates a space for people to be listened to.

Sadbh Caulfield – Worshipping the problem

This is for my mum. "Worrying is worshipping the problem" is something my mum has started saying to me recently and it stuck with me. The two graphics represent the spiral an anxiety attack can cause. The grid and abstract spacing represents the struggle to be grounded and remember that it is only worshipping the problem.

ALT Description: A grid-based design with alternating red and white squares, featuring hand-drawn illustrations and bold black text. The top row includes an illustration of hands creating a cat's cradle string figure. Below it, text reads: "Worrying is worshipping the problem." Additional squares include an illustration of a person standing next to a spherical diagram labeled "Horizon" and "Now." The bottom-left square states, "Redirect the energy toward solutions, hope, and trust in the process." The design emphasizes reflection, mindfulness, and focusing energy positively.

Worshipping the problem

WORRYING

IS

WORSHIPING

THE

PROBLEM

Redirect the energy toward solutions, hope, and trust in the process.

Sadbh Caulfield - What If?

This is a piece representing a form of OCD that I have lived with for most of my life. Constant 'what if' scenarios would come into my mind, paired with compulsions. And when I saw this quote "What if it all works out?" which flipped the narrative.

ALT Description: A gray textured background featuring the bold, distressed text "WHAT IF?" at the top in a fragmented, edgy font. Below, vertical and diagonal phrases in varying alignments repeat anxious thoughts such as "Check it," "Count to five," "Don't step on the crack," and "Rewrite it." At the bottom, subtle embossed text reads, "What if it all works out?" The design captures a contrast between worry and hope, exploring themes of overthinking and optimism.

What If?

(Tilted text running vertically in different directions and fonts reads:)

- TOUCH THE DOOR BALANCE IT OUT READ IT AGAIN
- BALANCE IT OUT DON'T LOOK AT IT
- COUNT TO TEN BALANCE IT OUT
- CHECK IT DON'T LOOK AT IT COUNT TO FIVE
- DON'T TEXT THAT
- DON'T STEP ON THE CRACK
- DON'T TAKE SHORTCUTS
- MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND
- CHECK THEY UNDERSTAND
- LOOK UP
- MAKE SURE YOUR SHOES ARE STRAIGHTENED
- DON'T EAT THAT
- CHECK IT DON'T STEP ON THE CRACK
- CHECK FOR A FIRE DON'T SAY THAT CHECK IT
- CHECK IT'S OFF
- REWRITE IT
- CHECK IT'S OFF
- CHECK FOR A FIRE
- CHECK YOUR LAPTOP'S OFF
- COUNT TO TEN
- DON'T LOOK AT IT
- BALANCE IT OUT
- COUNT TO FIVE
- READ IT AGAIN

(At the bottom in large, faint text:)

WHAT IF IT ALL WORKS OUT?

4. Holly Wolohan

What does art mean to you?

Art to me means communication and response to the world around you. Poetry - in a variety of forms, registers, and traditions - provides a playful space to create and construct a vision of inclusive futures, while allowing the disabled experience to be framed within its form.

In your opinion, what role does Art play in building an inclusive future?

This poem is a brief, personal response to the powerful poem 'Wonder Woman' by Ada Limón, which speaks of invisible illness, chronic pain and drawing unexpected fortitude from another's example. Art provides an opportunity to learn from and enjoy the experiences of other people with disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this event and embodiment of 'An Mheitheal' - a working community.

Holly Wolohan – Sruthmheadbhair na hAbhann | River Collection

ALT Description: This image features a bilingual poem titled Sruthmheabhair na hAbhann (River Recollection) in both Irish and English, displayed on a blue brushstroke-like background with decorative white cloud motifs. The poem reflects on personal growth, learning, and life's journey using metaphors of rivers and flowing currents. The poet, Cuileann Ní Uallacháin, is credited at the bottom. The visual elements emphasize fluidity and introspection, complementing the themes of the poem.

River Collection

Sruthmheabhair na hAbhann — River Recollection

Nuair a bhí mé i mo óg | During the days of my youth
Chas mé timpeall ag an abhainn. | I turned around at the river.
Cos lag, guth ciotach | Halting speech, lagging footsteps
Ceann ag meabhrú go domhain. | An intellect keen to deliver.

Ag foghlaim an siúl agus na focal | Learning the steps and word structures

Arís is arís go deo. | Again and again once more,

Céim thart, céim siar, | One learnt, one left,

Bhuail an saol i mo threo | Life hit me with its currents galore

Ag tarraingt an chiall as an cheo. | Pulling sense out of fog to the fore.

Cuileann Ní Uallacháin

5. Jessica K. Doyle

What does art mean to you?

Art, to me, is a bridge between my inner world and the external reality—a language that mirrors the way my thoughts naturally form. It offers a structure that feels more aligned with how I process and understand the world, allowing me to translate emotions, ideas, and experiences into something tangible. Through art, I can express complexities that often feel impossible to convey with words, giving shape to what resides within and creating a space where others can glimpse and connect with my internal landscape.

ALT Description: A poem titled *Fizzy Feet* by Jessica K. Doyle is written in black text on a soft gradient background of green and yellow hues. The poem describes themes of reflection, nostalgia, and finding peace. In the bottom-right corner, there is a simple black outline drawing of a cat stepping into a puddle, its tail raised. The illustration adds a whimsical touch to the contemplative tone of the poem.

Fizzy Feet explores the beauty of slowing down and taking scenic routes literally and metaphorically. Written in a moment of magic and music and connection, though not initially about cats, on reflection it reminded me of moments spent walking with my two cats, where their curiosity anchors me to the present. Their playful exploration reminds me of childhood nostalgia—muddy boots stuck in the muck, little paws and how nature teaches us to slow down and immerse ourselves, even in moments of discomfort. The poem is also about finding growth and reflection in those too-light or too-tight or uncomfortable spaces and the wonder and growth one can find in the places we often try to avoid.

Jessica K. Doyle – Fizzy Feet

By Jessica K. Doyle

Wait for me when racing forth
To planes of rushes

And paths of dust
Where weightless feathers
Feel heavy in the wind
Wait a minute don't rush to the end
Stop and fall and crash into a ball
Fractured and beaten, awake to it all
Feel the fizz and whine and pop
Of long lost lands of laughter that's rough
Slow your pace to observe the race
And find yourself get lost in a stream of grace
Wash up in whirl winds
Let sounds pulse through your soul
Sorrowful and sweet
Fizzy in my feet
Breaks through the dams
To these less walked far distant lands
Or maybe there always here
In the everyday
Waiting for the wanderers
To stop awhile and play
Even just a glance through a crack on the door
There always here lying on the floor.
Whisper to me
on gently rocking waters
Call me home
With tendrils of nostalgia
Piece by piece
We'll find our feet
In pieces we'll weep

Till we wash away
what make us screech
In pain, laid down in a heap
We will keep each of us close
in reach
Pitch forward your ideas and don't feel like you have to run
Be strong in your roots
In water tight boots
Cut through rubber
Toes squelch into wet muck
Licking heels
Look back up
I'm stuck
and that my friend is all it took.

ALT Description: A poem titled *Pink Lanes* by Jessica K. Doyle is displayed on a white background with splashes of pink and black ink framing the page. The poem explores themes of pain, memory, and the struggle for clarity. At the bottom right, there is a circular abstract illustration in shades of pink, purple, and teal, resembling a microscopic or cosmic view. The artwork complements the reflective and introspective tone of the poem.

Pink Lanes emerged instinctively, without a planned structure, as much of my writing does. It speaks to the experience of processing something lost yet lingering in the mind—a journey of processing attempts and plans for more.

Jessica K. Doyle – Pink Lanes

Pink lanes of pain making tracks through my brain.
Snaking in winding pain.
Burrow down till some days I don't recall

that fraught seeming so tall times that don't ever thaw.
Pink freezing rain smashes
down in the voices that stick,
thick tastes of liquorice.
I'll drown it out when roads roar to life
with nowhere to run and no way to fight.
I know I need to go there to take away its life.
I don't want to welcome anyone in, whether friend or foe
I know I'm going to barricade the door.
Disgust seeps in through my pores making puddles of yuck along the floor.
I've slipped in them many times before.
And felt the sludge cling to my skin, sour breath smothers and sometimes stings.
That memory is a mess of jagged pieces, scratching in ways that make colours go blind and
white walls take too much space as if in spite.
I can't remember.
And I can't remember if what I remember fits or
falls to crash to glass fragments, Smash, Bad Luck.
I don't want to have another look.
I've swept those floors all the way out but
they catch in the gusts of storms and always find their way back to settle again, under
furniture absorbing the softness, the colour, the hues.
Eating away at the shadows,
till again I'm here in this bright white walled room with pink leaving traces of ultraviolet ink.
Won't ever wash away.
Where is this space that leaves such a harsh trace, I'll
need to travel it all to find where it sticks.
I like to think it clings somehow,
easy to fling.
I'll pick up that whole board and throw it out, but to

where every place has too much glare
it'll find a new way to the Fallen king
caught by a queen,
and we will begin this game again.
I need to find another way.

Jessica K. Doyle

ALT Description: A poem titled *Trains* by Jessica K. Doyle is presented on a soft beige background with faint train track illustrations running vertically along both sides. The poem delves into themes of anticipation, movement, and introspection, exploring metaphors of trains and their journeys. The imagery evokes both physical and emotional travels, capturing fleeting moments of reflection and connection. At the bottom, a train track loops, symbolizing the continuous journey. The text is laid out in a clear, elegant format, complemented by the train motif.

Trains was written after my first day of college, during a moment of reflection as I waited for the train. While I stood in stillness, observing, others buzzed with anticipation, and the poem captures this contrast—a quiet contemplation of transition and movement and diverse perceptions.

Jessica K. Doyle – Trains

By Jessica K. Doyle

Waiting once, it was hard but not today, the jittering sense of anticipation blocked out by the giddy yet delicate confidence.
Heads sway from side to side
Stand up, arch necks, look up
On the board it stares back
20 minutes late.
Back and forth the tension filling up the space,

Detached from it today.

The pigeons fly

A motor rolls on in the window sill, I wonder what love's in there.

Grated windows would they open to adventures creatures had among the tracks.

Weeds and polls spike up from roofs.

People start to pace

An announcer explains further

Phones come out heads sway in the liminal dance of uncertainty steeped in anticipation.

There all running ahead in this race.

Human clocks, fueled on feelings of time, but never of the present you'd never need a watch in this place.

What would it be if we took moments in the stress in the liminal to just sit and observe

Build around the person

maybe would get us there

Build back up curiosity and wonder.

Is that possible from the outside to reach in or does the inside need help to reach out.

A cold breeze flows.

I notice the discomfort

maybe it's another challenge not to fall into it but sit with it.

I had happiness today though

Success fulfillment achievements and confidence

those factors need to be taken into account

The sun shines down again and suddenly the air is warm the coolness is still there but resembles the contrary of hot tea with ice cream.

I could be at the beach looking out to the vast waves wrapped in a warm blanket hair blowing in coastal breeze.

It's strong in resemblance even while I sit waiting or pausing in this moment to take it in and the train is here.

In we go to the next moment.

The rush begins again to get a seat.
Or maybe not, the doors stay locked
The clouds move in whispers to the right and suddenly it's like I'm on a boat, a yellow streaked
concrete boat.
Let's sit back down change this delusion of time.
Perception is time to hallucinate.
And off it moves across the tracks
In swarms people fall back retreat downtrodden and unsure.
Some give up and stamp off the platform. Too much force applied to each footstep.
The bricks, they lie quite normal in upward vertical horizontal jumps but today like slithering
snakes upon their way, never ending.
Fitting for the station.
Only for a moment and back to bricks.
Now I've figured out how to make it flip.
The beats pick up
I've an urge to stand up and move and dance
Exuberant and circling but maybe that might be too much.
Out by the trees closer to home I'll be free to spin and sing till darkness gently pulls me in.
And safety yellow lines might collide into water slides if dancing was afoot.
And that would require the lending of a new book and we'll alas I'm finally enjoying this one.
And two now arrive at once
And a race of trains ensues,
Which one will get the flocks there faster.
Unsearedness rises like lime buzzing bees protecting some invisible queen.
Most race to the first but stare in disbelief in their two fast choices as the familiar one arrives on
the right side.
That grabbing feeling for what is known but panic at an idea of missing both if change is
attempted, whips across many a face.

I'll go with comfort and the view of the roof tops.
If I could navigate life across the roof tops and bypass the streets I would.
Even with the risk of a sudden plunge and the possibly of a factory line system of borrowing books.
I would,
Wonder lives on roof tops. Bounds and bounds of it.
But there would be no guarantee the next story would even have roof tops.
Or silky black four legged fluffs.
We'd miss
So I'll take the hustle, the bustle the bangs and shouts and stimulus pouring in floods and crashing in waterfalls, on ankles with mechanical faults.
Be sure, well... they are my family of fluffs.
I'll go now, breathe in each moment. Feel the hum and the purr and rock of the waves of tracks below.
A warm glow waits for me to catch it and see where we will go.

6. Audrey Steinier

Audrey Steinier – Description of Artwork

This artwork is about the frustration and pain that comes with having a disability or illness that is not understood by the medical community. I have been prescribed medication for my chronic pain where the side effects of that medication were more pain of the same variety. Doctors are unsure of the origin of your pain or how you experience the pain, and so seem to prescribe medication based on your explanation of the pain (being neurodivergent does not help with this). In this artwork I have used my own medication tablets, their side effects, and the 2025 national gallery of Ireland's calendar.

What does art mean to you? What role does art play in building an inclusive future?

Art is one of the only ways for marginalised people to express themselves in a capitalist society. Through art, marginalised people can make themselves and their opinions visible to the dominant culture. Hopefully pushing for change not just in the art space but in greater society. Through art an individual can also process their anger and sadness that occurs in our current system of governance.