**Notes attached to students’ artwork.**

**Badb by Katlyn Roche from Colaiste Fionnchua, Mitchelstown**

Hello,

My name is Katelyn Roche, I am in 2nd year in Colaiste Fionnchua, Mitchelstown, Co Cork. This is my entry to ‘Éirí’ Évoking Ireland’s Resilient female Ícons.

This is my artwork of Badb, an Irish goddess of war and death.

She takes form of a crow, therefore is known as badb catha (battle crow).

She is known to cause fear and confusion among soldiers to move the tide of battle to her favoured side. Badb may also appear prior to a battle to foreshadow the extent of the carnage to come, or to predict the death of a notable person. She would sometimes do this through wailing cries, leading to comparisons with the banshee.

**The Caileach Bheara by students from West Cork Sudbury School**

In the spirit of awakening the female icons of our ancestral heritage by

embracing our mythological culture we have chosen to celebrate an Cailleach Bheara, a goddess that is largely associated with the Beara Peninsula in Co. Cork, our home. West Cork Sudbury School’s students and staff found an Cailleach Bheara to be one of the most strongest female figures of Irish mythology. As a creator deity, her responsibilities were countless. We chose an Cailleach Bheara due to her association with this time of year. October 31 st or Samhain is the end of the Celtic year and winter begins, thus bringing the return of the Cailleach.

She was considered to be the goddess of many elements, most recognizably the winds and winter as she controlled its length and harshness. Throughout winters months she was seen to have been a veiled old woman with ragged hair, pale blue skin and red teeth, a sore sight to an innocent wanderer. She also controlled the storms and thunder with the work of her cherished hammer. An Cailleach Bheara highlights hard truth as her youth is sacrificed when winter begins and she returns to the form of an old hag. In Ireland’s folklore, it is said that she had seven periods of youth before she remained stuck as an old woman. Within those winter periods she symbolized hope as better days were yet to come when her youth would once again be restored.

For the purpose of our artistic piece we decided to portray an Cailleach Bheara in the form of a scarecrow to highlight her features and symbolize her strong connection with nature. We used fully natural and upcycled materials for this

project as sustainability is a core value in our school community. For the body

of our scarecrow we used a large tree branch stood upright to symbolize the

harshness of winter as the seasons change and the trees are left bare. Her

clothes are stitched from upcycled materials and her head is made from a repurposed lantern. We used dying and dried out ferns as her ragged and matted hair to symbolize her connection with nature and change.

By participating in this competition, a conversation around feminism, folklore,

Celtic mythology and archaeology has arisen throughout our school. There has

been a keen appetite for knowledge developed over the past few weeks as we

worked carefully on our scarecrow. We hope to take part in more competitions

like this in the future. Thank you for the opportunity.

**Artwork submitted by Paula Glynn’s students from St.Cuans College, Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway**

*Unfortunately, not all the pictures have descriptions or the names of the artists. I have included all that were sent to me.*

**The Banshee**

The name of my piece was “the banshee”, it’s about the banshees in Ireland and their presence of the dead and mourning of the dead as they played such a major factor back in the day, to the people of Ireland and the families of Ireland. The banshee would appear to warn family members that there was going to be a death in their family soon after her appearance. She would arrive in different forms, a young lady and a old woman and she was known for her screaming and her wailing. My painting was the banshee overlooking a dead Irish man, her body and hair takes over the landscape and the sky as she is had such a presence and is the main character in this painting, her head raised to the sky and her blackout mouth shows her screaming and wailing, this would awaken the people of Ireland. Personally I don’t think she was a evil spirt or anything, I actually think she was a help to families as she wanted to warn them of deaths and it’s like she was looking out for them and preparing them for these deaths.

**AIRMID Life and power before tears.**

Artist: Cristina Antunez

n my drawing, Airmid uses her power and knowledge of herbs, healing and medicine. She is creating life and she is surrounded of nature, just like she did when her brothers died.

Airmid was one of the members of Tuatha Dé Danann, the most ancient race of deities in Ireland. She took care of this well which was said to restore health and vitality to the wounded and dead.

After her jealous father slew her brother, she wept over her brother's grave. Watered by her tears, all the healing herbs of the world sprung from the earth over Miach's body.

**Macha**

Ireland's fiercest war goddess In ancient Ireland, there was a goddess revered by women warriors, feared by men, and known to everyone in all the land. She is called Macha. She was thought to be one aspect of the triple death-goddess, the Morrigan. Macha was a sovereignty goddess associated with the land, battle, kingship, horses, crows and fertility. The morrigan often appeared at the scene of a battle disguised as ravens, crows or other birds. Macha fought in many battles. She was challenged to horse races by men and won every time even once while she was heavily pregnant. She also battled to break the chain of men ruling Ireland. She fought the five sons of Díthorba. She then ruled for twentyone years. Macha is listed as the 76th ruler of Ireland, and is thought to have ruled around the 4th or 5th century BC. I decided to place a horse and crows on either side of Macha to portray her various forms and as symbols of her warriorship. Her sister goddesses are placed above her on either side. I chose a red background to represent the bloodshed battles she partook in and her ruthless nature. Macha was one of the most powerful yet beautiful ancient goddesses of Ireland.

Title: **Queen of the Night**

Description: Arianrhod is the goddess of the moon and is a symbol for women and virginity. Arianrhod teaches us women that we are not be valued solely for our reproductive ability and shows us that we are the creators of our own lives and we are not to be controlled by anyone.

**“Oonagh Queen of the Fairies”**

One day Queen Oonagh’s husband got kidnapped by a giant and Queen Oonagh rescued him by trapping the giant in webs, that’s why we have a spider behind my painting of Queen Oonagh, the spider is painted with a stain glass window like look to represent church windows