



## ÉIRÍ: Évoking Ireland's Resilient female Ícons (Adult category)

### Artists, art, assessors and results

### SEVEN WINNERS €1,000 each



**Artist: Lee Fenlon**

**Medium:** Stained glass (350 pieces, 20 inch x 20 inch)

**Character:** *Boand / Boann the mythical Goddess of the River Boyne.*

After reading some old Irish poetry mentioning Boand that was translated into English, I



**Artist: Salty Seagull (Daniel Breheny)**

**Medium:** Drawing

**Characters:** *A multitude of Irish female mythological and folkloric figures*

Medb, Macha, Naoimh, Caileach Beara,



**Artist: Kate Lionis**

**Medium:** Photograph with digital illustration

**Character:** *Morrigan*

To capture the moment of change (morphing) from her human to her crow form, a symbol that I see with her. I wanted to show her strength and assurance in her role as a recorder of the past and the force that brings in the

garnered an image of her being fair skinned from phrases such as "white bright Boand", "fair formed" and "white breasted Boand". This resulted in my use of white glass for her hair and a light skin tone glass.

Morrigan, Oengus and Caer Imbormith, Deirdre, Eriu, Tailtiu, Boann

new. It was important that she was not a malevolent or a kind, benign being. She is an active force transcending good or evil, calmly recording and letting you know what will happen if you continue of this path. For me it is a personification of karma.



**Artist:** Louise Shine

**Medium:** Digital

**Character:** *Morrigan*

This is the A.I.'s understanding and interpretation of the Morrigan, the goddess of war, fate, and destiny.

It's full of movement and really encompasses the Morrigan's shape-shifting abilities. She looks as though she is in the middle of a pitched battle, looking off to the side of the image with a ferocious intention.

The AI has no agency, no will, it is simply used to elevate human creativity. Simply put, this is a text-to-image application, in which a series of instructions or prompts are inputted, and the AI is tasked with transforming that series of prompts into an image.

**An Chailleach**

She never brought mud from this puddle to the other puddle.  
She never ate food but when she became hungry.  
She never went to sleep till she grew sleepy.  
She never threw out the dirty water till she brought in clean water

Siamsa an Ghleamhóidh, D. O'Folharta (1892), p116-118.

d Chailleach and the Gaelic word for girl/woman, Cailin.



**Artist:** Jesse Downs

**Medium:** A number of photos with accompanying text.

**Character:** *Chailleach*

I used the complex process of double exposure in which two images are exposed to the same frame of film, chemically binding them. I feel this was the best way to capture and demonstrate the bond between a place and its people, a landscape and its myth.



**Artist:** Ruth Egan

**Medium:** Painting

**Character(s):** *Morrigan (Macha, Badbh and Nemain)*

The Morrigan in Irish mythology is often depicted as a shape-shifting goddess: one of three sisters Macha, Badbh and Nemain; or a goddess of the Tuatha de Danann with three elements to her.

This image can be seen as a portrayal of the spirit of the three women, or elements, who form the Morrigan as she shapeshifts down the generations through the normal day-to-day lives of Irish women.

**Artist:** Alexander Goodison

**Medium:** Poetry

**Character(s):** Sheela Na Gig Triptych. Three poems: "The three main theories of Sheela-na-gig"

<u>Goddess</u>	<u>Apotropaia</u>	<u>Sermon</u>
Fecundity - lush, fertile word for the arable land found in a womans belly. Ready to be ploughed by plunging ploughshare, the rich red soil turned, ripe for seeding. Blank eyes, fingers pulling herself apart, offering a glimpse into her fossil body. Crude, in design and by design, an ancient face that saw the rivers flood a thousand times, a periodic shedding of what was there before.	Don't think you can get by me... I am more powerful than you can know. Look at what I have between my thighs. Look! Look away... there is magick here. I can calm the sea, tame whirlwinds, catch lightning. That which brings life will bring you death... the Romans knew this. Beware - devils, frail deities, look on this with shock and awe... don't think you can get by me...	Sin made solid - lust delineated. See how she shows herself, see how her sex insinuates your soul, weak flesh turned stone. Gorgon-glanced and scrape-sculpted, hag breasts and rictus smile, see how your God punishes. Blank eyes, fingers pulling herself apart, scalpel scarred, scarified. See her succumb to Satans whisper, watch her sink into his seventh circle. Nailed above Gods door for a thousand years, silently staring still.

**Further details from the artists:**

**Lee Fenlon:** The iconic female Goddess I chose as my subject was Boand / Boann the mythical Goddess of the River Boyne. My reason for choosing her was simply that Boyne was my mother's maiden name and I took it as a sign. The medium is stained glass, and it depicts Boand with the waters of the River Boyne flowing from her hands, flanked by her wolfhound with an ancient Newgrange in the background. Researching Boand turned up a few similarities to the story of Sinann, that being a defiant woman storyline resulting in drowning and the subsequent birth of their respective Rivers. After reading some old Irish poetry mentioning Boand that was translated into English, I garnered an image of her being fair skinned from phrases such as "white bright Boand", "fair formed" and "white breasted Boand". This resulted in my use of white glass for her hair and a light skin tone glass.  
About the piece: Height by Width 20 inch x 20 inch. Materials: Various textured / coloured stained glass, copper foil, 60/40 solder, black patina. 350 pieces in total.

**Daniel Breheny:** Attached is two pictures of my finished piece, done on an A2 piece of paper, drawn and coloured by hand it features a multitude of Irish female mythological and folkloric figures which I find personally rather vivid or captivating. found within the work, positioned on the brown bull of Cooley is Queen Medb of Connacht, running next to her is the poor Macha of Ulster, pregnant with twins racing next to the kings horses, upon one of these white steeds is Naoimh from Tir Na Nog, above her can be found the Cailleach Beara dropping stones from her apron to form the cairns, tombs, and stone monuments of Ireland. Flipping to the other side the Murrigan is found leading a small cow akin to one

of her encounters with Cu Chulain (note the hound next to her) upon which sits a blackbird, flying behind her is two swans in reference to Oengus and Caer Imbormith. Laying among the foliage is found Deirdre of the sorrows, who possesses a purple eye to mirror when she was a purple fly, and rests, emulating her final moments upon jumping from Conchobars chariot. following on we find Eriu, the goddess who gives her name to the island sitting atop the hill of Uisneach's Cat stone, she is styled in a fashion to reflect the modern national image of Hibernia. above her is found wife of the last Fir Bolg king, Tailtiu, who cleared all of Ireland's fields by hand. She carries on her shoulder the Turoe stone, one of the finest pieces of art from the Irish Iron Age. Lastly then we arrive at our centre piece, the goddess of the river Boyne, Boann. With a dress mimicking the waves, and hair akin to the sun, she is designed to convey the story of her union with the Dagda. Clutched within her arms is an egg containing a embryonic style form, referencing her one desire, Oengus. My personal goal with this work was to convey these characters in a way which makes them visually recognisable. As they are from text based sources, there is no precise appearance available for most of these characters, thus it took some ingenuity to convey their stories through an image. I hope I have been able to convey at least a fraction of the great wealth of creative and cultural power held within these characters in my art.

**Kate Lionis :** My submission is my depiction of the Morrigan. It is a photograph with elements of digital illustration. To capture the moment of change (morphing) from her human to her crow form, a symbol that I see with her. I wanted to show her strength and assurance in her role as a recorder of the past and the force that brings in the new. It was important that she was not a malevolent or a kind, benign being. She is an active force transcending good or evil, calmly recording and letting you know what will happen if you continue of this path. For me it is a personification of karma. I hope my photograph shows these elements of this mythological character.

**Louise Shine:** I am a visual artist based in Athlone and I have been collaborating with artificial intelligence to generate text to image work over the past few months. ... I have been working with AI generated images for about a year now and had previously sent on one of my favourite images to open a conversation about the submission for this project. Well, much like a photographer that takes the perfect shot the first time round, but then takes 100 more photos to see can they top that first shot, this is exactly the situation I also find myself in regarding this project. This is the A.I.s understanding and interpretation of the Morrigan, the goddess of war, fate, and destiny, the shape-shifter and the best known of the Irish goddesses.

**Jesse Downs:** The word Chailleach and the Gaelic word for girl/woman, Cailin, share a common root. The Chailleach is one of the most ancient and enigmatic entities in Irish folklore and mythologies. She was a complex character, neither fully good nor evil. She cared for animals during the dark winter months, was the patron of wolves and was known as the Winter Queen. She is said to have created mountains and islands by discarding rocks from her apron and could control the wild oceans of the Atlantic. Unlike her counterpart Bríd, the goddess of spring and growth, the Chailleach was less amenable to sainthood and was thus demonised by male theologians of the past. In the 10th-century poem entitled The Lament of the Hag of Beara, we find reference to her power and glory but also the disempowerment of her nature at the hands of Catholicism. It is a remarkable poem with a beautiful example of the widespread idea that human life is ruled by the flow and ebb of the sea tide. ... [See accompaniment of submission for more text.]

**Ruth Egan:** The Morrigan in Irish mythology is often depicted as a shape-shifting goddess: one of three sisters Macha, Badbh and Nemain; or a goddess of the Tuatha de Danann with three elements to her. This image can be seen as a portrayal of the spirit of the three women, or elements, who form the Morrigan as she shapeshifts down the generations through the normal day-to-day lives of Irish women. The women in this image represent the lived-in everyday form of which such myths of the Morrigan were fashioned. Irish women over the eras who constitute that continuous cycle of fertility, birth & death being played out against the land – steeped in myth and its deep connection to the surrounding countryside and nature; ordinary women who themselves were ultimately the very source and inspiration of the myths of extraordinariness

**Andrew Goodison:** The three main theories of Sheela-na-gig – fertility symbol, apotropaic warning and a warning against lust are combined in this triptych work.



