



Installing the exhibition, Shauna Scott and her mum at base, Ballycastle NS teacher Francesca Scott.  
Photo: wildatlanticimagesaok

## **Rave reviews for north Mayo school's magnificent exhibition**

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A NEW exhibition by children in a north Mayo school is receiving rave reviews.

Parents, grandparents, children, neighbours and friends packed out the Ballinglen Art Foundation in Ballycastle on Friday at the launch a wonderful exhibition of 70 lantern light boxes called 'Growth', created by the children of Scoil Naomh Bríd Primary School in Ballycastle.

The show was opened by Sean Walsh, director, Ballina Arts Centre, who described the show as 'magnificent'.

The public can see this show at the Ballinglen Art Centre until Friday, May 6.

Walsh said the 70 lantern light boxes made by the children presented an 'incredibly sophisticated piece of art which could be placed in any gallery in the world'.

Una Forde, managing director at the Ballinglen Art Foundation, added that the show would rival any of the international exhibitions the centre has had in the past 25 years.

Also speaking at the opening, Scoil Naomh Bríd principal, Patricia Newman, talked about the great experience both children and teachers had in the making of this work and that never in a million years did they expect it to reach the Ballinglen as an exhibition.

Michael McKenzie, director, Mayo Education Centre, applauded Scoil Naomh Bríd's whole hearted engagement with the project and congratulated the school children, principal and lead teacher Francesca Scott as well as artist Cas McCarthy on an impressive exhibition.



Ballycastle NS pupils with their teachers.

The art project is the result of a seven-week residency by Mayo artist Cas McCarthy in collaboration with young artists from the primary school and teacher Francesca Scott, funded through Teacher Artist Partnership (TAP), a Department of Education and Skills initiative, which is managed by Mayo Education Centre.

The exhibition, on display in a darkened gallery space in the Ballinglen Art Foundation in Ballycastle, also features the recorded voices of the young artists talking about their creative process, and personal ideas about identity and belonging which relate directly to the images in the panels.

Laying the groundwork for this project, artist Cas McCarthy and class teacher Francesca Scott attended a week-long training session last summer under the auspices of TAP and the Department of Education. It was from this engagement that the initial relationship between artist and school was built, providing a firm working foundation for the project.

Scott and McCarthy are enthusiastic about this strategy, confirming that 'this approach really paves the way for a successful project'.

Based on this foundation, a structured programme was instigated with the thematic core of 'growth', working mainly with the 5th and 6th class pupils, comprising seven half-day residencies designed and implemented by Scott and McCarthy. The programme involved exploring the theme of Spring as a season of growth and ways of depicting it visually, in terms of representation and materials, whilst also exploring ideas about symbols, metaphors and abstraction.

This included a visit to Ballinglen Art Foundation's landscape-based exhibition 'The Way We Went', and also an introduction to the work of artists such as William Crozier, Cy Twombly, Vincent van Gogh and Keith Haring.

Inspired by all these ideas, the young artists created drawings on translucent panels addressing a number of strands such as landscapes and identity - local, personal, social. Finally, together with Scott and McCarthy they curated their own display of panels which were then transformed into lanterns.

The enthusiastic and imaginative response by the children involved confirms the success of the project, and the results of this rewarding process of engagement are now ready for all to see and enjoy at the Ballinglen Arts Foundation in Ballycastle, until Friday, May 6.

A wonderful 3.5-minute video of this exhibition has been made by wildatlanticimagesaok, thanks to the generous support of Anne Finn, SICAP, North East Mayo Partnership and can be viewed at [ballinglenartsfoundation.org](http://ballinglenartsfoundation.org).



Speakers at the exhibition launch last Friday.



Ballycastle NS pupils outside Ballinglen Arts Centre.



Enjoying the exhibition launch.