



# The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**New York:** Sophie Colgan: Tel: (212) 867 6268

**Dublin:** Roddy Feely: Tel: (01) 667 4040

**Email:** [info@irelanduscouncil.com](mailto:info@irelanduscouncil.com)

### ***The Ireland-U.S. Council's 2021 Award For Outstanding Portraiture Presented To Emma Stroude for Fifteen***

#### ***Prudential Financial's Sponsorship Supports Important Arts Program***

**October 14, 2021: New York, NY:** Emma Stroude's portrait of her daughter, "Fifteen" has been chosen as the winner of the 2021 *Award for Outstanding Portraiture*, sponsored by the *Ireland-U.S. Council* in conjunction with *The Irish Arts Review*. The award is presented in Ireland to an artist whose work is judged to be of outstanding merit. The Award is an important part of the *Ireland-U.S. Council's* program to support the arts and arts education in Ireland. Council member-company *Prudential Financial* is the principal financial sponsor of this program.

The winning painting was chosen from all portrait exhibits at the *Royal Hibernian Academy's* (RHA) 191<sup>st</sup> Annual Exhibition which runs through October 30 at the Academy. At a prize-giving ceremony at the RHA building on Ely Place in Dublin, Emma Stroude was presented with the *Ireland-U.S. Council's* €5,000 award bursary. A formal presentation of the award citation will be made by Council President Tom Higgins at a *Gala Dinner* on Friday, December 3, 2021 in Dublin Castle in Dublin, Ireland.



The 2021 Award Presentation was held in the gallery of the Royal Hibernian Academy in Ely Place in Dublin. Seen at the presentation were (from left) Abigail O'Brien, President of the RHA; Marie-Claire de Sachy, Chief Executive of the *Irish Arts Review* and the winning artist Emma Stroude standing by her prize-winning portrait seen at extreme right here.

#### **NEW YORK**

P.O. Box 4476, New York, NY 10170-0247

Tel: 212.867.6268 • Fax: 212.867.6834 • [www.irelanduscouncil.com](http://www.irelanduscouncil.com)



# The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

## NEWS RELEASE

In remarks with the announcement of the winning portrait work, Council President Tom Higgins noted “We are so pleased that, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we have been able to continue to maintain the staging of this important annual competition and prize. Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, this *Annual Award for Outstanding Portraiture* has been an important career marker for many of today’s successful portrait painters in Ireland. It is where quite a few of them received their initial support and encouragement. It is a tradition that we in the Ireland-U.S. Council are delighted to sustain with the *Irish Arts Review* on the prestigious platform of the *Royal Hibernian Academy’s* Annual Exhibition”.

### **About the Award Program**

The Award program is undertaken with generous financial sponsorship from Council-member firm, *Prudential Financial*, a U.S.-based life insurance company which is not affiliated in any manner with *Prudential plc*, a company incorporated in the United Kingdom. The *Irish Arts Review*, the quarterly publication devoted to Irish culture, art and design throughout the ages, manages the judging process and is chaired by Brigid Mulcahy, editor of the *Irish Arts Review*. The *Royal Hibernian Academy* is an all-island institution that is celebrating its 191<sup>st</sup> Anniversary.

Prudential’s incoming Council board member is Roben Dunkin, Chief Operations and Innovation Officer, PGIM, the global asset management business of *Prudential Financial*, which maintains operations in Ireland in Letterkenny, County Donegal.

“We are pleased to help support innovation in arts education and appreciation in Ireland. There is a strong connection between this arts program and the value we place on outperformance. This sponsorship is one of the ways Prudential is able to show its commitment to supporting outperformers in the arts,” said Dunkin.

As part of the sponsorship program associated with the Award, every Council member in the United States and in Ireland receives a copy of Ireland’s premier visual arts and heritage quarterly journal, 38 years in publication, the *Irish Arts Review*. Other benefits for Council members include a program of discounts available through the *Irish Arts Review* to many arts events in Ireland. Also included are calendars of upcoming arts activities throughout the year plus online information on prices of Irish art and results of auction sales.

---

### NEW YORK



# The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

## NEWS RELEASE

The *Ireland-U.S. Council* was founded in 1962 by business leaders in the United States and in Ireland. It is the premier transatlantic business organization that encourages and promotes business between Ireland and the United States. Its founding was in preparation for the visit of President John F. Kennedy to Ireland in the Spring of 1963, as a measure to build institutional form around a structure to improve business, economic and commercial relations between the two countries. The Council operates a variety of scholarship programs, stages seminars and hosts frequent events in Ireland and in America aimed at developing communications and dialogue between leaders in business, government and politics on both sides of the Atlantic.

### **About the Artist and the Portrait**

Emma Stroude is originally from England and completed her studies in London at Chelsea College of Art and Design and the Slade School of Art. She moved to Ireland in 1996 and studied in the National College of Art & Design before settling in Sligo where she plays an active role in the arts community.

Stroude's work ranges from wide skies and emotive Irish landscapes to figurative paintings emerging from her dedication to life-drawing. Her solo exhibition '*Curious*' at the Kildare Gallery in October 2019 explored the spectacle of colored smoke and powder clouds and the diversity of their use for celebration, entertainment, protest, alert or a call for help. The inhabitants of each painting choose to ignore, react, engage with or even act as the instigators of these clouds of color and the situations they create. Our human involvement and response to each spectacle is the subject of her curiosity.

Stroude's latest works are concerned with exploring the idea of play as a rehearsal for the challenges of adult life and the use of acrobatic performance as a metaphor for the precarious nature of our existence. She draws comparisons between physical and emotional tests in our life experiences as we identify with the characters she portrays. She has said that performances by *Síolta Circus* and *Angélique Ross* provided inspiration for several of these paintings.

Her work is housed in numerous public and private collections including the Office of Public Works, Sligo County Council, Kildare County Council, Pierce Brosnan and Luciano Bennetton's *Imago Mundi*.

---

### NEW YORK



# The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

## NEWS RELEASE

Her current roles include acting as an organizer and facilitator of *Graphite & Easel life* drawing sessions at The Model in Sligo, where is also a member of the Hyde Bridge Gallery Committee. Primarily a painter, she says “My practice is underpinned by a dedication to life-drawing which influences my current body of work. Rooted in real-life observations and experiences, my compositions develop further during the painting process and new environments and relationships between the figures inhabiting the images emerge. Permeated by evocative plumes of color, my work goes in search of pivotal moments between certainty and uncertainty. Playful gestures and more serious undercurrents hang in the balance challenging perceptions of performance versus reality.”

Angela Griffith, assistant professor in the Department of History of Art and Architecture in Trinity College Dublin, describes the work: “Stroude first began painting her daughter’s portrait when she was eleven years old. Further portraits were painted when she was twelve and thirteen, each titled according to her daughter’s age. The numbers mark a progression in terms of stages of development, but they also dictate the viewer’s response, determined by the viewer’s own life experience and their expectations. The first paintings in the series were based on a collection of play fashion photographs taken by the sitter’s elder sister. However, *Fifteen*, the next in the series, marks a new departure. Here Stroude has taken the photographs herself. Her daughter is not pretending or acting. She is herself. The fact that the painter is the sitter’s mother is significant in the sense that she feels a responsibility to her daughter. This is a work of loving carefulness and respectfulness.”

The *Irish Arts Review* is the definitive journal of art and design in Ireland. Published four times a year to the highest design and production standards, it is a beautifully illustrated review of Irish painting, design, sculpture, architecture, photography and decorative arts and is the authoritative quarterly publication on Irish art and design. It features articles written by experts on subjects ranging from pre-history to contemporary, artist profiles, critiques of new Irish architecture, interviews with leading artists, designers, sculptors, and photographers, a quarterly diary of events, auctions and exhibitions in Ireland.

*Prudential Financial, Inc.* and its affiliates have over \$1.5 trillion in total assets under management, serve individual and institutional customers worldwide and include one of the largest life insurance companies in the United States. *Prudential Financial, Inc.* companies offer a variety of products and services, including life insurance, mutual funds, annuities, pension and retirement related services and administration, asset management, securities brokerage, banking and trust services, real estate brokerage franchises and relocation services. For more information, visit [www.prudential.com](http://www.prudential.com).

---

### NEW YORK





# The Ireland-U.S. Council

— A Business Organization —

NEWS RELEASE



---

**NEW YORK**

P.O. Box 4476, New York, NY 10170-0247  
Tel: 212.867.6268 • Fax: 212.867.6834 • [www.irelanduscouncil.com](http://www.irelanduscouncil.com)