

Exhibition/ Education Guide



This guide is designed as a resource for teachers involved in our [Primary and Second Level Schools programmes](#) , however it may also be a useful resource for any other schools, teachers or educational groups, who want to explore collage in the classroom.

The images shown here are a small selection of work from the *Cutters/Cork* exhibition, selected for their relevance to the themes of this year's programme, and to illustrate the many different ways in which collage can be used.

After you have looked through the selection of images from the gallery you will find some ideas for collage in the classroom and notes for teachers at the end of this document. You will be able to select or adapt ideas to suit your age group.

Image above by Anne Minihane - left to right: James Gallagher, Kirstin Stephan, Sean Hillen, Ruben B, April Gertler and Stephen Brandes

Cutters/Cork

Curated by James Gallagher

5 February - 12 March 2011

Cutters/Cork is curated by James Gallagher, a collage artist himself, who invited collage artists from across the world to submit work for this show. There are more than 50 different artists included, from Europe, North and South America, The Middle East and Australia.

James Gallagher says the works in the exhibition “fall into a variety of categories, numerous styles and countless visions. All of them made from the act of physically or digitally cutting and pasting.”

The selection of works featured in this guide is only a fraction of the work on show in the gallery, which includes 158 individual artworks.

In the Gallery

A collage can be many things, but essentially it is making something new out of what you already have or can find, “recycling, reinterpretation and reprocessing” as James Gallagher has described it. The previous guide focused on the work of Ellen Driscoll whose work used recycled plastic to create sculptural landscapes that brought together sites from across the world, and from her imagination linked together into one new form. In this sense her work has much in common with collage. Ellen wrote about collecting materials, ‘quilting’ them together, and compressing or connecting different ideas, images, people and places into one piece of work. All of this could also be said about the art of collage. A collage recycles materials and images into a new form with new meanings.

One of the key themes of Ellen Driscoll’s work, which this year’s primary school’s programme has been exploring, is the effect of mankind and industry on the natural landscape. There are a number of collages in the *Cutters/Cork* exhibition that touch on this theme, and show us different ways we can use collage to combine images of natural and manmade elements. A number of these pieces are featured here. Take a look through the images below, then read on to find out more about trying out these ideas in the classroom.

Sean Hillen is an Irish artist. His work uses photomontage (a term describing a specific type of collage which creates a picture from different photographs) often from photos he took himself, as well as found images. He grew up around Newry in Northern Ireland and much of his early work focused on the troubles there. His work is political and often funny too. One of the pieces in this exhibition is *Searching for evidence of controlled demolition in the rose garden*



Sean Hillen *Searching for evidence of controlled demolition in the rose garden*

This piece was made in 2007 and is one of a series of works that, in the artist's own words, are about; "the powerful disinclination to believe one's eyes in the face of overwhelming evidence for an unacceptable reality". The girls admiring the roses appear to not notice the destroyed building, dark sky and empty landscape behind them.

The landscapes in this photomontage are all controlled by man, the rose garden is not a wild garden, it is designed, cultured and tended, but in many ways a positive example of man's interference with the landscape, the rest of the image, in contrast, shows the negative impact of man, however the girls ignore this and see only the beautiful roses. They're focusing on the things we feel we can control, rather than those we feel we cannot.



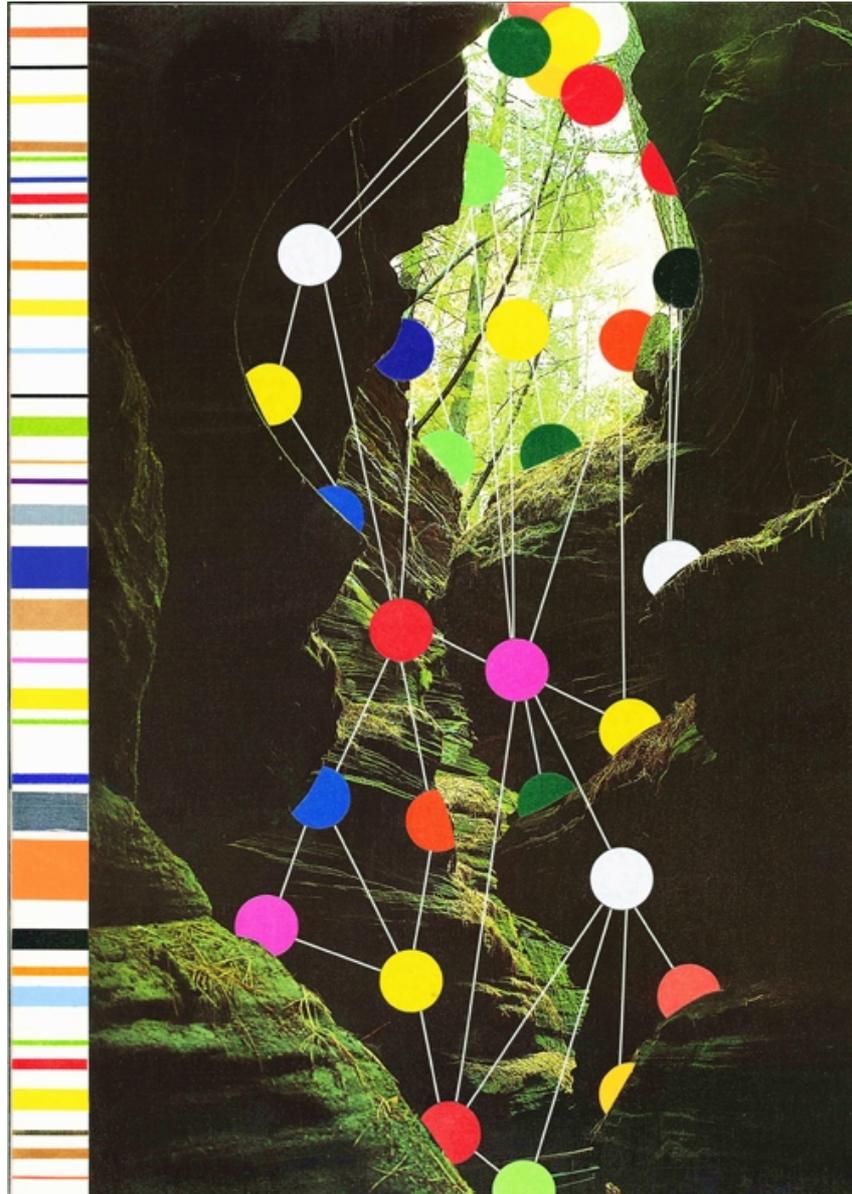
[Garrett Pruter](#) *Memory Fragment*

Garrett Pruter's *Memory Fragment* also combines two different landscapes but through a different technique. Sean Hillen's work seeks to create a landscape that looks almost real. Pruter's collage is not trying to look real. He has cut through the top image in a latticework effect that reveals the image underneath, an effect made stronger by the contrast between the black and white image on top and colour image beneath. The title, *Memory Fragment*, suggests that the images are representing layers of a place, its past, present or future.



[Ruben B](#) *Rock*

Ruben B, a Spanish artist, has a simple but striking collage, *Rock*, which also uses only two different images, this time fusing the human body into a rock, making man, literally, a part of the landscape. All these three pieces show us different ways we can use collage to combine two photographs into one.



[Joe Ryckebosch](#) *The Architecture of Nature*

Not all collage uses just photographic images. *The Architecture of Nature* by Joe Ryckebosch imposes a brightly coloured geometric design onto a photograph of a natural landscape, highlighting its architectural features.



Tatiana E. Fernandez *Weight, price and measures* (above left)

Other collages, though not directly related to the primary schools theme, suggest other ways we could approach collage. *Weight, price and measures* by Tatiana E. Fernandez uses blocks of colour, rather than images (although still taken from the pages of magazines). Shapes are cut through the page to reveal other shapes behind, and the piece is built up in layers to create the image of the figure. In some areas the collage is cut right through, leaving holes (this is less clear in the image here, but clearly visible in the actual piece in the gallery).

Erik Foss *Head Chief* (above right)

Erik Foss's collage *Head Chief* uses repetition, with many different pairs of eyes piled on top of one another.

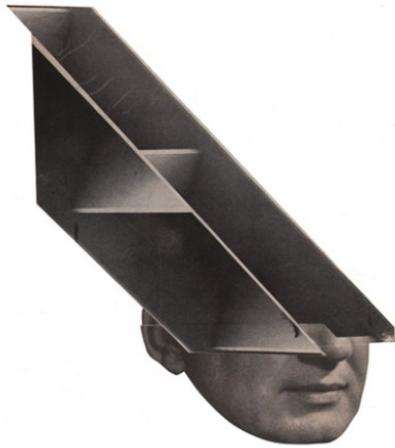


[Melissa Paget](#) *unititled* (above left)



Kirstin Stephan *Go with God* (above right)

Melissa Paget' and Oliver Wiegner 's collages play with colour and pattern
Collage allows us to play around with reality in all kinds of ways. We can use images of one thing to create an image of something else, as in Kirstin Stephan's *Go with God*, which replaces a woman's hairstyle with part of a zebra. Kirstin's work requires us to look twice, the first time we see what we expect to see, then, on closer inspection, we notice what the image is made up of.



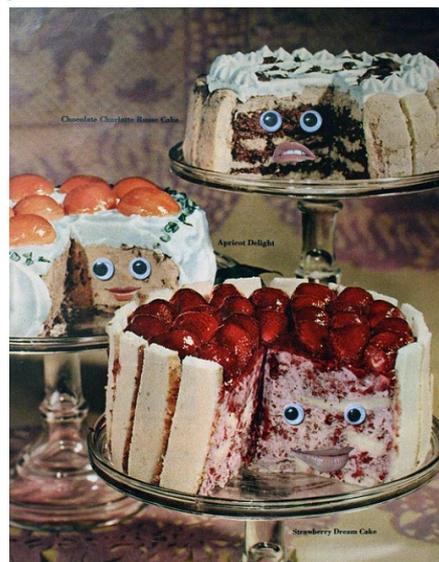
[Jesse Draxler](#) *Best Go Good* (above left)



[David Plunkert](#) *W-3993* (above right)

Jesse Draxler's *Best Go Good* replaces the top of a man's head with a piece of architecture, in a surrealist composition, in a similar approach to Ruben B's work.

David Plunkert's *W- 3993* uses many different images to alter the original image of a face creating a robotic looking hybrid or cyborg, and Alejandra Vilasimil's *A Scared Cake* brings inanimate objects (in this case food) to life with the simple addition of facial features.



[Alejandra Vilasimil](#) *A Scared Cake*

In the Classroom - Practical Ideas and Teachers' Notes

The word collage derives from the French word 'to glue'. You can collage with photographs (your own, or found images from newspapers, magazines, the internet, old books, postcards or calendars). You can collage with your own drawings or paintings you have finished with. You can collage different types of paper or different colours or textures of paper. You can collage with text, handwritten or taken from newspapers or other printed materials. You can even collage with objects, or fabrics, anything you can find that you can attach to your collage.

You can use colours and shapes to make your own image or you can cut out images from different places and put them together in unusual ways. You can cut out shapes carefully with scissors, or tear them roughly, or randomly. You can stick things down flat or make them into relief or 3 dimensional collages. They can be funny or sad, abstract or tell a story, be of people or landscapes or just shapes and colours. You can start with a blank sheet and add to it, or start with a picture and take things away from it. You can use just two pieces or hundreds of pieces.

There are so many things a collage can be. The following ideas are based on the some of the approaches shown above.

- Following on from Ellen Driscoll's approach, which relies on meaning in the materials she uses, consider making landscapes, or another image, from images of objects with meaning. For example, Ellen's sculptural landscape was made from plastic bottles, you could create an image of a landscape made from collaged images of rubbish, or manmade objects, as David Plunkert created a head from other images. Look for textures, shapes or colours that will echo the parts of the landscape you are trying to represent.



- Look for two images representing two very different types of landscape, perhaps one urban and one rural, or one of where a crop is grown, harvested or mined, and another of where it is sold or used. The important thing here is to spend time looking for two images that will work well together and have meaning. You can think about combining these two images in a number of ways. You could use parts of the two landscapes to create one new landscape like Sean Hillen. You could overlay one landscape and cut shapes through to reveal the one beneath, like Garrett Pruter. His pattern is quite complex but you could choose a simpler design, or cut through in the silhouetted shape of something that relates to the theme. For example a piece relating to the oil industry might use a silhouetted shape of a car as the hole that reveals the landscape beneath.
- Second level schools exploring Order and Chaos as their theme, might look at Joe Ryckebosch's *The Architecture of Nature*, and using an image that appears chaotic, find a structure, or order within that, that they can highlight, through adding shapes, lines or colour.



- As Ellen chose the plastic bottle as her material, choose a particular image as yours. Erik Foss created his collage from many pairs of eyes. You might choose an image related to your theme, perhaps cars, relating to the oil industry, or cows, providing the milk for our breakfast. Find as many pictures of cows as you can, small and large, and create a new image from them.
- You can also use textures and colours to create a landscape. Imagine looking down at a landscape from above- like a map. Perhaps you could use an actual map or a map of an area you are studying to work from. Using coloured papers, or coloured pictures from magazines (fashion magazines often have good textures and colours from all the materials found in the clothes they feature), you can cut out lines and shapes to represent the different areas on the map. Look back to Oliver Wiegner and Melissa Paget's pictures and see how they have made all the colours, textures and shapes fit together and fill the page.



- Second level schools might explore this year's theme of order and chaos using just shapes and colour. Begin by collaging an area of the page in an ordered way, perhaps a grid of boxes, or lines, in different colour schemes. As this moves across the page you can allow the order to begin to be disrupted, bringing in new random colours, or letting the boxes or lines move out of place, change size or bend, until eventually the pattern becomes chaos.

- Ruben B and Jesse Draxler's collages each use only two images combined together into one. Are there two different images from your theme that you could connect together?

Notes for teachers: One of the problems with collage in the classroom can be that the children spend so long looking through piles of newspapers and magazines they never get round to making the work. There are a number of ways to overcome this. Once you have a plan in mind for what you want to do ask them to collect this particular type of image at home. For example ask everyone to bring in as many pictures of cars as they can find, or of landscapes etc etc. Give them a couple of weeks to do this, weekends are especially good as the Sunday papers have more content! You can also collect images yourself. If you do not have enough then consider photocopying what you do have so there is more to go round (as long as you don't mind working in black and white). Another option is to use the internet, search Google images for the type of thing you are looking for and print them out, this is more costly in printer ink but useful if you cannot find what you want in everyday newspapers and magazines. If you are asking the pupils to look on the internet for images remind them that it is not always best to go straight away for images on page one of the search, look down further and they might find more interesting images.

It is important when working with collage to encourage the children to spend time thinking about the arrangement of pieces. For this reason you might want to wait until they have arranged all the pieces of their collage before providing them with glue to avoid a situation where they just stick them on without thinking. Discuss composition, show them how the lines of one image in the collage can connect up to the lines in another piece, or how colours can contrast with each other or blend together. Encourage them to cut out the pieces as carefully as their level of skill allows, and to use the glue sparingly, too much glue will cause the paper to wrinkle up. Glue sticks can be neater but are a more expensive option. PVA glue will work fine, use glue spreaders and only a scraping of glue is needed on each piece rather than a blob.