

New way of learning through sci-art

A collaboration between art and science at Queen's could play a part in changing the face of learning about both subjects.

Carmel Devlin, who was awarded a first class honours in her B Ed Art and Design degree from St Mary's University College, drew inspiration for her final year project from her curiosity about identity and what makes each of us unique.

She studied images at the Bioimaging Unit at Queen's Medical Biology Centre to inform her thinking.

The images on which Carmel's project was based were taken by Stuart Church, the unit Manager, on a microscope worth around £250,000 - the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland.

Her project used materials including metallic wire, mesh wire, angel fibre and wool fibres to construct three dimensional structures inspired by images of DNA, cells and chromosomes.

Carmel, who is from west Belfast and is now pursuing a career as a primary school teacher, said she had been inspired by the work of Helen Storey, who is internationally renowned for her work in sci-art.

"I was interested in the nature versus nurture argument and the natural links between art

and science.

"The project has made me think about how the subjects could be integrated in the classroom and how images could be used in learning."

Some of Carmel's work is on display at the Bioimaging Unit and staff both there and at St Mary's are keen that the relationship between them develops.

Professor Peter Hamilton, Director of the unit, said: "This is an example of scientific images inspiring art, but artists also have a big role in helping scientists understand the structure and function of biological and molecular components."

Deidre Robson, who is Head of the Art Department at St Mary's, said: "The art and science departments in St Mary's are at the forefront of education research in collaboration between subjects and have developed a teaching methodology which integrates arts and science."

The £2.2m world class bioimaging facility is aimed to significantly enhance the capability and performance of Queen's research in the biomedical sciences.

Bioimaging uses advanced microscopic techniques which allow researchers to better



see cells and molecular processes. This is vital to improve understanding of how cells function in health and what causes them to malfunction in disease.

Artist Helen Storey is due to speak at an art science education conference in St Mary's on 29 February.

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↑ Carmel Devlin and Director of the University's Bioimaging Unit Professor Peter Hamilton