

The Harry Kerr Bursary

A bursary designed to help talented early-career photographers has been launched in memory of Harry Kerr. The bursary, established by Artlink, Donegal and Harry's wife Martha McCulloch, will give €5,000 to a photographer at an early stage in their career to produce a new body of work.

Harry Kerr (1960 - 2022) was born in the West of Scotland. He was educated at Glasgow School of Art, specialising in photography, in the first instance in the Design School (the only route to studying photography at that time). He gained an Honours Degree in Graphic Design & Photography. But Harry's interests were always in the area of photography as a fine art medium so it was a happy coincidence that, during his time in the Graphics Department, Thomas Joshua Cooper, an American photographer with a vision for an entirely new kind of photography course, arrived on the scene and became a significant mentor.

Shortly after graduating, Harry was selected as the first year-long artist-in-residence at Summerlee Heritage Trust, a large industrial museum in his home town of Coatbridge. He later became the Design & Interpretation Officer at the museum. Subsequently, Harry became the first recipient of Scotland's much-missed lens-based media prize the Richard Hough Bursary. This award was for a project called Sense & Science which premiered at Street Level, Glasgow and was exhibited in several venues in Scotland and England. From 1993 until 2000 he was a technical instructor in the Fine Art Photography Department at the prestigious Glasgow School of Art and an active Board Member of Street Level Photoworks. Harry moved to Donegal with Martha over twenty years ago with the intention of establishing a commercial photography business, while continuing to pursue their own personal art/photography projects.

Harry's influence extended beyond his own work; he shared his passion for creative expression and technical excellence throughout his life. He was always generous with his considerable photographic skills and knowledge, facilitating opportunities for students and artists and fostering a culture of collaboration and growth.

Harry used many "cameras". He made digital, analogue and iPhone photographs as well as documentary films. He revisited the American West to make photographs with a heavy-duty large format camera. He made playful, poetic snapshots with a plastic toy camera. In an age of rapidly increasing technological development and image saturation, what mattered was not the tool but what was being communicated; the art of "making" photographs; photography that increases our emotional knowledge, photographs that could capture the complexities of life and encourage us to look anew at the world.

Bursary details:-

The Harry Kerr Bursary aims to support early career photographers in the Northwest of Ireland and the West of Scotland, from Strandhill to Stornoway, to produce a new project.

It offers financial and practical support to photographic artists who demonstrate exceptional talent and commitment to their craft. Harry was incredibly encouraging of aspiring photographers and this bursary will continue that by supporting the development and production of original, new photography into the future.

The bursary will support an artist to develop a new body of work over a 12 month period. During this time they will receive support and mentoring from Martha McCulloch and the team at Artlink, from Malcolm

Dickson, Director, Street Level Photoworks, Glasgow and Trish Lambe and the team at Photo Museum Ireland.

The €5,000 Euro bursary includes all costs, artist fee and production costs.

Submit the application using the Google form on the website by Monday Midnight the 12th January 2026

Applicants will be informed of the result before 1st of February 2026

The recipient should make work which brings solace to the soul.¹

Eligibility

The bursary is aimed at early career photographers.

Applicants must be based in Northwest Ireland or the West of Scotland.

Applicants should demonstrate originality and a strong technical grounding in photography

Exclusions

Students and those in further or higher education are not eligible

Selection Panel:-

Professor Thomas Joshua Cooper

Malcolm Dickson

Trish Lambe

Calum Angus Mackay

Martha McCulloch

¹ Harry was a big Morse fan. In the final episode of Morse, we learn that his first name is Endeavor. At the end of the episode he passes away. In the first episode of Lewis (the spin off to Morse) we hear of music students at Oxford competing for the Endeavor scholarship. The staff explain that the money had been donated by an anonymous benefactor on the condition that the recipient brought "solace to the soul" with their playing.