



## **Wexford Arts Centre's nominated artist wins 'The AIB Prize' for 2010**

**5th November 2010**

Born in Dublin and currently based in Wicklow, Swords graduated from the National College of Art and Design (BA, MA). He has had two solo shows in Dublin and was invited to exhibit in 'Futures' 2009 at the RHA and 'Look Again: Recent art from Ireland' at Purdy Hicks, London. Swords' work utilises, with exquisite craftsmanship, materials that are often overlooked, including carpet, tent fabric and string, without any attempt to hide the process of making. The hand-made quality of the work is clearly evident, with crafts (such as embroidery) and domesticity playing a central role. However, the artist seizes on the viewers' familiarity with patterns and ordinary objects, overturning and disrupting their expectations. He has recently used Wicklow history for subject matter, contrasting the modesty of craft-based techniques and domestic materials with the grand ambitions of historic/scientific themes.

Noel Kelly, Chief Executive Officer of Visual Artists Ireland, said:

"The AIB award offers a unique encouragement and support to visual artists in Ireland. Now, more than ever, the visual artists in Ireland rely on this form of valuable boost that is offered by AIB and the special showcase that is offered of Irish contemporary visual arts practice."

Swords wins a prize of €20,000 to assist in the publication of a catalogue and to facilitate the production of new work for an exhibition in the Wexford Arts Centre, Wexford. His proposal aims to extend his preliminary work on the theme of Robert Halpin, an historic Wicklow figure who was captain of the Great Eastern and who was responsible for laying and repairing telegram cables across the Atlantic. Using domestic materials and craft-based techniques, Swords hopes to explore the tensions between the modesty of crafts and the grand ambitions of historic/scientific subject matter.

The three runners-up - who each received an award of €1,500 - and the galleries who nominated them, are:

Aideen Barry	Millennium Court Art Centre, Portadown, Co Armagh
Niamh Mc Cann	Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, Co Meath
Richard Mosse	Sirius Arts Centre, Cobh, Co Cork

**Ends**

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**Photos available on request.**