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**THE IRISH AMERICAN ARTS AWARDS ANNOUNCES INNOVATIVE VIRTUAL
REALITY VISUAL ART PILOT COMPETITION WITH
SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

NEW YORK—The Irish American Arts Awards announced today an innovative pilot competition in association with the Savannah College of Art and Design, America’s largest art and design college. SCAD students will be at the forefront of artists creating virtual reality contemporary art using Microsoft XNA Express software.

Microsoft XNA Express software is one of the latest interactive entertainment tools used by gaming enthusiasts to create their own video games for the Microsoft Xbox 360. Creating virtual reality contemporary art with the software is an innovative new use for the software.

The pilot competition is open to SCAD students, and all entries must have a visual art theme. Entries may not be video games.

The ultimate goal of the competition is to hold an annual contest throughout the worldwide 90-million strong Irish Diaspora, in which 15- to 25-year-old entrants can create high-definition visual art and share it through the medium of the Microsoft Xbox 360.

“Throughout the history of visual art, the development of new technology has allowed art to expand from wall paintings and stone carvings to the lens-based media used by both of the terrific IAAA 2006 winners, Mary Kelly and Paul Rowley,” said Simon Pereira Shorey, IAAA chairman. “Working with SCAD will ready us for a worldwide launch, when the younger members of the Irish Diaspora can produce their own high-definition virtual reality visual art and easily share it worldwide through a medium they enjoy using on an almost daily basis, the gaming console. This will excite artists, educators, and parents alike, and we are proud that once again the Irish are at the cutting edge of the 21st Century.”

The winners of the pilot competition will be announced in early 2008.

First place team members will receive a Microsoft Xbox 360 game console and a Wacom Cintiq 21UX interactive pen display.

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Second place team members will receive a Microsoft Xbox 360 game console.

“SCAD is excited by this opportunity for our students to be at the forefront of creating virtual reality contemporary art using Microsoft’s latest software,” said Peter Weishar, dean of the SCAD School of Film and Digital Media. “This collaborative project will help showcase the talent and ingenuity of our students as well as provide a venue for outstanding and innovative fine art.”

Media inquiries and image requests may be directed to +1 (212) 208 2526.

About The IAAA

The Irish American Arts Awards, Ltd. (www.irishamericanartsawards.org) was founded in New York by members of the Irish Diaspora to recognize, encourage and celebrate contemporary visual art by those of Irish ancestry worldwide. The Irish American Arts Awards, Ltd. is a not-for-profit limited company, incorporated in the State of New York, 501(c)(3) applied. Sponsors include AMP3PR, Hennessy, Samsung, Culture Ireland, John McCormack Bloodstock Ltd, Commodore Construction and Scentsational Designs. Further sponsorship interest invited.

About SCAD

Named one of Kaplan’s “25 cutting-edge schools with an eye toward the future,” the Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited institution with locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Ga., and in Lacoste, France. Undergraduate and graduate degree programs also are offered online through SCAD-eLearning. The college offers Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Fine Arts, and Master of Urban Design degrees.

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