

PRESS RELEASE: Steinbeck Festival Limavady, Dust Bowl Photographic Competition 2025 launches!

Date: 01/09/24

Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre in partnership with The Steinbeck Festival are thrilled to announce the Dust Bowl Photographic Competition 2025.

The Festival events celebrate Steinbeck's connection to the Limavady area through art, music, literature and film.

John Steinbeck was a US Nobel Prize Winning author whose work includes; *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*. Steinbeck's maternal grandfather, Samuel Hamilton, was born in Ballykelly in 1830, and his influence on the author, and his Irish roots generally, had a profound effect on the creativity and passion in his writing. His work, though often describing grim reality and disappointment, usually expresses sympathy for the oppressed. It celebrates the simple joy of life and reveals a great fondness for the natural environment. John Steinbeck visited Ballykelly in 1952, the same year he published the novel *East of Eden* whose main character was named after his grandfather and was attributed many mannerisms of his Ulster heritage. On his visit to his "Home Place" Steinbeck claimed he had found, "the seat of my culture and the origin of my being and the soil of my background".

Entries are invited for the fourth annual John Steinbeck Dust Bowl Photography Competition celebrating the American writer's important connection with the Roe Valley in Northern Ireland. This year's competition theme is "Leaving", and the judges would like to encourage the widest possible interpretations of this idea. Emigration, separation from family, embarking on journeys, memories of home or the past are some thoughts to suggest suitable subjects.

Rules and Regulations

The Competition is now open. The closing date is Sunday 8th December 2024. Entry to the competition is free and there are no age limits on participant entry.

A maximum of three original Single Digital Images that have not been used commercially or been entered in any other competition may be entered. Digital

images should be submitted along with full name, contact details and image title to the following website address; www.steinbeckfestival@gmail.com .

The sender must be the owner of the photograph(s) and if applicable, hold the portrait rights. Commendations and prizes will be awarded on the basis of general photographic and artistic merit as judged by the jury, as well as on their specific relevance to the literary legacy of John Steinbeck and the recurring themes in his work.

By participating in this event, the participant agrees to the rules and terms of this event. By submitting, the sender provides the Committee permission for the photograph(s), with the photographer copyright credit, to be used for the promotion of the Steinbeck Festival Limavady without additional compensation. All photographers retain copyright on their submitted images. The award for the winning photograph is a hand thrown ceramic “dust bowl” created by local ceramicist Adam Frew that contains a vial of soil taken from the site of Samuel Hamilton’s house – Steinbeck’s home place. The photographs of those receiving commendations and the winning photograph will be published on the Festival website www.steinbeckfestival.com with jury comments.

The 20 best entries will be exhibited in February 2025 in the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre. Winning entries will be contacted by the Chair of the Photography Competition on or before Monday 22nd December 2024.

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