

A Day in the Life of a Border Town

A visual arts project facilitated by Marie Smith

The project began as Cavan artist Marie Smith responded to a request for quotation by Cavan Arts Office for a visual arts project to be realised during the Summer and showcased on Culture Night 2019. Workshops with 15 participants took place at The Bridge Street Centre, Cavan facilitated by Marie Smith over 26 hours. As a figurative sculptor, Marie Smith designed the project to give participants the opportunity to make figurative sculptures in clay, which were glazed and fired into ceramic.

The Project Brief

The project brief which Marie Smith responded to included to explore the legacy of peace in our border area and the wider positive implications for culture, social and economic stability and to celebrate the journey of this work since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The artist and participants held group discussions on the lived experience and remembrance of Cavan during the Troubles and before the Good Friday Agreement taking note of the past, where we are today and how life in a border town has changed.

The Project - Part 1

For the first part of our project, each participant made a figurative piece of sculpture thinking about the theme. Some are reflective, but all are positive showing resilience, standing together in a group with heads held high and looking to the future. The ideas explored included tolerance, integration, solidarity, hope, multicultural communities, embracing diversity, memories, peace of mind in everyday/ordinary lives - family, friendship, sports and music.

The Project - Part 2

The second part of the project involved looking at the freedom of movement we enjoy today. Open roads and rivers, borders which were never respected by animals

who could always cross freely. We wanted to celebrate the creativity and freedom of expression at Townhall Arts Space Cavan and in doing so to find creative ways in which we could cross a border - birds in boats, flying fish (hot air balloon) water flowing freely, the enjoyment of travelling and theatrical characters. These pieces of sculpture were worked on collaboratively and during the process local stories and experiences influenced some of the artworks.

“The first part of the project involved each participant working on an individual artwork. It was a serious process which made everyone reflect on where we have come from and on what we hold dear today.

In the second part of the project the participants explored the freedom of movement we have and we wanted to express this in a fun, creative way. We also wanted to celebrate the re-opening of Townhall Arts Space Cavan and all of the creativity that happens in this place.

Artworks were made collaboratively and it was wonderful to see the participants embrace the opportunity to work together. By letting go of ownership and control, becoming less possessive of the works and understanding that we all wanted to achieve the same goal. This led to wonderful outcomes of shared ideas and creative expression. It also made for better friendships and a greater enjoyment of the experience” Marie Smith

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The Project Participants

Christine O'Brien
Clare Chamberlain
Colleen Quinn
Cornelia Stuart
Elizabeth Weir

Idara Udo
Jenine Smith
Jo Maher
Mary Leonard
Niamh Creamer

Oonagh Gaffney
Roisin Fegan
Sinead O'Reilly
Susan Caffrey
Veronica Smith

For more information on this project and to read some of the stories behind the artworks, please visit:

www.mariesmith.net/peace-iv-townhall-cavan/



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council

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