

The Spaces Between

by

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Abstract

This written report provides further insight into the context and process of my creative work that focuses on my Irish heritage and the emotional repercussions of migration. These sculptures are inspired by the history, perseverance, and evolution of Irish culture. They explore my reactions to emigrating from Ireland to the United States. Together, these works display my understanding of self, biculturalism, and belonging.

Using steel as my main material allows me to present the iconography of Ireland; ancient spirals, lozenges, interlace and zoomorphic knotworks, in a way that allows the images to become opened up, elegant and light. These works act as a link between the Irish culture of birth, my present American culture, and the void that is created between them.

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
INTRODUCTION	1
PERSONAL HISTORY	2
INFLUENCES.....	5
List of Plates	
<i>Across the Pond</i>	12
<i>Oraiste agus Liath</i>	14
<i>Triquetra</i>	16
<i>Bealtaine</i>	18
<i>Interwoven</i>	20
<i>Three Hand Reel</i>	22
<i>Continuence</i>	24
<i>Here, There and the Spaces Between</i>	26
CONCLUSION	30
GLOSSARY	31
REFERENCE	34

INTRODUCTION

My sculptures are inspired by iconic images found throughout Ireland, such as Newgrange, the Book of Kells, the architecture of Christian churches, and the political art of Northern Ireland. These iconographic images are referenced in an effort to explore my reactions of growing up in the Irish culture, emigrating and adopting the culture of the United States, and the hybrid culture that is created by the two intersecting. Together, these works display my understanding of self, biculturalism, and belonging. I utilize similar quality of line and style of traditional interlace Knotwork, but through steel fabrication, allowing me to echo the contemplative and spiritual feelings of the stone monuments while opening up the form, exposing its interior, and creating an uplifting, gravity defying visual element.

Public works, either the stones of the Neolithic period or the political murals of today, have a direct effect on the people living around them. They inspire many myths and legends, provide spiritual contemplation, commemorate historic events, express complex feelings and beliefs, and define a sense of place. I choose to create outdoor sculpture so that my work may become part of a community environment and be experienced by all. I hope to engage both communities of my upbringing and bring them together through my work.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Emigration has become an intrinsic part of Irish Identity. Due to agricultural, political, and/or economic turmoil, approximately 10 million people have emigrated from Ireland since the 1800's, leading to a diaspora between 70 – 100 million. ^{1,2}

My story is just one migration in that 10 million, but instead of focusing on numbers, statistics, and politics, I wish to illustrate my story of heritage, migration, and new beginnings through large outdoor steel sculpture.

I was born in Dublin in 1982, the youngest of three. My mother, a stay at home mam, is from Cavan and my father, a brick layer, is from Belfast. With redundancy (unemployment) at an all-time high, the decision was made to immigrate to the United States.

My first experience of emigration out of Ireland is one I do not quite remember. At the age of three, we moved from Dublin to Florida, close to aunts and uncles who had also immigrated. Unfortunately my father could not find work so we packed up again and moved to New York. Many of my earliest memories are of New York and American life. Driving on highways, living in a high-rise, and trying American foods like Eggos. Six months after we arrived in the United States, everyone, except our father, moved back to our house in Dublin, Ireland.

America was a constant thought. We were the only children we knew that did not have both their father and mother at home. Our father would return at Christmas with gifts that were not available in Ireland, we made constant trips to the airport to greet aunts and uncles who were returning to Ireland and saying goodbye to those that were moving away again.

Childhood memories consist of days living in the suburbs of Huntstown, Mulhuddart on the north-side of Dublin. From attending a National Primary School called Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa Íosa, participating in Irish Dance at the local church, rides up the Dublin Mountains, street parties, and the sound of Irish Music.

¹ <http://diasporaalliance.org/mobilizing-irelands-diaspora/>

² <http://www.irishinternationaldiasporacentre.ie/>

On August 9th 1994, Dublin was left behind as we immigrated to Florida once again. Ending up in Vero Beach, a small town in Indian River County on the east coast, it was most certainly a new world. My siblings and I attended different schools. I started every day on a cramped school bus enduring forty-five minutes of teasing and mockery by the other students each morning, followed by hours of being told to talk by teachers who were entertained by my Irish accent. My transition to the American way of life was not an easy one.

The main solution to stop the torment I faced each day was to assimilate in every way possible. By studying other students, their mannerisms and accents, I was tried to remove my Irish identity. I practiced on removing my accent; I changed my name to an Americanized name, and adopted American cultural practices that were “acceptable”. I succeeded at school, excelled in the visual arts, participated in many extracurricular activities, and had an amazing part time job managing a music store. I was living the typical life of an American teen.

In high school, I was introduced to ceramics. Ceramics provided the opportunity to express myself through non-verbal means. My ceramic works needed no voice, they were able to stand and speak for themselves. Taking summer school each summer opened up the schedule for more time and courses focused on the arts. My ceramics teacher, Mrs. Katherine Cairns made a huge impression and inspired me to apply to college to study art education.

After graduating high school I moved to Jacksonville, Florida to attend the University of North Florida (UNF) to pursue a degree in Art Education. Between working full time and attending college full time, there was not much time to reflect. Upon graduating in 2005 with a Bachelors of Arts (B.A.E.) in Education, I started teaching for Duval County Public Schools, and was once again reminded of the need to assimilate to an American lifestyle. Young students would get so distracted by the Irish accent and the pronunciation of words that they did not listen to the context of the lesson, so I set out to master the “Hollywood” accent.

While I was teaching it became clear to me that Duval County referenced teachers with a Bachelors of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) for high school teaching positions over those with a B.A.E.. Earning a grant from the school board in 2006, I took a college sculpture course during the summer months, followed by re-enrolling as a B.F.A. student in Ceramics and Sculpture. In Fall of 2006, Professor Jenny Hager joined the faculty of UNF and revitalized the dying sculpture

program. I continued to attend UNF while working full time for the public school system and earned a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Ceramics and Sculpture in 2011. With Professor Hager's guidance, encouragement, and direction, I applied to graduate school to continue studies in both sculpture and teaching at East Carolina University.

In 2007, my sister and I traveled back to Ireland. After 13 years of separation from our extended family, we were with them once again, but they were familiar strangers. We traveled to areas of our youth that were so familiar yet had changed so much. This began an effort to explore the past, my family's heritage, and rediscover all that was lost in the quest to assimilate to America.

Once more I felt the need to return to Ireland so in 2009 I traveled back home with my husband, John and introduced him to friends, family, and the Irish culture. We spent much time learning about the history of Ireland and the British occupation. Traveling to new areas sparked the desire to learn more of the struggles of the Irish throughout history. In 2010, a study abroad opportunity in Wales allowed for a side trip to Ireland with friends. With each experience traveling home, the connection with family and Ireland grows stronger.

It is here at East Carolina University in North Carolina, that I started to reflect on my past and how to communicate the story of my heritage, migration, and new beginnings through large outdoor steel sculpture.

My work illustrates only 1 out of 10 million stories of migration from a land with a complex history, a rich cultural heritage, and an abundance of visual works. Ireland is a land of small size but with great influence, a land whose people travel the world but who always feel the call home.

INFLUENCES

These sculptures are created in response to my personal story of migration from Ireland to the United States. They are created in an effort to preserve the history and iconography of Ireland, announce my heritage, and discuss the interaction of two cultures coming together. Images found throughout Ireland in such places as New Grange, the Book of Kells, and the architecture of Christian churches, serve as inspiration. My sculptures utilize similar quality of line and style but through steel fabrication, allowing me to pay homage to the past while creating a sculpture

that shows evidence of being made in the present.



Fig 1. Neolithic Stone Carvings: Lintel of the entrance to the Four Knocks Burial Chamber in the Boyne Valley area of Ireland.



Fig 2. Neolithic Stone Carvings: Kerb Stone at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley area of Ireland.

The stylized filigree constructed on the sculptures is largely influenced by the Neolithic Stones of Ireland. These carved stones are magnificent artworks created prior to written history and have profoundly impacted the people and the communities surrounding them. Standing as inspiration for many myths and legends and acting as a foundation for the community culture, the meaning of these stones have evolved with the community they inspire. They have been used to connect with the gods, to mark historic events, as spiritual conduits, and to provoke a sense of place. The carved art found on the Neolithic stones, concentric circles, lozenges, spirals, chevrons, and other curvilinear art from the Boyne Valley, can be seen within my work.

Many Neolithic stones are left plain, without carvings. These stones are arranged in a formation that enhances the essence or spirit of a place. Some stand tall, thin and singular while others are short, stocky, and piled. Most notable of these formations are the various tombs, Court Cairns, Portal Dolmens, Passage Tombs and Wedge Tombs. There are also Stone Circles, Stone Alignments, Monolithic and Standing Stones, and Ogham Stones. The arrangements of my sculptures are inspired by the various arrangements of these standing stones.



Fig 3. Creevykeel, Court Tomb, County Sligo



Fig 4. Ballykeel, Portal Tomb, Co. Armagh



Fig 5. Berneens, Wedge Tomb, Burren, Co. Clare



Fig 6. Knowth Passage Tombs, Boyne Valley, Co Meath



Fig 7. The Beaghmore Stone Circles County Tyrone



Fig 8. The Baltany Circle, Alignment: The Bealtaine Festival Co Donegal



Fig 11. Cuchulainn Stone (Big Man's Stone) Co Armagh



Fig 10. Holed Ogham Stone of Kilmalkedar County Kerry

These images have evolved and changed with the society that created them. The impact of Christianity on Irish culture and visual art expanded the curvilinear art of the Neolithic period and transformed it into what is known as Interlace Knotwork. From as early as the 10th century, Interlace Knotwork can be seen carved into metalwork, sculptures and the High Crosses throughout Ireland. The pinnacle of Ireland's Interlace Knotwork can be seen in the Insular Manuscript from the 8th Century, The Book of Kells. It is more delicate and fluid than the previous iconography and is a main element within my work.



Fig 11. The Celtic High Cross at Monasterboice
10th Century



Fig 12. The Book of Kells, Gospel of John



Fig 13. The High Cross at Boho
County Fermanagh
10th Century



Fig 14. Detail from the Book of Kells



Fig 15. Detail from the Book of Kells



Fig 16. Detail from the Book of Kells



Fig 17. Detail from the Book of Kells



Fig 19. Triple Sedilia with a Cusped hood
Kilfenora Cathedral , Co Clare

Fig 18. 15th Century Tri-Cusped
Ogee Headed Windows
Church Island, Garadice Lough,
Co. Leitrim



Fig 20. Tympanum of St. Peter's Church,
Phibsborough, Dublin



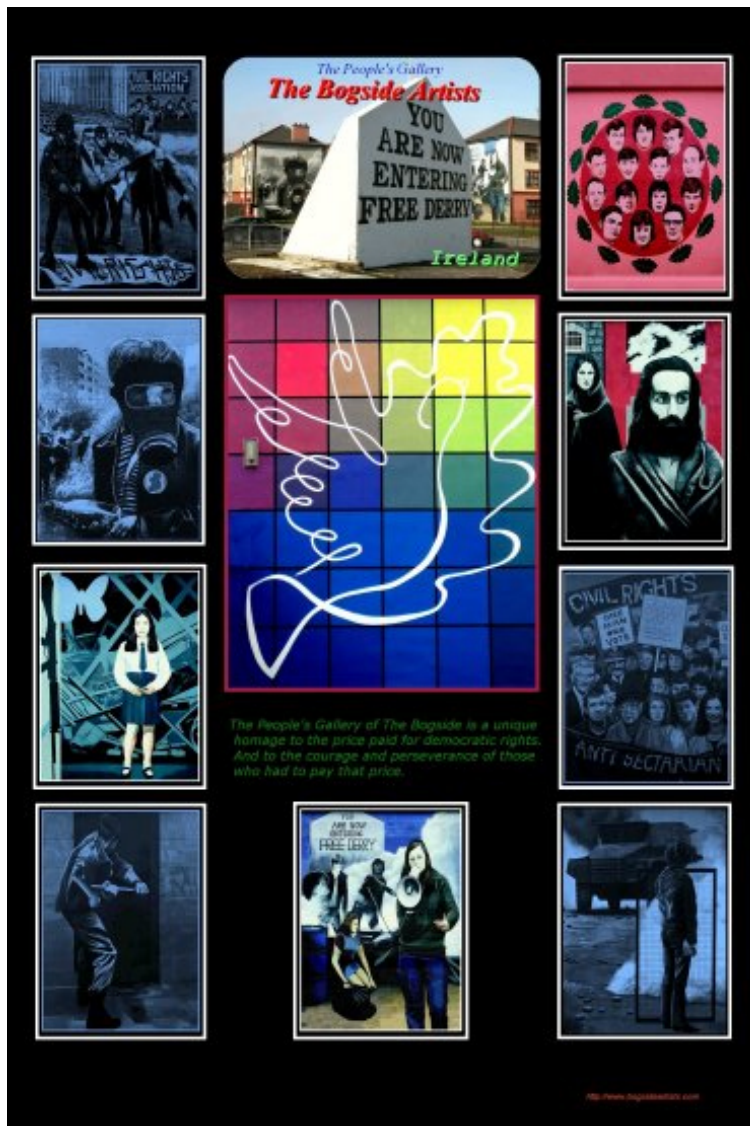
Fig 21. Interior view showing Archways
of St. Peter's Church, Phibsborough, Dublin

The influence of Christianity can also be seen in the churches that are present throughout Ireland.

These churches were constructed from the early 5th century to present day. The main structures of my work are informed by various elements of Christian architecture. The most notable architectural elements evident within these sculptures are the cusped ogee-headed windows, tympanums, rose windows, along with trifoil and quatrefoil archways.

Due to political and economic turmoil, Ireland had little cultural activity between the 13th and 17th centuries. In the late 1700's a number of Irish painters emerged, but the majority of artists left the country seeking more financial stability. This continued until the early 20th century.

With the Celtic Arts Revival movement, the efforts of the Hugh Lane Gallery, and the establishment of the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art, Irish artists returned from overseas and encouraged a new generation of Artists. This new generation formed the Irish Exhibition of Living Artists (IELA) in 1942, in response to the lack of support for modern art. This resurgence of visual culture did not last long. The 1950's led to further emigration by artists followed by the general population being concerned over onset of "The Troubles" rather than visual art. Many people expressed their political views of "The Troubles" by painting murals in public locations. These murals express nationalist imagery, support for paramilitary groups, memorialize people who have lost their lives, and commemorate important events.



The most significant murals to me are those created by "The Bogside Artists". These three muralists approached their work knowing of the high degree of social responsibility that comes with immense emotional and political subject matter. They choose not to concentrate on a single side of "The Troubles" but to paint the history of the community for the community. These murals have had a profound impact on the healing of many individuals. They provide education of the events to an international audience, and they have demonstrated the power and importance of public art. These various

Fig 22. The Bogside Artists Poster

components of my Irish visual heritage are evident within my work, but altered from their traditional environments and materials. While the carvings of the Neolithic and Christian eras have been created through stone carvings, I choose to represent them through steel fabrication. Steel allows me to echo the contemplative and spiritual feelings of the stone monuments of the past while opening up the form, exposing its interior, and creating an uplifting, gravity defying visual element. Through steel, I am able to pay homage to my cultural past while bringing the iconography and visual elements out of the past and into the present. Public works, either the stones of the Neolithic period or the political murals of today, have a direct effect on the people living around them. They inspire many myths and a legend, provide spiritual contemplation, commemorate historic events, express complex feelings and beliefs, and define a sense of place. I choose to create outdoor sculpture so that my work will become part of a community environment and be experienced by all the people who see it.

THE ART WORK



Across The Pond Steel Bronze, Fabric, and Sand
5' x 9' x 9' 2014

Across the Pond

This work is rooted in my transcultural experience and cultural displacement. Titled “Across the Pond”, after a common phrase used by many Europeans to describe travel between North America and Europe. It is used as an ironic understatement to express the 3,000+ miles that lay between the two countries that separates family, friends, and culture. The broken bridge is used as a symbol of the spatial, psychological, and emotional disconnect that is created within a person through migration.

Each side of the bridge represents a country of cultural influence. The section on the right represents the culture of my birth, Ireland. It is marked by a harp, the national symbol of Ireland and found on the National Seal. As the road begins, it is concealed and protected within this mountain but becomes open and exposed, vulnerable to the outside. The section to the left represents the United States, the culture where I came of age. It is marked by a bald eagle, the national bird of the United States. It too, has a section that is open and exposed but recedes into the safety of the enclosed mountain. Both sections are of equal size and sit across from each other emphasizing the vast open chasm at the center. This chasm embodies the disconnect between these two cultures, the impossibility of participating in both at the same time, and the difficulty in traveling back and forth.

The piece is surrounded by the triple spiral symbol called a triskele. It is an ancient symbol found on Neolithic sites such as Newgrange, and consists of three conjoined concentric spirals. It is symbolic of the three separate but interconnected aspects of my cultural identity. The culture of my birth, Ireland, the culture of where I live, the United States, and culture created when these two come together to create a hybrid. The triskeles are arranged in a circle that encompasses both sections of the bridge, symbolizing wholeness, totality, and protection. The chasm that of the bridge is continued onto the floor, creating a gap that has interrupted the circle, breaking the circle of protection and exposing the interior to all.



Oraiste agus Liath Painted Steel 7' x 3' x 2' 2011

Oraiste agus Liath (Orange and Gray)

This sculpture is an attempt to reconnect with my heritage in multiple ways. The two forms are inspired by a combination of the cusped ogee windows, Gothic archways, and the standing stones and are repeated throughout my work in a variety of ways.

The colors of the piece are inspired by the Flag of Ireland, known as the Tri-Color, which is divided into three equal vertical sections of green, white, and orange. The Green represents the republic of Ireland, also known as the Free State. The Orange represents Northern Ireland which is still under British Occupation. The White of the flag symbolizes peace between the two political parties. To this day, there is consistent unrest and violence so peace is not yet a reality, it is a gray area.

Both the positive and negative shapes created by the two forms are equally important and come together to complete the central ellipse.



Triquetra Painted Steel 7' 6" x 5' x 3' 2011

Triquetra

Triquetra comes from the Latin words *tri*, meaning three and *quetrus*, meaning cornered. Triquetra is most commonly referred to as a Trefoil Knot or The Trinity Knot. This symbol is seen on Celtic Crosses and slab carvings from the 7th century to the 12th century. It is also frequently used in Insular Manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. Within the manuscripts pages it is primarily used as a filler of space and does not appear to have a symbolic function or meaning. During the Celtic Revival of the 19th century, the Triquetra, seen as a connection to the shamrock and St. Patrick, began to represent the Blessed Trinity of the Christian Religion (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). It began to appear as a dominate Christian symbol on sculpture, vestments, books, and church windows. Many Modern Pagans see the Triquetra as a symbol representing the three stages of the Triple Goddess: (the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone), The Three Realms: (Earth, Sky and Sea), the interconnected parts of each of us: (the Mind, the Body, and the Soul), or of life itself: (Life, Death, and Rebirth). As a cultural symbol it has become a symbol of the three promises of a relationship, (Love, Honour, and Protect). It is commonly attached to the hands of the Claddagh ring, the traditional ring given for friendship, engagement, and marriage. Many Triquetra are also accompanied by a circle which has been read as the eternity of God's love or the eternal circle of life. It can also represent the ancient circles of protection. Today, the Triquetra has become a symbol of the Celtic people and the Celtic lands. It is present on everything and anything that a tourist might buy and is one of the most recognized Interlace knots outside of Ireland.

This work takes the recognized symbol of the Triquetra and pairs it with other Interlace Knotwork to announce my heritage and my culture. But in this work, the Triquetra is only created through the negative space. To see the Trifoil Knot, one must look at what is not present, at what is missing. This piece is created to show that no matter how much I try to connect with my past, there will always be a piece that is missing.



Bealtaine Painted Steel with Cast Iron 7' x 2' x 2' 2012

Bealtaine

Bealtaine is the festival that is held on the cross-quarter day between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. It is usually celebrated on the night of April 30th to May 1st and it marks the beginning of summer. The festival is mentioned in some of the earliest Irish literature and talks of the importance of bonfires to bring protection to the herds and homes. The word Bealtaine translates to Godly Fire and in modern times the festival is known as the Celtic Fire Festival of Bealtaine.

In county Donegal, in the North West of Ireland, there is a stone circle called the Beltany Stone Circle. It dates between 1400 – 800 BC and is comprised of 64 standing stones still standing. A singular triangular stone is widest of the stones and is located in the east-north-east side of the circle. This stone is decorated with cupmarks and lies directly across from the tallest of the stones. On the cross-quarter day of Bealtaine, the morning of May 1st, when you stand in this alignment, the sun rises on the tip of the triangular stone.

This sculpture, titled “Bealtaine”, is inspired by this ancient festival. It consists of two standing stone forms, one tall and one short, both triangular. The interior of these stones displays the warm colors of a glowing fire. The cast iron circle on top echoes the layout of the Beltany Stone Circle, while displaying the interlace knotwork that Ireland is famous for. When installed in its final location, the sun shall rise through this circle on a date of significance.



Interwoven Powder Coated Steel 10' x 2' x 3' 2013

Interwoven

Many of my influences are interwoven into this one piece. The form is inspired by the cusped ogee-headed windows and gothic archways combined with the height and scale of the standing stones. The iconography displayed on each form is reminiscent of a different period of development in Celtic Interlace Knotwork. The smaller form portrays the same spiral and lozenge shapes found carved into the frontal kerb stone at the Newgrange site. The medium form displays Celtic knotwork that is frequently displayed in the Illuminated Manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. The largest of the forms, contains many forms of more contemporary knotwork that is used frequently in both tourist and commercial applications of Celtic Iconography. The three styles of Irish visual culture range in scale to represent their influence on the world. Each section is stacked and interwoven with the other two displaying their relationship and influence on one another. Using steel has allowed me to open up the form. What is traditional carved out of heavy stone is now in a light fluid line that becomes the form itself.



Three Hand Reel Painted Steel 8' x 3' x 3' 2013

Three Hand Reel

A three hand reel is a traditional complex Irish Dance utilizing three dancers. The choreography strives to balance the interaction of these dancers and their visual presentation to the audience; however, the center figure frequently supports and interacts with the two exterior dancers. In this piece, there are three forms; each form supports the other two by three bracing bars.

The number three is important through Irish mythology and Christian beliefs. As with *Triquetra*, the number three has become representative of many things. I focus on the number three to discuss the different aspects of my cultural identity. There is the Irish culture in which I was raised, the American culture where I currently reside, and the hybrid created by the interaction of these cultures coming together. Each aspect of my identity is supported by the other two; they echo the twists and curves of each other, moving in unison. Yet they are detached, each one self-contained, with spaces between them. It is not a seamless integration; there are spaces and voids that cannot be filled.



Continuance Rusted and Painted Steel with Cast Iron 11' x 3' x 3' 2014

Continuance

In the center of continuance is an example of Irish Iconography known as a Triskele. It is a triple spiral graphic that is found throughout Ireland in such places as Newgrange and other megalithic and neolithic sites. Although dating back to pre-Christian times, like the triquetra, it has become to be known as a Christian symbol representing the trinity, - the father, the son, and the holy spirit. It has also been adopted by neopagans and other religions where triadic or threefold is a central theme to their mythology.

Continuance consists of two triangular forms that are repetitive in my work and are inspired by the cusped ogee windows, the gothic archways and the standing stones. Here these two forms are stacked, one as the foundation, and the other elevated off the ground and growing up towards the sky. These two forms are braced together in the center with each one leading in and out of the other. It is at the center point where a cast iron element displaying a triskele can be found. It connects the two larger forms which suspend it in a large open space.

The sculpture represents the three aspects to my self identity, which are repeated in the triskele symbol. The two forms represent the two largest influences, the foundation form represents the culture of my birth, Ireland, while the top form represents the culture where I live that continues to grow and influence me, the United States. At an open central point these two forms collide into one another and support one another before once again independently emerge. The tips of each form are joined together in a large open space by a cast iron triskele. The triskele places the focus on the intersection of the two forms, the place where two cultures come together to create a hybrid.



Here, There, and the Spaces Between Painted Steel 8' x 18' x 18' 2014

Here, There, and the Spaces Between

Here, There, and the Spaces Between is a representation of my cultural influences and their interconnected relationships. It discusses the placement of myself within the surrounding society and the walls that are created by cultural displacement. The work is comprised of six individual elements, three curved solid forms that present an icon to the viewers and three interwoven circular walls that display a framework of Interlace Knotwork. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this work, it should be observed as individual forms, as the interaction between forms, and as a single complex whole. Viewers are also encouraged to walk throughout the work so that they may experience it from both the outside of the surrounding walls and from within.

The three solid curved forms are inspired by the cusped ogee windows, gothic archways, and the standing stones that are scattered around the Irish landscape. The size of each form varies to represent a different period of my cultural development. Each period is marked by an icon created in the style of an interwoven knotwork that is placed on the top of the corresponding form. The shortest form presents an interlace knot that is similar to the traditional knotwork found throughout Irish visual culture. Both the compressed height of the work and the traditional knot personifies the culture of my youth, a culture that was presented to me from birth through my heritage. The intermediate form displays an interwoven shamrock. The shamrock represents many things in Irish culture. Here it is used in reference to the logo of Aer Lingus – the national airline carrier of Ireland. It represents travel between my two cultures, Ireland and the United States, a connection to home, and the hybrid culture that is created by combining them. The tallest form exhibits a filigree star that encompasses a person of my height, 5ft 4 inches. This star represents the United States and the growth of this culture within me. While the iconography represents different stages of my cultural development, the solid foundation forms which they are presented upon are reminiscent of the visual foundations of the Irish Culture.

The color of each form assists in viewer in discovering the forms symbolic purpose. The smallest form displays the two dominate colors of the Irish Flag, green for the republic of Ireland and orange for Northern Ireland. These two colors are presented together, displaying one unified

cultural influence. The largest form presents the two most recognized colors of the flag of the United States of America, red and blue. The intermediate form presents two colors, blue and green, a color from each of the other two forms showing the connection between these two cultures. These colors are also symbolic of travel between the two countries. The green of the shamrock represents the green tail logo of Aer Lingus flying over the solid blue ocean.

Each form is surrounded by a see-through curved wall that decreases in elevation from right to left. These walls consist of a large triskele symbol surrounded by a framework of Interlace Knotwork. They add a physical barrier to the viewer while allowing them to see through the open voids to examine the forms and their meaning that lies within. The triskele symbol is mirrored again in the arrangement of the sculptures footprint. This triskele, an ancient symbol carved on Neolithic stones that consists of three conjoined concentric spirals, defines the foundation of my Irish heritage while provide three separate but interconnected aspects of my cultural development. Each of the three walls spirals out from the center at equal distance and interval, to affirm their equal significance.

These walls separate the interior forms from the surrounding society. The audience must decide if they wish to remain on the outside of the work or if they wish to enter the work and experience it from a different perspective. They are invited to enter the sculpture through the space created between the shortest and largest forms, explore the work from the interior, and experience the different aspects coming together to create a unified whole. Upon entering, the viewer is guided to the right where they are presented with the shortest form, symbolic of my Irish beginnings, followed by the intermediate form, and lastly the largest that displays the culture of the United States. As the audience travels around the piece they experience each period of cultural development as an individual complex interaction between the nestled form and its encompassing biographical wall. From a single vantage point at the center of the triskele, each period of cultural development; the Irish culture of my youth, the culture of the United States where I came of age, and the hybrid culture of their interaction can be clearly and equally viewed and experienced.

The work is created to give the audience control over whether they stay and view the work from the exterior, or if they enter the space to explore the complex relationships that are present within the interior.

Conclusion

My sculptures are constructed to convey my personal narrative of migration. The ancient Irish symbols, such as the Triskele and the Triquetra, express the three aspects of my cultural identity, the culture of my birth, Ireland, the culture of where I have come of age, the United States, and the hybrid culture created by these two intersecting. Through interlace Knotwork, I examined how interwoven these cultures are while exploring the spaces and voids that exists between them. Referencing ancient stones, symbols, and architecture, has taught me a great deal about my heritage and has directed my visual aesthetic to one I am intrigued to continue to develop.

These sculptures are an attempt to reach back to my heritage to fill the voids created through migration. I hope to expand on this body of work by creating sculpture that discusses the process of cultural assimilation in the age of globalization.

Glossary

Boyne Valley

The Boyne Valley or Brú na Bóinne, is a world heritage site located in Co Meath in Central Ireland. It is the largest megalithic site in Europe spread over of 780 ha. It dates back to the 3500 BC and shows evidence of astronomical understanding by its builders. The site is located around a wide bend in the Boyne River and consists of over 40 Passage Tombs, Neolithic mounds, Cairn Courts, Standing Stones, the Hill of Tara, and other enclosures. Within the Boyne Valley, there are cluster sites such as Knowth, Dowth, Ballinrad, and Newgrange, were multiple tombs and megalithic arts are located. The Boyne Valley contains the largest collection of Megalithic art in Europe and 80% of the Megalithic art of Ireland.

Chevron

A common motif in Neolithic art, the zigzag pattern.

Concentric Circles

A group of circles that are placed one instead the other that all have a common center.

Cusped Ogee-Headed Windows

An ogee is an s like curve that runs on each side of an archway and comes to a peak in the top center. They are frequently used in gothic architecture in archways, doors, and windows.

A cusp is an ornamental pointed protrusion created by two small curved arches extending out of the main arch.

A cusped Ogee-Headed Window is a window that has an s like curve that runs each side on the window and comes to a peak in the center above the window. This window will have one or more ornamental pointed protrusions that extend out from the main arch. Many time the will be referred to by how many points are protruding out of the archway, such as a tri-cusped ogee-headed window would have 3 cusped protrusions extending out from the main arch.

Filigree

An alternative word used in regards to the delicate ornamental metal work of Interlace Knotwork.

Interlace Knotwork

Interlace motifs are characterized by a continuous, unending line, strands, or braids, that creates a complex geometric pattern. The strands follow alternating pattern of over under. There may be a single strand or multiple strands in a pattern.

Interlace Zoomorphics

Interlace motifs that are characterized by intertwined animals. Interlace Zoomorphics differ than Interlace Knotwork in that the stands of the Zoomorphic animal begins and ends with the animalistic features such as a beak, head, paw, and/or tail.

Lozenges

The diamond pattern found in Neolithic Art.

Megalithic

From the Greek words of Mega and Lithos meaning “Large” and “Stone”. Megalithic means Large Stone. Many of Irelands ancient stone works are Megalithic works build in the Neolithic period. Some examples include the Portal Tombs and the Passage Tombs.

Neolithic Art

New Stone Age. From the Greek works Neo and Lithos meaning “new” and “stone”. Neolithic means New Stone. Coincides with the introduction of farming in Ireland and runs up to the Bronze Age. C4000 – 2000BC

Spirals

A plane curve generated by a point moving around a fixed point while constantly receding from or approaching the fixed point.

In Neolithic Art, Spirals have been found alone – single, in pairs – running in the same direction and running in the opposed directions, and in threes – known as a Triskele – where the three spirals interlock.

Triskele

Is a pre-Christian Celtic symbol of three conjoined concentric spirals that is found in numerous megalithic and Neolithic sites in Ireland, most notably the entrance stone to the Newgrange passage tomb.

Tympanums

A tympanum is an ornamental semi-circular or triangular decorative space within an arch that is above the lintel or a subordinate arch that often contains sculpture and imagery related to the buildings purpose.

“The Troubles”

The common name for the conflict between Irish Nationalists and British Loyalists in Northern Ireland between the 1960’s to the “Good Friday” Agreement of 1998.

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