

Faerie Trees And Hill Forts

Details of Commissions:

Commissioned by Bunrana Town Council under the percent for Art Scheme with the residents of the new Sliabh Sneachta / Dún An Ghrianán housing schemes at Ferris Lane, Bunrana, Co. Donegal. The facilitating artists were Deirdre O' Callaghan, Fiona Mg Gee and Julie O'Donnell.

The sculptures have been created through a process of interaction and workshop activities led by the artists and involving members of the Sliabh Ghrianain Residents Association and twenty children from the area ranging in age from 3 to 14. The process culminated in a permanent public artwork, the first of its kind in Donegal to involve consultation and input from local people, in a local authority housing development. The process began in August 2003 with a submission by Artlink to Bunrana Town Council in an open competition for the creation of a public artwork for the Phase 1 of the Ferris Lane development.

Medium:

The sculptures are fabricated from a steel framework which forms the underlying structure and on which the concrete, ceramic and mosaic tiling are overlaid. There are four sculptures in total, three of which have a hand made mosaic tiles decorative surface, reflecting some of the land based themes from the drawings made by the children. The fourth sculpture is composed of concrete and self coloured ceramic tiles, textured with imprints from the original drawings completed in workshops.

Location: Ferris Lane Housing Scheme, Bunrana, Co. Donegal, Ireland

Description:

The Artlink submission for the project concentrated not on the final design and form of an artwork but the process of introduction to the artists and the organisation, discussion about themes and ways of approaching the project. Members of the Sliabh Ghrianain Residents Association were actively involved in the project since the initial selection process, and the involvement continued to develop through meetings, studio visits and practical workshops with the children of both estates. Following a number of planning meetings with the parents and members of Association, in January 2004 a series of workshops began to decide on the themes and forms of the project. Facilitated by the artists and using drawing, painting, collage and photography the workshops also included a field trip to archeological sites in Inishowen. Gradually the nature and form of the design for the final work emerged through the workshop activities and a presentation was made to the Residents and a representative of the Bunrana Town Council at the end of March 2004. The plans and scaled models drawn up by the artists were based on the artwork created by the children through the workshop programme.

The theme had been chosen by members of the Residents Association and focused on the names of the estates, which translate loosely as the fort of the sun and the hill of the snow. It was these elements that the children had explored, and the field trip involved making sketches and notes at sites that included carved standing stones, tomb slabs and a local fairy tree. The artists have translated the ideas and work of the children into four free standing sculptures which are indicative of the curving and organic drawings of the hill and mound forms, the fairy tree bent in the wind and the spherical shape of fallen berries. The parents and children were really excited about the final design and also with the fact that the children would continue to be involved in the fabrication of the pieces, and that their individual tiles would be identifiable on the completed artworks.

Other Notes:

Artlink is a visual arts organisation based in Tullyarvan Mill, Bunrana since 1992. Artlink is a registered charity revenue funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and our aim is to promote good practice, excellence and access to the visual arts in a community context. Our programme includes participatory workshops led by professional artists for a wide range of ages and developmental groups, exhibitions in the Artlink studios and in site specific locations. Previously Artlink has completed a number of public art projects, such as 'Art in the Park' ceramic seating and plaques in Swan Park, Bunrana, the Nature Trail in the Tullyarvan Gardens and the Sligo Community Festival seat.