

Solder: Global Connection through Art

18 May-11 June 2023



**HUGH LANE
GALLERY**



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Welcome

Solder: Global Connection through Art is the culmination of two years intense work by adult participants in the LYCS Global Citizenship project. The artists accepted the challenge to investigate and reflect upon Global Citizenship Education and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Working with Helena Murphy in LYCS, there were many weeks of debate and reflection, after which the participants worked with artist Claire Halpin to bring their responses to life in stained glass.

At the outset of their project the artists visited the Hugh Lane Gallery where they were welcomed by Jessica O'Donnell, Head of Education and Community Outreach and with artist Claire Halpin drew inspiration from the outstanding work of Harry Clarke, Evie Hone, James Scanlon, Paul Bony and Wilhelmina Geddes on view in the Gallery's stained glass room.

We are delighted to collaborate with LYCS on this exhibition and congratulations to these artists whose skilful works successfully connect these global concerns with the NEIC area.

Barbara Dawson
Director

Martin McConigley - Adult Education Coordinator, LYCS

Two years ago, a group of Adult Learners practicing the art of stained-glass in LYCS made their way to the Hugh Lane Gallery. The group had just agreed to take part in an ambitious project that would test their creativity, world view, and artistic skill. They went to the Gallery to see the work of Harry Clarke and to immerse themselves in this iconic location. They returned to LYCS filled with ideas and the claim — made with a laugh — that they would see their own work hanging beside Harry's very soon. Little did we know what a prophetic claim this would be.

The LYCS Stained-glass Group have spent the last two years developing their understanding of Global Citizenship Education and the art on display here explores issues that impact the lives of people living in inner city Dublin. Over many months the group discussed the issues they saw around their city and community: homelessness, hunger, a lack of educational opportunity, inequality of many kinds, racism, ecological threats. The list was endless. They also spoke about how these issues have a global significance. The challenges that face our city, our community, is unfortunately replicated all over the world. The images on display depict local scenes but could depict individuals and circumstances from any part of the world. This is an era of unprecedented environmental, economic, social, and political crisis. This work is a response to that threat.

Claire Halpin – Artist and Facilitator

My role in the project was as an artist and facilitator. Working with the group of artists to bring ambition and scale to their design and artworks. Visited Stained Glass Room at Hugh Lane Gallery to put their artworks on another level as a first step in the project.

Leading them through a creative process from idea and concept around the SDG themes through visualisation, design and composition. With the artists as a group sharing ideas and inspirations. Developing images and designs on global themes but localised, unique and highly personal to each artist.

As I continually reiterated to the group – these artworks have never existed in the world before – they are truly original and unique and beautiful. What was technically possible I was guided by the group. My role was to instil confidence, ambition and trust and pride in their skills, ability and achievements in creating these incredible stained glass artworks. And to then bring the works to exhibition stage with the first exhibition at Charleville Mall Library in March 2023.

And an unforeseen outcome for the power, importance and relevance of these works and exhibition to be acknowledged and affirmed by Hugh Lane Gallery through continued conversations with Jessica O'Donnell. Which led to the invitation to exhibit Solder works here at Hugh Lane Gallery... what an honour and privilege to be on this beautiful creative journey with this truly fantastic group.

Founded in 1984, Lourdes Youth & Community Services (LYCS) is an integrated community development organisation that provides education, training, social and developmental opportunities to local people living in the Northeast Inner City (NEIC) of Dublin. LYCS provides a number of services to the community, including an Early Years Service, Community Training Centre, Community Employment Scheme, Youth Work Programme, Global Citizenship Education Programme and an Adult Education Programme. Participants live and work in Dublin City, but hail from every corner of the globe and range in age from 6 months to 80 years. LYCS is concerned with providing participants the opportunity to become involved in their own development and the development of their community, and their country as active global citizens.

Hugh Lane Gallery is committed to its education and community outreach programmes which extend throughout Dublin city and embrace inspiring and innovative projects and programmes for audiences and individuals of all ages. These programmes forge a multiplicity of connections through imaginative and creative engagement with the gallery's collections, exhibitions and visual art practice enabling children, young people and adults deepen their understanding and connection to the artistic life that surrounds them and realise their own artistic potential.

Michael McCusker
Sustainable Development Goal No. 5
Gender Equality

“I have always heard about the glass ceiling. I remember at school: boys wanted to do cookery and girls wanted to do woodwork, but they couldn't do what they wanted. There was a separation based on gender.

In my piece the books represent education, the thing that can break through the glass ceiling. The whole project made me more committed to it. It is one piece that you create, make and design and it is personal. It tells a story, my story.”

Brian Godwin
Sustainable Development Goal No. 16
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

"Everyday when I leave LYCS, I see homeless people lying in doorways. Every Monday morning they wash down the doorways. My piece shows a homeless person wrapped in a blanket. The candle is a welcome candle, it gives hope. My first piece shows the injustice of homelessness. Everybody should have a home. Why don't they? I did a second piece. It is a simple dove. That depicts peace. Without peace we can get nowhere."

Bernie Sweeney
Sustainable Development Goal No. 1
No Poverty

“There is an awful lot of poverty in the world, in this area. Behind closed doors, there is huge poverty. There are homes where there is no food. Everyone should have food. I wanted to contrast the poverty with richness – the bowl of fruit on top of the fridge, out of reach. Everyone should have food!”

Tungaa Daramsed
Sustainable Development Goal No. 17
Partnership of Goals

"I chose that because who you are, what colour you are, where you are from, what gender, it doesn't matter. We all have to help each other. No racism, no bullying. After Corona virus, people abused me on the street, kids threw eggs at my house, bottles of water, stones, they blamed me for the virus. All Asian people were targeted.

My image says everybody needs to help each other and work together, because we are living in one world. People from Africa and Asia and everywhere.

The doves above the hands represents peace and safety."

Joan Traynor
Sustainable Development Goal No. 14
Life Below Water

“I love the beach. Malahide beach. But there is a lot of clutter. We need to keep our beaches clean for the animals. Simple things. People should pick up their rubbish. It can end up in the sea and hurt sea animals.”

Jean O'Connor
Sustainable Development Goal No. 3
Good Health and Wellbeing

“Good health is not just medical. It brings me back to the community, because people head for the park, for whatever reason; peace of mind, to walk, to look at the flowers, people seem happy to be outdoors in nature, looking at scenery. Even the drug addict, for whatever reason, everybody goes to the park. The fresh air, I like the fact that people seem happier, kids are playing ball, nice things. Where we live, when we walk out the door, we see homelessness and drug abuse. That’s not good for your wellbeing. Nature is very important.”

Marion Nolan
Sustainable Development Goal No. 15
Life on Land

“My Goal is about everything on the land, it’s about community; every country revolves around community. Like the community garden, we help each other. We plant and grow things together. There is great trust. It’s the same as this group. We all help each other here as well. We’re honest with each other.”

The exhibition of Solder: Global Connection through Art stained glass panels celebrates the creativity and active citizenship of the participants as well as further encouraging creative connections between the Hugh Lane Gallery and the community of Dublin 1.

We are very grateful to the artists Bernie Sweeney, Brian Godwin, Jean O'Connor, Joan Traynor, Marion Nolan, Michael McCusker, Tungaa Daramsed; Helena Murphy, Martin McConigley, Adult Education Coordinator, LYCS, artist Claire Halpin, our art technicians and Jessica O'Donnell, Head of Education and Community Outreach at the Hugh Lane Gallery for bringing this remarkable work to the attention of a wider audience in these beautiful surroundings.

The artists at the launch of their work in Charleville Mall Library, March 2023





Artist Claire Halpin and the artists at work



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