

Digital Toolkit

Post Primary
Junior Cycle

Pavee Presence

Leanne McDonagh

GLUCKSMAN

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Artwork.



Pavee Presence, 2020
Digital Print

About the Artwork.

Pavee Presence is a photographic work by artist Leanne McDonagh that captures a Traveller's stall at a horse fair. McDonagh took the photo using slow exposure in order to capture the movement and colour of the scene.

"During my time at college I became enthusiastic about abstraction. Through further experimentation with paint, print and photography I soon discovered various ways of creating my desired visuals, images that fell between abstraction and representation, ones that revealed as much as they concealed, while also capturing the fleeting transience of my memories.

As a member of one of the most socially excluded groups in Irish society my memories are sometimes spoiled by extensive experiences of being identified as a negative stereotype.

However not all my memories are blemished, and I retain others that are untouched by negativity.

Hence, I have chosen to document and record my experiences of past and present so that I can encapsulate the positive and authentic norms that remain constant throughout the years. Documenting for both myself and for the outsider an artistic auto-ethnographic view of the community before it is lost forever. Pavee Presence was captured by a Traveller's stall at a fair. There is beauty in all people and all things but the real beauty in life is being able to see that beauty in others."

Pavee Presence appeared as part of New Light, the Glucksman's project for Cork Midsummer Festival in 2020, which exhibited eight poster-based artworks on billboards across the city.

About the Artist.

Leanne McDonagh is a Traveller woman currently living in Cork. She is the 5th of ten children and grew up a halting site, with first-hand experience of the prejudices and misconceptions that society has about Travellers. As an artist she feels she has a unique opportunity to represent and record her community from within. Her work has been exhibited at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Triskel Arts Centre, Cork; Origin Gallery, Dublin and The Glucksman, UCC.

“When I did return to my practice, a number of years after graduating from art college, I began to pick up on the things I had parked when I did leave 4th year, and I fell in love with art again. I realized this is something that I have to continue, and I always describe it as, ‘it was an itch that needed to be scratched’.”

Leanne McDonagh

Artist Film.



LINK XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Pictures of Artwork.





Artwork Info.

Leanne McDonagh
Pavee Presence

Digital Print, 2020
52cm x 34.5cm

Audio.



https://www.glucksman.org/content/exhibitions/EX_NewLight/New-Light-Audio-Guide.mp3

Pedagogy.

Materials

Camera/Mobile phone/tablet/or other any device to take photographs
Card or canvas board
Scissors
A3 paper
Colouring pencils
Pencil
Steel Ruler
Craft Knife
Cutting matt
A4/A3 card
PVA Glue
Foam board/stickers – labels

Overview

This toolkit supports students to understand the positive contributions that Travellers have made to Irish society. Through discussion, research, writing and creative activities, students will come to understand the need to demonstrate support for the community. They will take the work of artist Leanne McDonagh as the starting point, creating their photographs, stencils and mixed media artworks that investigate Traveller culture and heritage. The exhibition outcome will encourage the students and school to take the lead within their community, through the display of artworks helping to create awareness and openly demonstrating allyship for Travellers. The toolkit presents opportunities for educators to address different aspects of the junior cycle curriculum including the main strands of the English curriculum – Oral language, writing and reading and the 5 main elements of the visual arts curriculum.

Links to curriculum

(Junior Cycle Post Primary)

English -

Strand 1, 2 + 3: 1 Communicating as a listener, speaker, reader, writer. 2. Exploring and using language. 3. Understanding the content and structure of language.

Visual Art –

Five elements - Critical and visual language, Drawing, Visual culture and appreciation, The art elements and design principles, Media.

Worksheet.

Three Classroom Exercises

1. Pavee Presence. Discussion + written exercise. (30mins)

This discussion invites students to look closely at the artwork Pavee Presence.

What are your first impressions of the artwork?

What do we think the artist has photographed?

What effect does the blurring of the image have on the way we read the artwork?

What impact do the colours have on the way we react to the photograph?

How does the title of the artwork change the way we interpret it?

Writing a short paragraph, students can capture their first impressions of the artwork, their understanding of the artist's motivations and the possible impact the title could have on viewers.

2. Traveller Culture + History. Research. (overnight or weekend)

Students should research Traveller history and heritage and create a folder of collected images and texts.

Use these two significant moments in recent history to direct your research -

In March 2017, Travellers were recognized as a distinct ethnic group by the Irish State. This formal recognition was a key step to support Travellers to attain human rights and improve living conditions. What can you find about this historic moment? Can you find information on the campaign to recognize Traveller ethnicity? Has this recognition improved the situation for Travellers in Ireland?

In July 2019, two elements of Traveller culture were inscribed on Ireland's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

This means the Irish Government agrees to protect, promote and celebrate these living cultural heritage practices, customs, crafts and traditions. The two elements were – the Traveller language of Cant/Gammon and Traveller Tinsmithing. What can you find about both of these aspects of Traveller culture? Is the language commonly practiced? Where can you find examples of Traveller Tinsmithing?

Worksheet.

3. A Visual History. Creative exercise. (60mins)

In March 2017, a group of Traveller women designed and handmade the Traveller Ethnicity Quilt to mark the official recognition of the ethnicity of Travellers by the Irish Government. This exercise invites students to create a design for a quilt that celebrates Irish Travellers identity, culture and history. Use the images and information that you have found to inform your design.

Use a ruler to divide your A3 page into 9 or 12 sections. Each section will capture a particular element of Traveller life. Sketch and write into each section and share your results with your class.

Project.

Three Stages

Stage 1

Discussion.

Pavee Presence provides an important visual depiction of and for the Traveller community.

Why do we feel it is important that this community is represented in artworks and in society?

What prejudice and discrimination might the Traveller community face?

Students should consider what actions they can take both in their school and in society that would work to end discrimination.

How can we provide a more inclusive, open and supportive society?

Research.

Celebrating Traveller identity, culture and heritage is a central element in any strategy to counter discrimination and the exclusion and marginalisation of Travellers. This research activity encourages students to develop an understanding of the contributions Traveller culture has made to our nation's cultural heritage.

Students should research Traveller craft, art, music, and storytelling, and collect information, texts, images and examples of artworks.

Project.

Stage 1 (continued)

Photography.

Review your research findings and see if you can connect an element of Traveller culture to your own life, your school, or your local town, village or city. Perhaps your research has led you to look at Irish music, craft, art or literature. Take a camera, (your phone, tablet or camera) and photograph an object that connects to your research. i.e. a musical instrument or a book.

Just as Leanne McDonagh has abstracted her photograph, try abstracting your image. Perhaps, you can focus on a section of the object, zoom in on a detail, or place the item on a similar colour background or in an unusual setting.

Consider a title for your photograph that will provoke further thought in the viewer.

Print your photographs and share with the group.

Project.

Stage 2

For artist Leanne McDonagh, the titles of her artworks hold particular significance. They provide her with an opportunity to question and challenge prejudices and educate people about Traveller culture.

Discussion.

This discussion invites students to consider how titles and language can be a powerful tool to an artist. Discuss in a group using these questions as a guide -

Do we think titles are important to the reading of an artwork?

How can a title of an artwork convey a mood or idea?

Can we think of how a title might provoke different responses from a viewer?

At this stage of the project, we will look at creating a text artwork, drawing on Traveller language to celebrate Traveller culture.

Can we think of any artworks that use text?

What does the text do in the reading of the artwork?

How does it contrast with visual messages?

Is a message in visuals or in text more powerful?

Research.

Students should consider words and messages to support and celebrate Traveller culture. Once you have identified these words and messages, students can research the Traveller language Cant, to find translations.

Cant is a creole language developed by Travellers from Irish, Scots Gaelic, and English-speaking backgrounds. Creole languages are generally derived from pidgin versions of the language spoken by the larger population.

Among Travellers Cant is known as the Gammon, and as Shelta to academics. The number of speakers in Ireland is said to be about 6,000, believed to be made up mainly of Travellers who had originally been Irish speakers.

Project.

Stage 2 (continued)

Stencilling.

Students will create a stencil of a word or message in Cant that demonstrates their support for the Traveller community.

You will need a cutting matt, A4/A3 piece of strong card, craft knife, pencil and steel ruler.

Consider the font you plan to use. How will this represent your word or message?

Before you begin to draw your letters, measure everything out so the word or sentence will fit neatly on your piece of card. Plan out which parts of your design will be cut out and which will be kept.

Using your cutting matt, steel ruler and craft knife cut out your stencil.

Taking a large roll of paper, students will work together to paint/colour their stencils to create a collaborative text artwork that can be displayed in the classroom.

Project.

Stage 3

Discussion and research.

This final stage of the project will invite students to consider all they have learned about Traveller culture and history. This will be an opportunity to demonstrate support for the community and to recognize and celebrate their heritage.

Students should research both the historical and contemporary position of the Traveller community in Irish society. They should look at the racism, discrimination and daily challenges that the community face. What changes are being made to ensure the Traveller community feel supported and that their contributions to society are recognised and celebrated?

Students should share with the group their research findings in a moderated discussion.

Mixed Media

Taking inspiration from Leanne McDonagh, students will combine mediums to create a mixed media artwork. Your mixed media artwork will communicate a message of support for the Traveller community, celebrating the heritage of the community and their contributions to Irish life.

Take an A3 sheet of strong card (or canvas board), use your photography (stage 1) as the backdrop for your artwork. Combine, crop and assemble the photographs on your card. Consider the colours you use. Cut out coloured paper or paint sections out. Take your stencil and begin to layer your message/word on top of the photos. Make additional stencils (various sizes) if required. Feel free to add handwriting, found images and drawings to create a dynamic artwork.

Project.

Stage 3 (continued)

Traveller Ally and Proud Exhibition

Take this opportunity to demonstrate your school's support for the Traveller community. That your school is an ally of the community and proud of it. Look at the calendar and pick a suitable date (i.e. Recognition of Travellers as an Ethnic Minority March 1st, World Day for Cultural Diversity May 21st, or Traveller Pride Week) for a school exhibition. This will be an opportunity to exhibit the mixed media artworks.

What to consider –

Location – where will your exhibition be - school hall, corridor, assembly, or perhaps in a nearby community centre, or library.

Title – what is your exhibition title, this should be short, catchy and give the audience an understanding of what the exhibition is about.

Display – your location will dictate what is possible but look online at exhibitions and the way artworks are hung. Will you hang the artworks in a grid, a row or salon-style?

Mediation – You should consider providing a short text on the exhibition, so the audience understand the artists motivations. Perhaps, you can record an audio piece explaining the exhibition that people can access on the school website.

Promotion – Let people know about your exhibition. Invite someone to speak at the opening. Invite members of the Traveller community. Send a press release to local press outlets. Promote via the schools' social media.

For support and advice with arranging your exhibition, please contact education@glucksman.org

Discover more.

Leanne McDonagh -
<https://leannemcdonaghart.com/>

New Light Exhibition -
<https://www.glucksman.org/exhibitions/newlight>

Pavee Point - <https://www.paveepoint.ie/>

Irish Traveller Movement - <https://itmtrav.ie/>

Yellow Flag Programme - <https://yellowflag.ie/>

NCCA Curriculum Audit -
https://ncca.ie/media/4324/ncca_draftaudit_traveller_culturehistory_0919.pdf

In Other Words – short video on Cant -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxkkOSvg_Ys

Roads from the Past – short film on the history of Travellers -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bhBbMrF8Z0>

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