

HANDS OF HISTORY +20



A SERIES
OF ARTWORKS BY
RAYMOND WATSON



EXHIBITION SPONSORED BY



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



EXHIBITION ALSO KINDLY SPONSORED BY Patrick Gaul

HOSTED BY



CURATED BY



THANKS TO

Dara Watson (harpist)
Sagit Mezamer (photography and advice)

A SERIES OF ARTWORKS
MARKING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BELFAST/GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT
BY **RAYMOND WATSON**

VICTORIA
GALLERY & MUSEUM
LIVERPOOL

10.03.18 - 21.04.18

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm



THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement was the seminal event in the peace process in Northern Ireland. It was an agreement voted for by the people of Ireland – North and South. It spoke to the values of parity of esteem and mutual respect, and through law enshrined the rights of citizenship and national identity. The Agreement has shifted Northern Ireland out of armed conflict and into a society in which new relationships are imaginable and increasingly plausible. Twenty years later we celebrate the capacity of the people to support and develop new relationships with each other. Despite evident issues that remain, The Good Friday Agreement has led to many to commit to reconciliation and in so doing create a legacy of mutual consent.

The Agreement is not a settlement but instead the structure upon which we alter and adapt our constitutional preferences to respond to the need to embed and build upon democracy. It is ultimately the people's process and it is up to them and all of us to develop creative and inspired leadership for the future.

It was agreed on Good Friday (10th April) 1998.

RAYMOND WATSON



Raymond Watson is an artist who creates public artwork, gallery based work and installation work. His practice is diverse and hybrid, including site-specific installations, using site specific objects, alongside personal items and photography. He works with a wide range of materials in order to visualise the themes he wishes to explore.

In this exhibition he uses found historical artefacts and digital technology alongside contemporary sculpture.

Raymond has been involved in a number of high-profile projects, and has exhibited widely at home and across the globe, having exhibited in New York, France, Spain, India, England, Holland and the Basque Country.

2011

**THE BELFAST
FLAGS OF HOPE**

A massive community exhibition at the peace wall in Belfast.

2013

THE BRIGHTER HOARD

An exhibition of sculpture and painting for UK City of Culture, Derry.

2014

**ARTIFARTI
FESTIVAL**

Workshops in Western Sahara, Africa.

2015

KIDS GUERNICA

Artwork displayed at the Hiroshima commemoration and other important sites in Japan.

2016

**“THE CELL
WAS MY CANVAS”**

His book ‘The Cell was my Canvas’ (2013) was translated and published in Germany.



HANDS CAST FOR ORIGINAL
GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT
SCULPTURE INCLUDE THOSE OF:

GERRY ADAMS Sinn Féin

MALACHI CURRAN Northern Ireland Labour Party

DAVID ERVINE Progressive Unionist Party

JOHN HUME Social Democratic and Labour Party

GARY MCMICHAEL Ulster Democratic Party

MONICA MCWILLIAMS Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

MO MOWLAM Northern Ireland Secretary of State, UK Government

SEÁN NEESON Alliance Party

DAVID TRIMBLE Ulster Unionist Party

THE HANDS OF HISTORY

Shortly after the signing of The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, artist Raymond Watson managed to persuade the Northern Irish political leaders involved in negotiating the Agreement (some of whom are now deceased) to allow him to take a cast of their hands, which he later cast in bronze to create a unique sculpture entitled 'Hands of History'.

Raymond's 'Hands of History' is an important, significant and truly unique artwork that captures a momentous and historic event in Irish history.

For the twentieth anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement, Raymond has created new art work and hand casts. This recent work is accompanied by a re-enactment of the original Good Friday exhibition.

The original hands are shown alongside additional new hands of those political and international figures who have been instrumental in helping to build the peace over the last twenty years.

OF THE +20 NEW HANDS CASTS
THE SELECTION THAT ARE PRESENTED
IN THIS EXHIBITION INCLUDE:

BERTIE AHERN Irish Taoiseach

DAVID ANDREWS Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs

TONY BLAIR British Prime Minister

BERNIE MCGUINNESS Widow of Martin McGuinness

LORD CHRIS PATTEN Chair of Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland

THE INSTITUTE OF IRISH STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

The Institute is a recognised world-wide leader in teaching and research into peace, conflict and social justice. Professor Emerita Marianne Elliott (OBE) through her work with the Opsahl Commission provided an opportunity for civic society and political parties to speak at the beginning of an emergent peace process. In inheriting that leadership the Institute remains committed to hosting and supporting difficult conversations between communities harmed by conflict and strive through research and outreach to build new relationships that transcend adversarial identities.

Professor Pete Shirlow, Director, The Institute of Irish Studies, has worked on a range of projects that has included capacity building projects, social justice recognition and delivery and the challenge to sectarian asperity. The Institute's commitment to reconciliation is absolute and was recently recognised by HRH The Prince of Wales and President of Ireland, HE Michael D. Higgins, who agreed to be joint patrons of the Institute. This exhibition is driven by the desire to celebrate peace-building in Ireland North and South and between these islands.

VICTORIA GALLERY & MUSEUM LIVERPOOL

As a central part of Liverpool's Year as European Capital of Culture in 2008, the Victoria Building was renovated and transformed into the Victoria Gallery & Museum. Today the building showcases works from notable artists in the collection such as Elisabeth Frink and J.M.W. Turner alongside historical artefacts from The University of Liverpool's long history and contemporary art works.

ARTISANN GALLERY BELFAST

The ArtisAnn is a contemporary art gallery situated on Bloomfield Avenue in Belfast. It showcases the work of both emerging and established artists, as well as running exhibitions and events across Northern Ireland and further afield.

One of the owners, Ken Bartley, was previously Information Manager for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and helped establish a digital archive of art related to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.



Stormont Parliament Buildings

The bronze hands for the original Good Friday sculpture and the new hands are mounted on bases cut from Mourne Granite, the same material that forms the steps to Stormont Parliament Buildings in Belfast. The use of a granite stone reflects the fact that in ancient times there was a sense of immense power and permanency about a large rough shaped rock. In mythology, and in the contemporary era, people, chieftains and monarchs touched or sat on a stone to pledge a better future. This centrepiece will be accompanied by other sculptures, paintings, prints and three important new audio visual installations reflecting the search for peace and its wider context over the last twenty years.



Emergency Orders



Liberty Key



The Grappling Hook

The three new installations combine genuine historical items with digital technology to produce immersive, thought provoking artworks.

The artefacts are: an actual grappling hook made by prisoners at Long Kesh/Maze prison in the 1970s which is brought to Belfast's peace wall, dividing line; the keys from the cells and buildings at Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast; combined with an audio memoir presentation by the artist.



Raymond Watson at the Peace Wall with the Grappling Hook

“GRAPPLING HOOK” – VIDEO INSTALLATION

The ‘Grappling Hook’ installation makes use of an original prisoner-made grappling hook from the internment period of the early 1970s. The installation shows the hook and an attached rope being thrown over the top of the Belfast Peace Wall in an effort to escape from the ideological prison of one political culture. On the other side, however, is another ideological cultural prison that also compels the need to escape. The struggle with the wall, the hook and cultural confinement is explored.

“KEYS”

– AUDIO INSTALLATION

This installation constricts the audience into a small space that contains the actual keys that were used in the running of Crumlin Road Gaol. Combined with audio this work examines the notion of imprisonment. The work combines actual historical artefacts with contemporary art pieces encouraging the audience to examine the ideas around the themes of imprisonment/confinement and freedom/release.



A Bunch of Crumlin Road Prison Keys



RAYMOND WATSON

thehandsofhistory.com

INSTITUTE OF IRISH STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

liverpool.ac.uk/irish-studies

VICTORIA GALLERY & MUSEUM, LIVERPOOL

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ARTISANN GALLERY, BELFAST

artisann.org

For artwork sales enquiries please contact ArtisAnn Gallery
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