

Bernie Masterson

Invocation

14 November – 20 December

Bernie Masterson comes from a painting background but more recently uses moving images, stills, text, and sound to create a multi-layered meaningful form of expression depending on the subject matter and the kind of statement she wishes to make. She uses a variety of media to explore highly personal and emotional areas, following in the tradition of artists like Gillian Wearing and Kikki Smith whose works challenge our perception of the human condition both socially and politically. This work evolved as her personal response to real life stories heard during the course of her involvement within the Irish Prison Education Service as artist / teacher in residence over a long period of time.

Some of the prisoners were adult victims of abuse who provided testimonies of their experiences as children placed in these institutions. In the year 2000 the Irish Government commissioned a study more commonly known as the Ryan Report, which took nine years to complete and drew on the testimonies from individuals and officials, from more than 250 church and state run institutions. The commission found that thousands of children had been terrorised for decades and that government inspectors had failed to stop the chronic practice and humiliations. It is therefore not surprising that some of these victims found it difficult to integrate with society as adults and that some ended up in prison. ¹

Invocation engages the civic imagination in a critical way and presents the idea that in thinking of the ruined and scarred lives, there is an onus on us to take account, as individuals, as communities, and as a society. Masterson aims to capture and present some nucleus that allows us to re-visit, recollect and learn from the past. These works portray a fragile and vulnerable human presence, in which we become both victim and onlooker. A paradox is created.

Masterson was born in Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland. She graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design in the 80's, and has exhibited widely both at home and abroad. Exhibitions for 2014 include *Weather*, at the Draiocht Art Centre and Fermanagh Visual Arts Open, Enniskillen. She lives and works in Dublin.

Reference

Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2009) Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse. 2009 Implementation Plan. Dublin: The Stationery Office