

Invocation - A potential space for reconciliation

TCA as a participatory arts organisation works with individual people and communities across South Dublin supporting each person to realise the potential of their own creativity and to derive pleasure and wonder from their own artistic work and the way it can connect them to their peers or their wider community. We continually seek to balance an active participation in the creative process with the opportunity for our participants to gain insight into the work of exceptional artists. Bernie Masterson is one such artist. She combines the finesse of a professional life of an artist with a socially engaged practise via her teaching.

The idea that art can be an effective tool for social change is in itself still an unusual concept for many people. However artists can be a catalyst for 'one of the hardest tasks of our modern and individualistic societies: to renew the link between community and individuals, by defining a new paradigm in which every individual feels responsible for the community and for 'the other.' ¹

When I was approached with the idea of INVOCATION I realised that this was a rare opportunity for us to possibly contribute to the national debate on how we come to terms as individuals and as a society with the historical abuse of children sanctioned by church and state in the last century. The exhibition encourages people to imagine a future that is distinct from the past. A sense of powerlessness is translated into a belief that 'I am' capable of making change.

INVOCATION quietly challenges and transforms traditional notions of self and community that historically prevented people from taking action on behalf of those who were suffering.

The small 'pilgrimage' between the the gallery and the oratory creates a opportunity to imagine a space for remembrance and reconciliation. Charles Villa-Vicencio (National Research Director for the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission) intimately involved in the historic process following the collapse of apartheid warns against reducing the process of reconciliation to a neat set of rules.

"There are no simple "how to" steps involved. It includes serendipity, imagination, risk and the exploration of what it means to "start again". It involves grace. It is a celebration of the human spirit. It is about making what seems impossible possible. It is about the complex business of real people engaging one another in the quest for life. It is an art rather than a science." ²

INVOCATION invites us to find an individual and collective response to imagine a new space where we do feel responsible for 'the other'.

Tony Fegan, Artistic Director Tallaght Community Arts.

References

- 1 Mia Kjaergaard, Amy Larson, Lionel Rigobert HIA – Humanity in Action2.Villa-Vicencio, C. (2001)
- 2 "Reconciliation as metaphor". Retrieved from <http://www.ijr.org>