

Problematic Actions...

What brought me to this point, this place? A small island in the Atlantic, off the coast of Ireland - the country where I now live - displaced from the UK, where I lived for most of my life, due to problematic actions of its government, resulting in the displacement of that country from its cultural and geopolitical home in Europe. Displaced before that from the country of my birth (Israel) as a result of problematic actions of its government, displaced at a familial and ancestral level from the diasporic lands of my foremothers in Baltic Europe and Russia by more problematic actions...

Historical complexities combine, reflect and multiply - Ireland: a divided island on the edge of Europe, - similar but different to Cyprus - their respective histories of division having diverged over the twenty two years since the Belfast Agreement, that hard-won peace, now under threat again from problematic actions of its immediate neighbour. Yet Ireland's culture, values and identity are inherently, inextricably European, interconnected through centuries of maritime trade and cultural exchange.

The Irish language, one key to understanding this, is one of the reasons I'm here - looking at the relationship of language to renewal, invigoration, an arena for new cultural discourse - and also as a lens through which to understand past and present, to refract the distilled knowledge of countless generations and locate it within a place.

This Must be The Place...

As I write, and carve, on this island, chipping away at the bedrock, trying to reinsert stone tablets that I have extracted from offshore outcrops of Old Devonian Sandstone, the ongoing act of learning the Irish language has become an act of interpretation and re-location; reinserting myself in another land, another society, trying to make sense of the displacement, to understand a history and culture which I think may be porous enough, open enough to outsiders, to value alternative perspectives, to exchange ideas in gentle and respectful dialogue...

This is How...

Exploration > location > excavation > translation > language materialisation > incision > incavation

Lettercutting in stone is a slow process, painstaking, deliberate. It requires forethought, care, attention to detail and precision. It requires sensitivity to language, to material, to matter, to matters of the heart, and mind, and land; to generations of accumulation and accretion of stories, of lives. So here I am, chipping away, incising myself, a conduit between old and new, a place between here and there, between then and now, idir Bearla agus Gaeilge...

So tell me...

...Cape Clear / Tell me...

...Inir Thom / Inir Cléire...