



www.bogsideartists.com

## WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE MURALS....

Below are some of the many testimonials received by **The Bogside Artists** each year. Numerous internet pages have been devoted to their work. Not included are the myriad articles and reports that find their way to magazines and newspapers all over the world. The Bogside Artists occupy pride of place in this year's edition of Lonely Planet Ireland. One of the most interesting articles appeared recently in the number one art magazine of Australasia – **Art Monthly (no.203)**. In a six page article, author **Chris Holmes** had this to say:

*The Bogside Artists, Tom, Will and Kevin, never intended to create a tourist attraction, but The People's Gallery has become an essential part of any traveller's itinerary in Derry. The seventeenth century city walls are promoted by the Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau as the major tourist draw, with the Bogside murals as something of a sideshow. This desire to show the city in a positive historical light ignores the fact that the troubled recent history of Derry is itself a source of international interest.....The Bogside Artists have helped to shift the perception of public art and beyond.*

---

The Bogside murals are the most popular murals in Northern Ireland, and the most prominent political murals in the world.

Author, [www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

---

The contribution made by the Bogside Artists in recording the events of the last thirty years through their wall murals cannot be overstated. The artistic creativity and clarity of their message is to be commended.

*Gerry Adams, MLA, MP.*

---

I am amazed at the outstanding quality of this artwork.

*John Hume, MLA, MP Nobel Peace Laureate.*

---

The work of the Bogside Artists is remarkable ... a vibrant response to events still vivid in the psyche of the community.

*Brian Friel, world-renowned playwright and author.*

---

"The marvelous work of the artists has enhanced the historic and artistic appeal of the area and contributes to the growing sense of pride which Derry people hold for the role they have played in the events that reverberated around the world three decades ago."

*Mary Nelis, Derry City councillor.*

---

"The work provides a window into the heart of the Bogside and for that we must be truly grateful to the three artists."

*Prof. Raymond Helmick, world-renowned peace negotiator who opened the show of The Bogside Artists' work in Boston.*

---

"When looking at the murals one can see that there is hope if justice can really be done in relation to the events of Bloody Sunday. Not only is the Art itself a reflection of experience and feeling but it addresses forcibly the times in which the artists themselves have lived. I find

myself responding to the overpowering message of the murals: Here is our story."

*Prof: Peter Sheehan, Provost of The Australian Catholic University Sydney, Australia.*

---

"In my five years in the building I have never seen so many people so excited by an art exhibition. We actually had senators and representatives asking to have the duration of the exhibition extended."

*Senator Steven Tolman, host of the exhibition in the BOSTON STATE HOUSE, MA, USA.*

---

"I am aware of the work of the Bogside Artists and your reputation for providing a vital and distinctive identity to that area of Northern Ireland."

*Deborah Lely, minister for the arts, NSW, Australia.*

---

These images do not convey a message that could be summarized in a single statement. They are not propagandist images. They honour the people featured and they write the past into the landscapes.

*Malachi O'Doherty of The Irish Times.*

---

There is definitely something special about these murals as there is simply nothing like them anywhere else in the world.

*Student, Hannah Orrock, Australia.*

---

The Bogside Artists are sharing their history and art with people around the world.

---

*Laurie Callahan, Marymount University.*

---

Their works is a worthy record of the people's struggle for social justice and civil rights.

*Ian Hunter, Director of Projects Environment.*

---

The Bogside murals are the most popular murals in Northern Ireland, and the most prominent political murals in the world.

*Author of ... atuk.co.uk.*

---

The works are a moving testament to the power of art as historical document; the importance of documentation within the history of art, and the power of art within society; a creative process that situates the past as something we must acknowledge within the present, and from which we can draw strength.

*Author of ... irishsocieties.org.*

---

"The Bogside now has an attraction that rivals the city walls".

*Ex-mayor, Gerry O'Hara*

---

Their murals expressed the fears and memories of the people and, in so doing, assisted them in their struggle for human and civil rights, for peace and for justice.

*Eoin Murray writer and human rights activist based in Gaza.*

---

Among the world's most famous muralists are Diego Rivera, David Álfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, The Bogside Artists and Gert Neuhaus.

*Melanie Phillips, artist, Wales.*

---

Extract from Georgia University homepage announcing their exhibition of the work of The Bogside Artists

**“A Spectacular Educational Exhibit”**

*Imagine the visual impact in a museum or gallery of ten 6' X 9' hangings: state-of-the-art reproductions on fabric of the giant political and peace murals painted since 1993 by Northern Ireland's The Bogside Artists..... These three gifted friends—Kevin Hasson and brothers Tom and William Kelly—have created their internationally acclaimed works of social art on sides of buildings along Rossville Street in their native Bogside. Although this exhibit centers on the aesthetically breathtaking paintings of The Bogside Artists, the extensively illustrated materials that accompany it reveal and analyze the greater history of Northern Irish murals.*

---

Dear Tom, Will, Kevin,

I sincerely thank you for your prompt response to my questions. I found your response to be most helpful for my project! I admire the effort and talent, often unrecognized and sometimes unappreciated, that goes into your work. I am honoured that such world renowned artists such as yourselves have taken the time to reply to me.

Wishing you all the best in telling the story.

*Chris Nelson.*

---

Dear The Bogside Artists

I was fortunate enough to visit Derry this past weekend. I was taking my girlfriend back to her parent's home in Donegal. Having never visited any part of Ireland, I was keen to see some 'tourist' sites, such as the Giant's Causeway, but she insisted we go into Derry, and while there, go to Bogside.

I have to admit, I was nervous going there, being English (and kind-of Protestant). I have grown up with the negative/biased reports of Irish Republicanism on the news and live near Manchester and Warrington, both bombed when I was in my early 20s. My fears, of course, were unjustified.

Your murals are not only pieces of social history but are by far the most moving pieces of art I have seen. I do not know if it is the sheer scale of them, the subject matter, or what they represent, but they certainly struck a chord with me and made me wish I had brought a camera to share the experience with others. Fortunately, I found your website, so now I can. So, thank you for a truly memorable experience.

*John Reynolds*

---

Dear Tom, Will and Kevin

On 31st August I visited your studio with a group from the Diocese of Durham. I was totally captivated by your work and by the things you had to say. I was especially interested in what you had to say about finding a new vocabulary for mission and reconciliation. Words that hadn't been used on either side of the sectarian divide. I was hoping to find out some more about that and wonder if you could help me as despite a lot of searching I haven't been able to find anything. Also, was hoping to gain your permission to use some of your material in a presentation to the ministry team at my church to give them a flavour of the work you have been doing. I would like to put some of your pictures onto a PowerPoint presentation if you are in agreement.

Although on the day I did feel like a tourist and as though I was somehow intruding into your hurt and pain (somehow it seemed OK that it poured down on us), I have gained so much by coming and listening to your story and it will have a lasting effect on me. Thank you.

*Sue Bruce, St Andrew's Church, Darlington, Co Durham*

---

Hi, Tom, Will and Kev,

I just wanted to say that the Bogside Murals changed my life. I was in Northern Ireland for a month in the summer of 1998. They were so powerful and struck my soul. Even returning to America I still have Northern Ireland and Derry close to my heart. And I'm always trying to find ways of getting involved one way or another.

*Heather Thornton*

---

Hello The Bogside Artists,

I think we may have found our focus at last. I just saw your last mural on the Cain website, a work of awful beauty, I feel immensely chuffed to have seen it in production and laughed like a kid reading the 'pen-pic' in the latest newsletter. What on earth are you doing now the murals are done? Thanks for the ongoing inspiration; public/community art is the only valid way to do it. God alone knows how many people have had your manifesto passed on to them!

*Alan Kelly, Wales.*

---

Dear All

I was privileged to be one of the 'North East Institute for Theological Education' students who visited you with Terry Hogg last week. Thank you so much for taking the time to share your story with us in the

pouring rain! Your stories had a profound effect on me and I look forward to getting more information from your newsletter. I would like to assure you once again of my prayers. With love and peace.

*Sylvia Wilson - North Yorkshire*

---

Hi, Tom, Kevin and William,

During my third trip to Ireland, I finally visited Derry. With some friends from the area, I went to the Bogside and was overwhelmed by your artwork. The placement of the Hunger Strikers' memorial was especially poignant, as it was surrounded by your powerful statements of art. I was so moved by this work. While my trip was back in June, I just this morning found the website that showcases more of your work. It remains powerful. Thank you, thank you. That you have used your God-given talents to tell the world these stories is truly amazing.

*Peace, Helen Mackey Lehman, Irish American*

---

Hello,

Last year I was visiting Derry with a knowledgeable friend from Belfast and was deeply moved. I fell hard for the city of Derry, particularly the Bogside. The murals are stunning and profound. They spoke so loudly to me that I never took a single photograph while in Derry (those who know what I get out of photographing things that move me are still marveling). I should admit that we did walk a bit on the stupid wall which was needless to say sick and boring. There was no spirit there and my friend was merely being politely thorough.

I would like to comment that I think your newsletter is the most intelligent, witty, cogent, and heartfelt newsletter that I have ever read. With your permission I would like to copy it and distribute it to the folks in my peace group here in the states, perhaps along with a pre drafted letter to the 'wicked brains' that be, that my friends can sign

and send with me when I return to Derry this August. Perhaps you already have a draft like this? I will be in Belfast from the 1st through the 18th on holiday and enjoying the film, and in Derry from the 15th to the 17th, and am wondering if it would be possible to visit the studio at that time. Until then and always, my best thoughts and wishes are with you.

*Warmly, Kim Garrett.*

---

Hello!

Thank you so much for meeting me while I was in Derry. I enjoyed our conversation tremendously. I hope that your time with the Smithsonian festival in DC was very good. I will try to find out more about your exhibition that will be in the States in the autumn. Thanks again.

*Take care, Laura.*

Hey there,

First of all, understand that I'm just a fella from Coleraine who doesn't take either side with regards to the divide in our wee part of the island, and just long for a lasting peace between both sides regardless of how it's done. I just wanted to e-mail and tell you that I'm impressed with your work. I was wondering, how do you work on such a large scale? I'm also an artist but couldn't imagine working on such a large scale as yourselves. Would be good to hear from you,

*Dave McElfrick.*

---

The Bogside murals are splendid examples of original, popular and imaginative political art of the period and deservedly attract great interest from tourists and locals alike.

*The Guildhall Press.*

---

Thanks a million for your answers. They helped me a lot! And I forgot to mention that I LOVE your work and I show it to the people here in Brazil and they got really impressed. Hope you can receive more support and continue doing these valuable art works.

*Laura Aguiar, Brazil.*

---

I did not know who was behind the murals, and I guess I still truly don't or what went into them, but I can tell you this- no photograph will ever represent the feeling I had by actually seeing them in person. We took pictures of every single one of them that was completed in March 2006. I don't think I will ever forget the tumultuous feeling at the pit of my stomach of what Derry has gone through for something most people take for granted. It seems so permanently divided, inside the walls and then outside. It felt like the things on the inside were just a facade for the problems underneath after going up and down nearly every street. I will never forget walking up the 10,000 little steps from the murals to the inner city, avoiding the broken glass and vomit of yesterday and today's seemingly troubled youths that couldn't have been kinder at heart or in conversation with us. I am not an art critic, or a writer for a magazine. I am just a person you helped tell a city's story to, and I just wanted to thank you for it.

*M. Fetters, Dallas Texas.*

---

Tom Kelly explained how he, along with his brother, William, and his best friend, Kevin Hasson, set out to represent the suffering of the Bogside people during the Troubles in a non-propagandistic manner in order to show the cost in human suffering that the conflict was bringing to their community. He spoke with passion and compassion, honesty and humour, but most of all, with great integrity - the integrity of the witness to horrible suffering who is also a survivor and who has dedicated himself to speaking plainly and justly on behalf of his

community, explaining their pain, their courage, and their right to justice. This lecture was a very special event at CAIS.

*Denis Noël Sound & Moving Images Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Canada.*

---

So, I most definitely did not expect what I got from three working-class guys in Londonderry. They call themselves the Bogside Artists - and during 10 years they have painted a series of murals that recall the painful moments of the past, in the area that is famous the world over. Derry for years was the crucible of the Troubles. But in 1994, those three guys, who grew up during the 30 years of those Troubles, and who happened to have a gift for art, started a project. They probably did not realise then the full scale of what they were beginning, but they painted on those gable walls the things that had hurt, moved and angered them.

*Denis Murray, BBC Northern Ireland.*

---

The Bogside Artists illustrate the power of a constructive voice. Their work has not only inspired me as an artist, but more importantly has inspired me to become a better human being. Thanks a million.

*Respectfully, Allison Elizabeth Tardif Senior Photography Major, Savannah College of Art and Design.*

---

End.