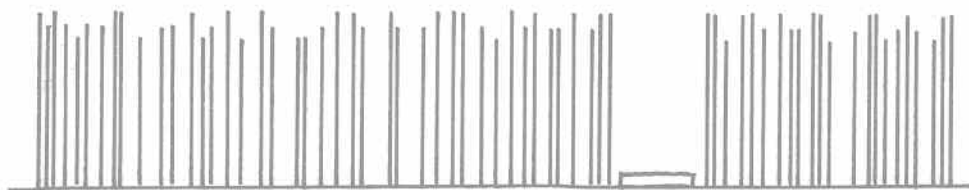


DONALD URQUHART LINES/PLANE : LARUS/CYGNUS

Stainless steel and cast concrete, 4,5 x 25 x 2 metres



The redevelopment of John F Kennedy Parade has added to the revitalisation and enhancement of the town centre and provides a place of relaxation and rest. Lines Plane : Larus Cygnus sits quietly within this environment.

I feel Sligo Borough Council's decision to place the work at this strategic location will prove a popular one. On behalf of the people of Sligo, I want to pay tribute to artist Donald Urquhart, who has been awarded numerous commissions, exhibitions and awards for his outstanding work.

Councillor Declan Bree
Mayor

I want to commend everyone associated with commissioning and producing this very special work of art. The members of the working group who selected the work were Councillor Joe Leonard, Catherine Marshall, Sean Martin, Siobhan Ryan and Suzanne Woods. This artwork involved a significant team effort on the part of the staff from Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council. Credit is also due to Mr Pat Doyle, Project Engineer, and his team at Sligo & Environs Water Supply Project, and to Michael Higgins who facilitated the placement of the work.

Councillor Maragret Gormley
Cathaoirleach

To mark the major investment and improvement in the quality and supply of water to the city of Sligo and its' environs this artistic feature Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus was commissioned by Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council and funded under the Per Cent for Art Scheme by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The competition brief to the artists was to propose a work surrounding water ecology. A contributing criteria for short-listing the Artist was his/her demonstrated interest in environmental/ecological life and related contemporary issues.

The proposal made by Donald Urquhart to the Working Group was selected on the strength of his response to the topography of the town with its close configuration to coast, river and lough.







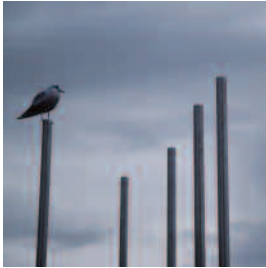
Metaphysical Mapping Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus Gavin Morrison

THE GARAVOGUE River flows from Lough Gill into Sligo Bay. It dissects the town of Sligo, where 55 vertical stainless steel poles and a concrete plinth have recently been placed within the river's flow. These items constitute the material elements of the public artwork, Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus, by the artist Donald Urquhart. Their stringently artificial presence displays a poetic simplicity and one could be forgiven for interpreting this work in a purely formal manner. Yet there is a benevolent functionality that activates and, in-turn, integrates the work dialogically with its locality and its wider place in the world. The rods, 'Lines', invite gulls, 'Larus', and other birds to perch upon them and the concrete plinth, 'Plane', has been designed for swans, 'Cygnus', to nest on.

Stepping back from this piece specifically, it is revealing to note the centrality which drawing occupies within Donald Urquhart's work. This is not always lines on paper but often exists as marks, gestures and elements actively placed within a landscape. And in relation to Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus Urquhart talks in these terms too: the vertical elements are, for him, literally lines drawn in space. But it could be maintained that the work extends other drawn lines, further through space and time. While thinking about this work one can be carried away with the birds, so to speak. Thoughts continue on with them, contemplating their destinations after they have left Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus, and quickly a speculative map of the intersecting trajectories of their flight paths is generated in one's mind. Through such conjecture the work adopts another dimension, that of existing as an object of thought, an extrapolation from the material world. With this the work embraces a totality of the stratifications of place: moving from the specific to the speculative by route of the global. That is, the work focuses the particularities of the geography of Sligo which makes the area such a favourable environment for bird life, into a single place. This in-turn expands into the global context through the possibility of the birds continuing onto other distant locations. This engagement with the multifarious aspects of place allows a reflection upon their inter-relations and co-dependencies both from an environmental perspective but also a philosophical one. For 'place' is far more capricious than the pure rationality of space, within it is imbedded an investment of those that dwell there. And so Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus creates a subtle unification of places, that of the birds and the human spectators.

Within these layers of 'place', which Lines/Plane : Larus/Cygnus utilises and exists between, it is the position of the viewer which brings this potential to actuality. This then is the most primordial of 'places', that of the perceiver, the individuated self who infers that the summation of these parts constitutes a unified whole. And in effect the work reflects upon this fundamental place most acutely. In contemplating our constituting role in the creation of 'place' it becomes realised that there is a potential moral obligation too. For if we are the creators of place we must surely also be the guardians of them too.

GAVIN MORRISON



DONALD URQUHART LINES/PLANE : LARUS/CYGNUS

The Artist would like to express his thanks to Leo and Jean McGurrin

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