

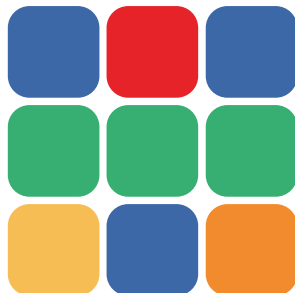
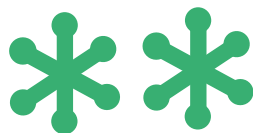
# STORIES



# BETWEEN

AN INTERGENERATIONAL  
PUBLIC ART PROJECT  
WITH JANINE DAVIDSON

# US





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# STORIES



# BETWEEN

# US



**JANINE DAVIDSON,  
ARTIST CURATOR**



***Stories Between Us* is an intergenerational public art project in partnership with the National Museum, Henrietta Street Adult Community Education, Phibsboro Active Retirement Association, St Gabriel's National School and '*...the lives we live*' Grangegorman Public Art.**

I had been resident artist with Phibsboro Active Retirement Association and with Henrietta St Adult Community Education for sixteen years. In 2017 I approached the Museum with the idea of *Stories Between Us*, at this point the Museum suggested St Gabriel's National School join the project. This inter-organisational and intergenerational project ran over a two year period and took place in a variety of locations from the classroom to the Museum.

*Stories Between Us* provided a space within which young and old could learn, share and listen to each others stories. Older people introduced the younger people to the games that they played in school, at home and amongst friends, some of which may be familiar to us all. These games provide a glimpse of childhood memory and street play. What struck me was how the street featured in so many of the games, the city was their playground.



We marvelled at the tall ship David made with his father from lolly pop sticks. David is the youngest of nine brothers and had kept the ship all these years. John told us about using a pig's bladder as a football when they were stuck for the real thing. Mary grew up at a time when Merrion Square was a private park and they could not afford to pay the £5 annual fee. She taught us skipping rhymes like, 'Vote, vote, vote for de Valera'. Seamus and Callum chatted about currently playing for Dingle United. Lenny, John and Pat recalled their boyhood winning formulas for conker matches. Stephen played the flute, Lorena created some manga drawings. Abdi shared his love for Harry Potter, while Michail Angelo, Iosif and William tried to explain Fortnite to the un-initiated. Mags showed us how to 'fill the gap', a weaving technique creating friendship bracelets that we all made.

We all looked forward to these gatherings with anticipation and a sense of curiosity about each other's thoughts and things. As the objects were passed around conversations multiplied and more memories were shared. In the handing over of these objects for exhibition at the Museum they went through a different, more technical process from documentation and freezing to cataloguing and presentation.

The personal objects selected by participants generated conversations. In *Stories Between Us* the object reveals the individual memory. When it is shared it becomes a collective experience that elicits other thoughts. These recorded conversations are a legacy of this project and join the archive of the Museum as a resource for future generations. A memory box of handling objects will be available as a resource within the local community for other groups to connect in a similar way.

Complex public art initiatives like *Stories Between Us* involve a huge amount of planning to deliver a meaningful intergenerational experience. The Museum has proven to be a place where people can feel at home and be openly creative.

**"We all looked forward to these gatherings with anticipation and a sense of curiosity about each other's thoughts and things. As the objects were passed around conversations multiplied and more memories were shared. The personal objects selected by participants generated conversations."**

— Janine Davidson, Artist Curator





# MAKING THE LOCAL NATIONAL



## THE MUSEUM AS A SPACE FOR COMMUNITIES

EDUCATION & OUTREACH  
TEAM, NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF IRELAND



**The *Stories Between Us* public art project highlights the key role that Museums play as cultural and creative spaces within their communities and wider society. Museums have the potential to enable the sharing, exchange and celebration of diverse histories, heritage and culture, not only through exploration of our collections but through participative projects such as *Stories Between Us*.**

*Stories Between Us* is an important initiative for the Museum in strengthening our existing relationships with St Gabriel's National School and the adult education groups working with artist Janine Davidson. We have collaborated closely with each of them over a number of years on a range of exciting history and arts projects. This is the first time they have come together to work collaboratively in an intergenerational project. It has also been a valuable opportunity for the Museum to collaborate with the Grangegorman Development Agency's Public Art team.

This participant-centred project has culminated in the *Stories Between Us* exhibition, situated within the Museum's decorative arts galleries. This vibrant exhibition displays

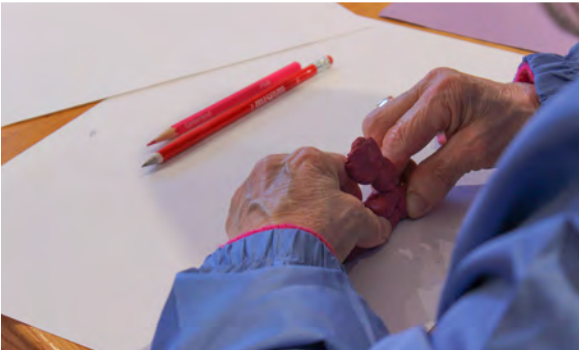


the project participants' donated objects on the themes of past times, recreation and play, along with their recorded oral histories on the theme. These oral accounts provide us with valuable social history and they will be added to the Museum's archives. The remaining key element of *Stories Between Us* is the Memory Boxes of objects to represent and inspire the telling of stories about Grangegorman and the local Dublin 7 area. Through the themes of 'Past Times' and the games we play, artist Janine Davidson encouraged both older and younger participants to share their stories and create these boxes of handling objects, reflecting their different perspectives.

This collaborative public art project has created lasting connections between the participants, and we look forward to seeing what might emerge in the future from this collaboration with older and younger people from our local communities, as they continue to explore local history and folklore through objects.

**"As an older adult it was pure joy working with the younger school children, teaching them the games we played like conkers, marbles and sharing experiences about our schooldays compared to their own. We had no computers or TV or mobile phones and yet they had great fun playing our games, it has been a great experience"**

— Peter, HACE



# BEYOND THE



# CLASSROOM



## THE VALUE OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS TO PUPIL LEARNING



**ANNA O'LOUGHLIN, HOME SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY LIAISON TEACHER,  
ST GABRIEL'S NATIONAL SCHOOL**



**St. Gabriel's National School was honoured to be chosen as the School Partner for the *Stories Between Us* project. We have had a long-standing, positive, collaborative relationship with the Museum.**

It was of huge benefit to our pupils to extend this relationship beyond the Museum to the adult education groups involved in the project. This type of learning is simply not available in an isolated school setting. Schools do not and cannot provide educational experiences such as this intergenerational, community public art project without strong and committed community partners. It has done more than merely “tick the boxes” in fulfilling curriculum learning for our pupils. It has given them a special and memorable experience of sharing and appreciating life's stories with people they would never otherwise have met.

**“I made four flowers and I also made a sun because, the sun is shining down on the flowers and that's what I felt the project was it helped me grow and talk about more things than I usually do.”**

— Student, St Gabriel's National School





# ACROSS THE



# GENERATIONS

## SHARED STORIES ON RECORD



**DR MARY MULDOWNEY, DUBLIN CITY  
COUNCIL HISTORIAN-IN-RESIDENCE,  
DUBLIN CENTRAL**

**One of the most valuable contributions that technology made to researching history was creating our capacity to record the voices of people who used to be considered only as statistics and to unearth their 'hidden histories'.**

*Stories Between Us* uses an oral history approach in a particularly innovative manner by bringing different generations together to talk about their games and pastimes and recording them in the process of sharing their memories.

The *Stories Between Us* project worked particularly well because the workshops that took place in advance of the recording sessions were based on the adults and the children playing games together and getting to know each other through their mutual enjoyment of the activities. The intergenerational approach built on the previous careful preparation of the different groups for their part in the project (the adults in the art groups led by Janine and the children in the secure environment of their school) so that when they came together in the National Museum at Collins Barracks there were no barriers to communication. The social history that emerged through this process will be preserved in the audio

and video recordings of the inter-generational encounters but also in the transcripts that will provide a valuable resource for research in the future, perhaps even by some of the young project participants.



# MEMORY BOX

9



13



18



20



1. Skipping Rope
2. Rubix Cube
3. Hand Balls
4. Rounders Bat and Ball
5. Warhammer Figures
6. Magnetic Spheres
7. Conkers
8. Uno Cards
9. Scraps for Scrapbook
10. Putty
11. Fill the Gap Weaving
12. Pencils & Paper
13. Poem (Psalm of life, Longfellow)
14. Poem (Alan Triduc)
15. Plasticine
16. Old Miniature Soldiers
17. Old Money
18. Playing Cards
19. Marbles
20. Chalk
21. Polish Tin for Hopscotch
22. Jacks

1



22



8



7



11



17



12



6



4



16



10



2



19



5



**THE ART**



**OF EDUCATION**

**IN A**



**CHANGING**

**WORLD**

**DR GARY GRANVILLE,  
EMERITUS PROFESSOR  
OF EDUCATION  
NCAD, DUBLIN**



**As communities change, so too do the processes of art that reflect those changes, contribute to them, shape them and sometimes even cause them. In this sense, the artist is an activist and educator as well as a creative agent.**

Art in this context is often described as 'socially engaged art'. In fact, the art is expressed in the act of education itself. This concept of education is not bound by our inherited experience of schools, of curriculum programmes, of examinations, certificates and credentials. A much richer understanding of education is involved, one that rejects the conventional and the familiar, one that seeks and celebrates uncertainty, contradiction and ambiguity. This is always a risky venture, almost invariably involving moments of frustration, of despair and rejection: the temptation is always to reach for the security of structures and systems – the conventional syllabus of organised learning. An artistic view of



education requires courage and confidence, and above all a belief in the artistic integrity of the collaborative practice.

As a socially engaged artist, Janine Davidson in this project works with Daughters of Charity Henrietta St Adult Education, (HACE), St Gabriel's National School, Phibsboro Active Retirement Association, National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks and Grangegorman Public Art initiative. The common education and creative focus of these groups provides a perfect home for Davidson's socially engaged practice. One of the leading advocates of this form of art practice has written that:

Traditional pedagogy fails to recognise three things: first, the creative performance of the act of education itself; second, the fact that the collective construction of an art milieu, with artworks and ideas, is a collective construction of knowledge; and third, the fact that knowledge of art does not end in knowing the artwork but is a tool for understanding the world (Helguera, 2011).

What Janine Davidson is presenting in *Stories Between Us* is a glimpse of that process at work in Grangegorman: the collective construction of knowledge, as a tool for understanding the world.

In looking at *Stories Between Us* as a participatory art project, this viewer is struck in particular by three recurring features, which the American writer Jessica Davis identifies as among the essential requirements of a real art experience. These recurring features are emotion, ambiguity and process.

The engagement with emotion is central to the participants. It comes through in the mutually balancing components of expression (this is how I feel) and empathy (this is how you feel) as they talk and present their work, the artefacts and items that have meaning for them in their 'memory boxes'.

Ambiguity is a delicate and frequently frightening feature of participatory practice. The different readings and nuanced meanings of work require a confidence in interpretation (what I think matters) and respect (what you think matters). The space given to the participants in this project, old and young, to recount their experiences and to listen to the experiences of others, is a real manifestation of that process of mutual respect.

The process orientation of *Stories Between Us* is most challenging. The making of the work may change the work itself introducing new ideas or random accidents. This is unnerving enough for

an individual artist working in her own studio – but when it is multiplied by the diverse confusion and puzzlement of many other participants, it requires a collective commitment to trust each other and to trust the artist in particular. This involves a constant process of inquiry (what do I want to know, how would I do this?) and reflection (how am I doing, what next?). In a collective enterprise such as this, the successful outcome is manifested through the visible process of engagement (I care about what I'm doing) and responsibility (I care about others).

In one of the rich conversations generated by the *Stories Between Us*, participants describe and recall games they play or used to play as a child. One older participant, who used to live close to Merrion Square, gives a mischievous account of how she and her mates would go into the National Gallery of Ireland and run through the central spine of that building, under the series of arches linking the display rooms: they would slide along the polished timber floors until they would eventually be chased out by the attendants. 'It was our playground as kids' she says, with fond memories and pride. There is a lovely symmetry in the fact that this conversation was being held on the premises of the National Museum, some decades later. Now instead

of being chased out of the building, her memories are honoured and she and her peers, as well as their schoolchildren colleagues, are welcomed to bring their 'play' into the Museum. And more importantly, through the work of the artist and her colleagues in this project, the world of the Museum is taken out from the building itself and embedded in the community.

**“The weaving is like the diversity of Ireland today, the younger generations from different cultures coming together and changing Ireland, it's going to be an interesting next 50 years.”**

— Michael, HACE



**BENEFITS**

**OF**

**INTER-**

**GENERATIONAL**



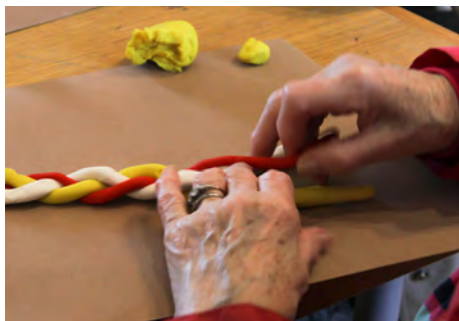
**LEARNING**



**DR CARMEL GALLAGHER  
LECTURER, SCHOOL OF  
LANGUAGES, LAW AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES, TU DUBLIN**

**Intergenerational learning (IGL) is the oldest form of learning in society and is central to social solidarity. Within families, we know that grandparents and grandchildren enrich each other's lives in myriad ways. However, IGL as a societal resource is little acknowledged in Irish society.**

There is growing social and cultural distance between age groups in contemporary western societies. For example, young children and older people spend more time in age-segregated settings and there are fewer opportunities for children and older people to have contact with each other in public spaces.



Planned intergenerational learning such as *Stories Between Us* brings together people from different generations to share knowledge, skills, values and have fun together. It is about learning together, learning from each other and learning about each other.

Among the benefits identified in research on IGL in Ireland (are different age and social groups





becoming more visible to each other; children bringing joy and energy to the lives of older people; older people passing on knowledge, skills and traditions; older people giving calm attention and encouragement to children and young people; awareness of difference and growth of empathy; expanding social networks to create multigenerational connections in a community.

IGL is an innovative approach to learning and promotes life-long and life-wide learning. Children and older people become more active in their own learning through planning and reviewing the activities. Successful IGL programmes involve shared activities such as art, music, drama, gardening and story-telling. It can take place in cooperation between a pre-school/primary school/youth setting and a nursing home/day centre/club. Shared spaces such as libraries, museums, community/youth centres or community gardens offer good possibilities for IGL.

TU Dublin were fortunate to be Irish partners with the recent international 'Together Old and Young' (TOY) initiative which has developed resources including a free online course for people wishing to develop intergenerational practice ([www.toyproject.net](http://www.toyproject.net)).

Further information is available from [carmel.gallagher@dit.ie](mailto:carmel.gallagher@dit.ie) and [anne.fitzpatrick@dit.ie](mailto:anne.fitzpatrick@dit.ie)

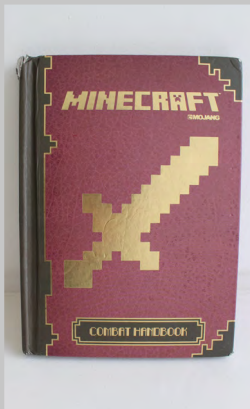
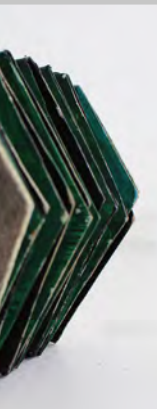
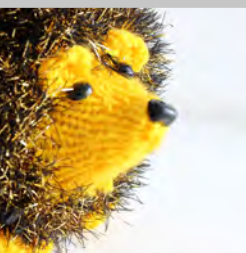
**“It’s a win-win situation – the benefits of intergenerational learning for all ages”**

— Dr Carmel Gallagher









# PARTICIPANTS & OBJECTS

PARTICIPANT NAME	OBJECT FOR DISPLAY
Abdirahman Calawi – 5th class	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix Novel
Alan Tretuic – 5th class	Rugby Book
Alastair Shaw – 6th class	Rubix Cube
Anda Rusti – 6th class	Photograph of Anda with her mother
Callum Kearney – 6th class	Football
Carlos Marcu – 5th class	Sports Medal
Daniel Wolfe – 6th class	Conkers
David King – HACE	Handmade Tall Ship
Dennis Pargaru – 6th class	Stress Putty
Eilis Moohan – HACE	Knitted Hedgehog
Elizabeth Hussey – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association	Crime Novel
Ellie Judge – 6th class	Warhammer Figurines
Emie Farrell – 5th class	Locket



<b>Eithne O'Toole – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Longfellow Poetry Book
<b>Fabian Gheorghe – 5th class</b>	UNO Cards
<b>Iosif Stefan – 5th class</b>	Xbox Controller
<b>Irina Pampareu – 6th class</b>	Stuffed Tot Rabbit
<b>John O'Flynn – HACE</b>	Handmade Paper & Tape Ball
<b>Josh Noonan – 5th class</b>	Dreamstones
<b>Leonard Dunne – HACE</b>	Handmade Paper & Tape Ball
<b>Lorena Ariesan – 6th class</b>	Two Pens & Drawing
<b>Mags Maxwell – HACE</b>	Miniature Concertina & Loom
<b>Marie Mills – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Penny, Ha'penny, Two Shilling, English Threepenny Bit & Coins
<b>Marta Stefan – 5th class</b>	Woven Braid
<b>Mary Cashin – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Scraps for a Scrapbook
<b>Mary Hayes – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Knitted Monkey

<b>Mary Judge – HACE</b>	Photograph of Stephens Green, Skipping Rope & Tennis Ball
<b>Maura Murphy – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Around The Boree Log, O'Brien Poetry Book
<b>Michael Kelly – HACE</b>	Mothers Bible
<b>Michail Angelo Pothitos – 5th class</b>	Minecraft Book
<b>Moira Ingle - HACE</b>	Photograph of a Rocking Horse
<b>Monica Larkin – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Father's Stool for Mending Shoes
<b>Pat Gately – HACE</b>	Oriental Bonsai Stone
<b>Peter Brannigan – HACE</b>	Photograph of Father in the Army
<b>Phillip Marcu – 5th class</b>	Draughts Set
<b>Raul Boz – 6th class</b>	Magnetic Spheres
<b>Seamus Mc Cabe Jones – 6th class</b>	Signed Football Boot
<b>Stephen Conroy – HACE</b>	Chess Set
<b>Teresa Toolan – Phibsboro Active Retirement Association</b>	Religious Service Cloth
<b>William Gajowski – 6th class</b>	

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all the project participants for sharing their stories.

## STORIES BETWEEN US PARTNERS

### Artist Curator

- Janine Davidson

### St Gabriel's National School

- Anna O'Loughlin, Home School Community Liaison Teacher
- Claire-Louise Sweetman
- Frances Hyland
- Mairéad Fahey
- Michael Donnelly
- Sharon Dillon
- Sharon Hewitt

### Phibsboro Active Retirement Association

Daughters of Charity,  
Henrietta St Adult Community  
Education (HACE)

### National Museum of Ireland Education & Outreach Team

- Aisling Dunne
- Edith Andrees
- Helen Beaumont
- Lorraine Comer

### Grangegorman Development Agency

- Grangegorman Public Art Working Group
- Jenny Haughton
- Lori Kieve
- Ronan Doyle

Dr Mary Muldowney, Dublin City  
Council Historian in Residence,  
Dublin Central

### Also from National Museum of Ireland

- David McKenna
- Greg Kelly
- Jennifer Keane
- Maureen Gaule
- Patrick Boyle

### Thanks to

- Dr Carmel Gallagher, TU Dublin
- Denise Byrne, Exhibition Mounts
- Dr Gary Granville, NCAD
- Martin Brennan, Carpenter for Memory Boxes
- Oisín McFarland, Film editing
- Language Communications Studio
- Office of Public Works for assistance in exhibition installation

The selected images included in this publication seek to capture the essence, experiences and aspirations of the ***Stories Between Us*** project. It is a celebration of the collective experience of storytelling and intergenerational learning. Thanks to staff and pupils of St Gabriel's National School, Adults from Henrietta St Adult Community Education and Phibsboro Active Retirement Association, NMI Collins Barracks and Grangegorman Development Agency.

Images were taken by Lori Keeve, Brian Cregan, Aisling Dunne and Janine Davidson.

**Upcoming events  
that accompany  
the project:**

**Stories Between Us**

Launch Event: *8 May 2019*

**Heritage Week**

Games on the Square:

*18 August 2019*

**Culture Night**

Games on the Square:

*20 September 2019*

For further details please contact:

[bookings@museum.ie](mailto:bookings@museum.ie)



GROWTH THROUGH  
EDUCATION



St. Gabriel's N.S.







Admission is free at all four Museums. Visit [museum.ie](http://museum.ie) for more information on all of our exhibitions, events and activities.

For further information about Stories Between Us contact:

[janined8@gmail.com](mailto:janined8@gmail.com)  
[www.janinedavidson.com](http://www.janinedavidson.com)  
[www.ggda.ie/public\\_art](http://www.ggda.ie/public_art)

### **Museum Open:**

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### **Museum of Decorative Arts & History**

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Dublin 7

Booking Office Open: 9am to 5pm.  
Mon-Fri +353 (0)1 648 6453

All bookings contact:  
[bookings@museum.ie](mailto:bookings@museum.ie)