

Guest Editor's Introduction

This special *IMSLA* issue—History, Art, Image—was inspired by my experiences during the Sixth Biannual SILAS Conference, *Island Relations*, which it was my great privilege to attend in Havana, Cuba, in 2017. Margaret Brehony and Clíona Murphy, co-editors in chief of the journal, were discussing themes for future issues one fine evening, and it occurred to me to suggest an issue revolving around the Image, or Art. I had been struck by the visual evidence of Irish immigration to Cuba as I walked around La Habana Vieja—the O'Reilly street name plaque and the façade of the Hotel Palacio O'Farril, for example—and by the vivid images that accompanied many of the conference presentations, some of which had touched on artists and creative collectives. The call for submissions in 2019 accordingly announced the special focus on art and images, welcomed work on all Irish-Latin American/Iberian subjects, and invited shorter entries linked to images along with articles and book reviews.

I am grateful to the authors of this issue for answering the call with their wonderful work, which is arranged alphabetically by author last name and begins with Nuala Finnegan's "Between Worlds/Entre Mundos: Images of Life between Mexico and Ireland". Finnegan's compelling entry documents a photographic exhibition of the same title, which Finnegan directed. An initiative of the Centre for Mexican Studies, University College Cork, the exhibition's twelve photographers, all Mexicans recently arrived in Ireland, are represented in this issue, each with an image accompanied by text in both English and Spanish. The goal of the exhibition, according to Finnegan, was to create an opportunity for the photographers to reflect "on ideas of home, belonging and identity shaped from their multiple lived experiences between languages and cultures". The cover image for this special issue is one of the show's beautiful photographs, by Sidarta Corral, to whom the issue has also been dedicated.

Following Finnegan's piece is Giselle González García's "Irish Hunger Strikers Monument in Havana, Cuba: Public and Private Commemorations". The inclusion of González's piece gives me great pleasure because her talk in Havana about an Irish enclave in the city was one of the inspirations for this issue. Currently a graduate student at Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, González here has, as her title suggests, written on the Havana Hunger Strikers Monument, exploring its various plaques, images and commemorations and considering the prominent Cuban and Irish figures who officiated.

Like Finnegan's piece, Tina Lawlor Mottram's entry and the project it documents reflect creative energies at work. In 2018, Lawlor became the first Irish artist-in-residence at *Zona Imaginaria*, an art space serving the underprivileged in Buenos Aires province, Argentina. At *Zona Imaginaria*, Lawlor worked with local children to produce a storybook that combined the local Mariana of Pocito legend with the Irish "Salmon of Knowledge" story. Links to videos of Lawlor and the children reading the book are provided, and Lawlor also reports on how her stay in Argentina informed subsequent artistic endeavors of her own.

Departing from the issue special topic is Lourdes Márquez Carmona's "Irlandeses en la Carrera de Indias: Aproximación a la Presencia de la Colonia Mercantil de Cádiz (España) en el Siglo XVIII en Xalapa (México), a través de los Protocolos Notariales" ("The Irish in Pursuit of the Indias Trade: A Look at the Presence of the Irish Merchant Colony of Cadiz (Spain) in Xalapa (Mexico) during the XVIII Century, through Notarial Records"). As Márquez's title states, her article is an investigation into an eighteenth-century Irish merchant community on the Atlantic

coast in southwestern Spain. According to Márquez, these Irish families had made their way to Spain as exiles following the implementation of the Penal Laws.

Marking a return to the issue's special topic are Edmundo Murray's "The Diplomacy of Art: Irish, Spanish and Latin American Artwork in a Historic Building of Geneva" and "Art, Sound, Nature: A Conversation with Irish-Colombian Musician Katie James". In the former, Murray discusses (amongst others) Irish gifts of art to United Nations agencies, including, intriguingly, a commissioned work that never arrived at its destination for having been deemed unsuitable. In his second piece, a conversation with the Irish-Columbian musician and activist Katie James, Murray presents his interview of the singer-guitarist along with an interwoven history of her extraordinary family's experience as members of the Atlantis Primal Therapy Commune.

Joining Márquez with an historical piece, and preceding this issue's book review section, Edward Walsh's "Journalist, Medical Doctor and Newspaper Editor-Proprietor in Bust-Up" entertainingly presents the details of a public spat that played out in the pages of *The Standard* newspaper in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1894. No duel was fought, but reputations were rather hilariously impugned and sternly defended.

While the articles and entries on this issue's special topic cannot be the first on such topics in this journal, I certainly hope that the fine pieces assembled here will contribute to inspiring future submissions on the arts. I heartily thank my CSUB colleague, Cliona Murphy, and SILAS's president, Margaret Brehony, for the wonderful, enriching experience that guest editing this issue has been.

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