

Krems report

AIR Program Leonard Sheil Ireland.

A short residency in 2005, paved the way, for a longer stay at the AIR program in Krems in 2006.

The facilities and accommodation were top rate, and the studio space more than adequate, and facilitated a number of possibilities.

When in such an environment, the impetus is to use it wisely, and if fortunate reach new discoveries.

My previous visit, was an advantage. I had spent considerable time surveying the locality, and had built up a catalogue of digital references. This time around I continued to add to this, albeit with less intensity and quantity. My eye had become more editorial.

Coming from Ireland this time with minimal equipment, but nonetheless, a plan to use the residency to investigate and explore further drawings, that parallel my work to date.

I generally do not work on specific singular subjects, but the work is not entirely spontaneous.

Tucked away in my back pocket, I had a small image from the National Museum in Dublin. The Brighter Gold consists of a beautiful model boat with mast, yard, seats and fifteen oars. Even a small boathook and rudder are included. The gold model boat from the Brighter Hoard (100 BC) found near Lough Foyle, believed to be a votive offering to Manannan mac Lir. Although a childlike in appearance, it has sophistication and sensitivity of workmanship. It displays ruggedness, as if battered by oceans, and forbearance for quieter moments on calmer seas.

Often the things we know best, are cast aside too quickly as uninteresting, or without any real symbolism.

I have been involved with sea going boats since childhood, and this small ancient work represented to me a number of aspects worth inspection.

I know some boats intimately, and remember others in detail, only. As an exercise to begin a new process in Krems, this was the simple foundation.

As I examined what I could remember, initial gestures, worked like the framework in boatbuilding.

From those construction frames, it led to extensions of the subject, almost figurative at points, then added text, boat plans and elevations, plastic cling film and other materials. An added factor perhaps is that Krems is situated beside a major tributary, and has much sea going traffic, must also have been a provocation.

By the end of the residency there were over fifty (65X50) cm mixed media drawings. Not conclusive, nor was that the intention.

In 2008 they are still in development and used in a digital format. (enclosed samples of the on-going project) However, it did produce a work, not directly from Krems AIR, but help shape it in the final analysis.

It will be exhibited in Ireland June 2008. (Mythical Wreck)

As well as the two months in Krems AIR, I also had the opportunity to exhibit some of my work at the Kuntsverein, Baden.

Although the exhibition was a considerable distance from Krems, Baden is an elegant town, with a unique atmosphere.

However the Kuntsverein, while an important part of the arts scene, and a good space to show work, falls sadly short on a number of aspects for an exhibitor, with very limited opening times, being the primary one. Audiences to view the work therefore are low, and there is no opportunity for visiting artists to engage with a new public.

The Anatomy of Territory (title of exhibition in Kuntsverein, Baden .) mixed media paintings, pages from a visual diary, and a film work.

Exhibition theme:

"From the froth on the strand, to dark bogland and forest, to the meandering riverbank. Like a knife dissecting the typographical landscape, from the coastline, to terrain and river, this work explores some of these components." LS.

This work had no direct contact with previous stays in Austria or the 2006 residency. It showcased some of the work I do.

There was also a film 'Hermitage' ... about "Skellig Michael", a 6-8th Century ascetic monastery, off the south west coast of Kerry, in Ireland. It is not a historical account, but a visual diary, chapters denote plausible manifestations.

Skellig remains aloof, a mystery, and majestic. It is above all-sublime."

The work is now archived on [www.leonardsheil.com](http://www.leonardsheil.com) with work from the Krems AIR residency.