

Caoimhghin Ó Fraithile (*Quee-veen Ó Frá-ha-la*)

“South of Hy-Brasil”

August - October 2016

Site specific temporary public art

“South of Hy-Brasil”, a floating art work by Caoimhghin Ó Fraithile (Ireland), directly references Irish mythology: Hy-Brasil is a mythical land located off Ireland’s West Coast that according to legend, only becomes visible once every seven years, and is the home of a mysterious advanced civilization.*

Ó Fraithile’s artworks, both his drawings and sculptural works, give us a chance to reflect upon our past and present. His choice of natural materials for this work (thatching and cotton cloth) underscores this. Thatching, one of the oldest methods of roofing, is still used in his home country. The tying of cloth as a spiritual offering or as a healing ritual near a water source or significant site is also still very much in practice in Ireland.

This work is supported by *Culture Ireland* as part of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme—a global initiative to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising which set Ireland on its path to independence. It is important to acknowledge that the Easter Rising wasn’t just a physical uprising, but also a cultural one, fostered by the will of the Irish people to take ownership of their political and cultural identity. In this spirit, *“South of Hy-Brasil”* is also intended to honor the Irish diaspora. The city of Boston did and still does have a significant role in the Irish diaspora: the percentage of people with primary Irish ancestry tops out at 20% in the Boston metro area, the highest concentration of people with Irish American ancestry in the country. Boston is the only U.S. city hosting public art for Ireland’s Centenary Programme. (*For more info about Ó Fraithile: www.cof-art.com or www.555gallery.com*)

“South of Hy-Brasil” and Michael Dowling’s “Well House” were commissioned by Medicine Wheel Productions as part of Tír na nÓg, a temporary public art and public engagement project in the Fenway section of Olmsted’s Emerald Necklace Park System. Tír na nÓg is in partnership with the Fenway Alliance’s Public by Design Initiative and their annual “Opening Our Doors event held on Columbus Day (October 10). Tír na nÓg is a vital component of Medicine Wheel’s multi-year Brooch Project that is engaging and connecting the communities along the finished and unfinished links of Olmsted’s Emerald Necklace Park System and it also celebrates the 2016 Centennial of the National Park System of which the Emerald Necklace is part of. (Well House is located near the Kelleher Rose Garden/the opposite shore of this lagoon)

**The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library has several of Ó Fraithile’s sketch books & drawings on display to the end of October along side maps from their collection that feature Hy-Brasil.*

Special thank you to Mayor Martin J. Walsh and the City of Boston, the Consul General of Ireland Fionnuala Quinlan & the Consulate General of Ireland (Boston) and to the Paraclete Center for hosting O’ Fraithile during his stay in Boston & for the creation of his art work. Thank you also to Boston Parks & Recreation, Boston Fire Department Marine Unit, the Boston Police Department, the Boston Transportation Department, the Boston Inspectional Services Department, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Bromfield Development LCC, & the Feeney Brothers Excavation LCC for their support & help with logistics for “Hy-Brasil”.

More Info & Full Supporters List: <http://mwponline.org/wordpress/projects/tir-na-nog/>