

Tread Softly 2019

Thursday 25th July – Saturday 3rd August 2019

www.treadsoftly.ie

inspired by the landscape of county Sligo, and the myths and stories and people associated with it

The eighth Tread Softly festival returns from the 25th July to the 3rd Aug with a programme of events inspired by the landscape of county Sligo, and the myths and stories and people associated with it.

Highlights this year are *Walking Birds' Mountain II*, an exhibition of the second collaboration between 13 visual and literary artists responding to the myths associated with Sliabh Dá Eán on the shores of Lough Gill. *Sailing to Byzantium*, a major staged work by the Turkish composer Onur Türkmen for the Irish Yurodny Ensemble presented by the Model. *The Nine Queens*, derived from a line in Yeats' play *On Baile's Strand*; nine sculptors will work with community groups at beaches along the coastline of County Sligo to create a series of sand sculptures representing the daughters of Manannán mac Lír, sea god of Irish mythology. *Muldoon's Picnic*, an evening of poetry and prose hosted by poet Paul Muldoon, presented by the Hawk's Well theatre in association with the Sligo Yeats Society. *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*, the annual invited artists exhibition of small works curated by the Hamilton Gallery. And the launch of the third edition of the literary broadsheet, *The Cormorant*.

Other features of the programme are *To the Waters and the Wild* a series of guided walks through the Sligo landscape; *The People of the Hollow Hills*, a talk on recent findings at Carrowkeel by archaeologists Robert Hensey and Pádraig Meehan; and *The Bare Hazel* a new Tread Softly arts participation programme including '*Maugharow is a wilder place*' and '*The Battle of the Books*' curated by Sean Golden and Niamh McCabe respectively.

This year Sligo Yeats Society celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Yeats International Summer School with an exciting and diverse programme of events in and around the county.

Tread Softly festival is programmed in partnership with Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, Hawk's Well Theatre, The Model and Sligo County Council in conjunction with the 60th International Yeats Summer School.

SELECTED PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS:

LANDSCAPE

Walking Birds' Mountain I The Nest, Monday 29 July – Saturday 3 August

Walking Birds' Mountain took place last year over one week. A group of visual artists and writers trekked across the Ballygawley Mountains with archaeological writer and folklorist Pádraig Meehan, exploring Sliabh Dá Eán, the 'hill of two birds', which is rich in the mythic narratives of the Cailleach Bhérra. They then exhibited their visual, vocal and written responses to the experience for one night in The Factory Performance Space. Their work will be exhibited this year in The Nest for the duration of this year's Tread Softly.

The People of the Hollow Hills – Recent Discoveries from Carrowkeel and the Passage Tombs of County Sligo The Factory, Tuesday 30 July

Meehan and Robert Hensey have been researching Sligo passage tombs for twenty years. They discuss significant new discoveries regarding the origins of communities that constructed these sites, including remarkable new evidence from ancient DNA, that highlight what we can say about the outlines of these people's lives, their societal structures, as well as startling new evidence regarding their mortuary rituals. Finally, difficulties – worsening weather conditions, diseases and the coming of new populations to this island – are considered, and how those changes may have left an imprint on the monuments of the people at Carrowkeel and across the north-west of Ireland.

Walking Birds' Mountain II The Factory, Friday 2 August & Saturday 3 August

Now in its second year, Walking Birds' Mountain will take place over the course of one week. A group of visual artists and writers will trek across the Ballygawley Mountains with archaeological writer and folklorist Pádraig Meehan, continuing their exploration of Sliabh Dá Eán, the 'hill of two birds', rich in the mythic narratives of the Cailleach Bhérra. An exhibition, presenting the visual, vocal and written responses to the experience will be held in The Factory Performance Space at the end of this week-long collaboration.

The Nine Queens Saturday 3 August, Locations TBA

Nine sculptors will work with community groups at nine locations along the coastline of County Sligo to create a series of sand sculptures representing 'Nine Queens from a Country Under Wave', the nine daughters of Manannán mac Lír, sea god of Irish mythology. The sea will wash them away...

VISUAL

Cairde Visual The Model until Sunday 18 August

The Model presents Cairde Visual, Cairde Sligo Arts Festival's sixth annual open submission exhibition featuring dynamic work from both Irish and international artists across a broad range of media.

Tidal by Tina Brooks, Hamilton Gallery until Saturday 27 July

Winner of the Cairde Visual Hamilton Gallery Award, Brooks' paintings are based on observations of Strandhill peninsula and its weather. Using a method of laying down and scraping off paint, each layer and brush stroke informs the next, informing an emotional response to the environment and place.

Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen Hyde Bridge Gallery & Hamilton Gallery until 7 August

The Annual Invited Artists exhibition of small works curated by Hamilton Gallery is a poem in six parts, full of WB Yeats' passionate social and artistic commentary on both Irish and world culture.

WORD

Onur Türkmen & Yurodny Ensemble, Sailing to Byzantium, The Model, Saturday 28 July

Sailing to Byzantium is a major staged work by Turkish composer Onur Türkmen for the Irish Yurodny Ensemble that focuses on parallels between the work of two great 20th Century writers - Irish poet William Butler Yeats and Turkish poet Ahmet Hasim. Born in different places during the same period both poets lived to witness their nation's fight for independence.

The Poetry of Nick Cave Hawk's Well Theatre, Tuesday 30 July

The Australian musician, singer-songwriter, author, is best known for fronting the rock band Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. His lyrics simmer with Biblical prophecy, violence, beauty & humour. In the company of author Gerard Beirne and guests we delve into the power and impact of Cave's work and influences. A treat for fans of Nick Cave and poetry alike.

The Cormorant, A Broadsheet of Prose & Poetry The Factory, Wednesday 31 July

The Cormorant publishes work from both established and emerging writers. Now in its third issue it will have published over 70 writers including Kevin Barry, Wendy Erskine, Bernie McGill, Molly McCloskey, Stephen Sexton and Eoin McNamee. Issue 3 includes work from Pat Boran, Mary O'Donnell, Nuala O'Connor, and new voices Dawn Watson, Caragh Maxwell and many others. There are local and international voices and experiences from 29 contributors.

Muldoon's Picnic Hawk's Well Theatre, Friday 2 August

An omnium-gatherum of poetry, prose fiction and music, Muldoon's Picnic is a cabaret-style evening hosted by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Paul Muldoon and his house band Rogue Oliphant. Muldoon's exciting mix of guests includes Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Wendy Erskine, Duke Special and Len Graham.

Arán & Im: Manchán Magan Hawk's Well Theatre, Wednesday 31 July & Thursday 1 August

Manchán Magan bakes sourdough bread for 70 minutes while offering insights into the wonders of the Irish language – exploring potent words of landscape, terms of intuition and insight, and the many phrases that bring to life the mysterious glory of our natural world.

For more information and programme details see www.treadsoftly.ie

Publicity enquiries to kate@bowecommunications.ie or 01 6520143