

INTERVIEW

Róisín de Buítléar

Have previous generations of makers influenced your work in unique and unexpected ways?

Yes, it has undoubtedly. There are a number of factors that have influenced my way of thinking and working. Firstly a way of thinking, an open curiosity, and acceptance of others as being different an ability to have a personal voice that may not be expressed as other would do.

Next is a rhythm of life which ebbs and flows: between intensity of work and periods of calm, financial stability and months of poverty, creativity and fallow times, the importance of feeding the soul and constructive learning, long working hours and days of listlessness. Learning that all this rhythm is part of the creative process and trusting its path is essential to it.

Conceptualising, generating ideas, developing those ideas and breaking new ground while doing so was a core skill that I developed from a very early age. From this, I also learnt the value of listening to a young voice, and how much working in an intergenerational way, can bring the greatest gifts to each person.

How does this influence manifest in your work?

An appreciation of what we have around us, how we can use our own recourses and how much we can learn from the past are essential ingredients in my inherited skillset. This has become an integral part of my practice and the basis for my concepts.

What is the most important thing you have learned from previous generations of makers within your family?

I have learnt that by following your passion you can fuel your creativity with an endless supply of energy and in doing so find your own voice for expression.

Describe the relationship between generations of makers in your family.

It is very important. Discussions, testing ideas, teasing out cultural issues, sharing discoveries, successes and losses are a way of deepening my understanding of the past and developing ideas for the future. It can be a foil or something to rebel against which have context and validity at different times.

Can you trace the evolution of skills inherited skills?

I absolutely feel a responsibility of sharing skills; inherited skills are important, tacit knowledge allows confidence to flow while learning a new skill or developing an old one. I have the confidence to try something new and to see it something that extends my own expression and not a challenge or something to overcome. As a consequence, I take on new projects with excitement of learning and exploring new avenues. Many of my skills have a basis of method which stems from inherited skills which have been passed down a number of

Generation

generations. The other skills are of seeing, understanding that something is of value when not apparent immediately to others, and lastly of learning about pace, and how taking time can influence how you see and do something.

How do you balance respect for tradition with innovation, current design trends and/or the need to respond to the demands of the marketplace?

I am driven by my own curiosity and have found that I can balance projects with a variety of types of work to avoid having to cater to the marketplace. This diversity in practice means I can step outside this loop and make at a pace and intensity that I wish to work at. Tradition is at the core of my practice but innovation is the propeller. My curiosity and ambition to bring my practice to new avenues drives me forward, while keeping tradition ever present.

Have you found your own voice or do you feel that being part of a family business can restrict your creativity and/or originality?

I have found my own voice though my choice of material and subject matter, which reflects my roots but carries its own legacy.

How important is it to pass on your skills and culture of making to the next generation? How important is it to continue the lineage and ensure a sense of continuity?

Giving the next generation the confidence in their own ability to make, learn and investigate skills is a lifelong occupation and joy. From my own kids to intergenerational learning, there is no greater pleasure than seeing someone discover their own ability to create. It is empowering and builds confidence in those that experience this and is embedded in their memory for life.