Cultural Preservation in Donegal, Ireland

Many aspects of Irish cultural heritage are being lost with the passing of just one generation. Weaving Tapestry in Rural Ireland enlarges the perception of weaving in Ireland beyond tweed, presenting the age-old skills of wool production (shearing, spinning and naturally dyeing yarn) as a vital form of artistic expression today. Juxtaposed against full colour images of the tapestries are award-winning photographer Laurence Boland's black and white portraits of the artists at work in a haunting landscape.

Cork, Ireland (PRWEB) January 24, 2007 -- Many aspects of Irish cultural heritage are being lost with the passing of just one generation. Meghan Nuttall Sayres feels that foreign corporate investments are potentially the most detrimental to indigenous grass-roots enterprises. While boosting the economy according to the corporate model seems promising, often what is at stake is the cultural and economic sustainability of vibrant communities. Without selective and appropriate development policies, Ireland could become further enmeshed in the current trend towards the global economy, which breed monoculture with the risk that connections to place and tradition are lost.


As an alternative to these prevailing capital and energy-intensive business models is Taipéis Gael. In 1993 a group of tapestry weavers formed this cooperative with a mission to contribute to the cultural preservation in the Gaeltacht, the Irish speaking areas of Ireland. With the help of older mentors the weavers were taught the old ways of spinning, weaving and dyeing wool. Taipéis Gael has created hundreds of works that now grace the halls of museums, galleries, embassies, banks, pubs and private homes around the world.

Taipéis Gael was formed in Glencolmcille, County Donegal. Poets, potters, painters, writers, musicians, knitters, quilters, sculptors and weavers enliven the area. Historically, isolation has worked against the rural Irish. Taipéis Gael tapestries reflect this and the hardships experienced by other minorities such as the Irish Travellers. Weaving Tapestry in Rural Ireland enlarges the perception of weaving in Ireland beyond tweed, presenting the age-old skills of wool production (shearing, spinning and naturally dyeing yarn) as a vital form of artistic expression today. Juxtaposed against full colour images of the tapestries are award-winning photographer Laurence Boland's black and white portraits of the artists at work in a haunting landscape.

In 2005 Taipéis Gael came to the decision to give up their studio and let their administrator go because of lack of funds. While the weavers look to the future in anticipation of a collaborative relationship, they will now weave from their own homes.

Meghan Nuttall Sayres is a writer and tapestry weaver who spins and colours the wool of her sheep with natural dyes. She has explored this craft in the deserts of the American West, Mexico, Turkey and Iran and the burren and bogs of Western Ireland. She holds a graduate degree in International Rural Development, and has volunteered for Taipeiis Gael for several years, having organized exhibitions and tapestry tours for them in the US. Her articles and essays on weaving and Taipeiis Gael have appeared in New Hibernia Review; Ireland of the Welcomes; Shuttle, Spindle and Dyeport; Handwoven; and Spin Off magazines. She is author of Anahita's Woven Riddle, a novel set in 19th century, Iran, about a nomadic carpet weaver. She has lived in Ireland and presently resides in Washington State with her husband and children. Her other books are featured on her website at: www.MeghanNuttallSayres.com.
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