

The Linen Memorial

I met Martin in 1999 when I exhibited at The Waterworks, Antrim Road, North Belfast in a 'site-interventionist' group sculpture show, called Seattle-Belfast Horsehead International. Martin has stayed in touch with me since that time.

Martin supported my original proposal, late 2000 and encouraged me in my 'down-times' while struggling internally with concerns and hesitations about conceiving and completing this artwork. Last year, he supported me wholeheartedly in a post-doctorate grant proposal which involved troubled youth in North Belfast for a site-specific art project in cross-community contested space(s).

Martin is always in the 'thick of things'; he was a part of the Peace People in the mid-1970s...and hosted many artists and journalists/photojournalists to Belfast over the years...and yet, he remains very humble about his contributions and humanitarianism over the years on behalf of those in need and/or traumatically displaced in North Belfast. It was only in 2007 that I heard the story of his own displacement from his family home (1970's) due to the conflict.

In 1999, Martin and I had many informal discussions when I was researching the iconic Northern Ireland fabric of linen; also after toured a dis-used flax scutching mill in the Northern Ireland countryside (which was soon to be Guilford Mill Shopping and Art complex). I was trained in creating "sculpture concepts through materials" and, therefore, it was a logical notion to make this memorial (not in bronze, glass or steel) in Irish Linen.

When I received an early 2001 Canada Council of the Arts for the memorial ...it grew into an ongoing site-conscious memorial installation which seeks to narrate the almost 4,000 deaths in 'The Troubles'...seeking to pick, unpick and re thread a sense of the fragile, recuperative work involved in a community emerging from conflict.

I apologise to any victim's families who do not wish to be commemorated publicly and with the other names, in this way...

Lycia Trouton
The Linen Memorial
<http://www.linenmemorial.org/>

Belfast
BT15 3BX

July 19 2008

To Whom it May Concern,

I have known Dr. Lycia Danielle Trouton since 1999 when she was a site-sculptor who created a public artwork and event at The Waterworks, a park in my neighbourhood, off the Antrim Road, North Belfast. I knew the USA curators of this exhibition. Lycia worked well with the intergenerational individuals and groups, especially the youth who frequented the park and participated by helping build the artwork-sculpture and participate in the interactive opening event. The Waterworks has a history of being a difficult and sometimes violent area; it is an 'interface' zone. Lycia was successful in working with art in the park over a 6 week period.

I have lived and worked in North Belfast for over 38 years, as a teacher, in journalism and in charitable cross-community organisations for anti-violence and social justice. I was a full-time worker in the Northern Ireland Peace Movement (Community of Peace People), 1976 – 78 and have received awards for my work. Since 2004, with recent immigrants from Poland, I have been Chairman of the Belfast-Poland Outreach Committee.

Lycia and I have kept in touch over the 10 years since, during her career in Canada, USA and Australia. I was an early supporter of her concept to create The Linen Memorial to those killed in The Troubles.

I whole-heartedly support Lycia's academic post-doctoral research which would enable her to work in the visual and performing arts in my neighbourhood. North Belfast and West Belfast have had a history of long-term sectarian violence. This area, although post-conflict, has new challenges which deserve the attention of an artist of her calibre and sensitivity that is willing to work with the people.

Sincerely,

B. Ed., Dip. Educ. Welfare

Martin Dunphy