

EACH DAY Eilis O'Connell (Born 1953)

Eilis O'Connell was brought up in Donegal and studied at the Crawford College of Art, in Cork and Massachusetts College of Art. O'Connell hoards objects as diverse as gourds and discarded agricultural tools and through her drawings transforms them to enjoy a new existence in her sculpture work. She has built her reputation on large-scale public sculpture, sensitive to its environment in Ireland and the UK. She takes inspiration from archaeology, architecture and the human body to create her unique forms that can be at the same time intimate and monumental.



Each Day is a sculpture in bronze that occupies the courtyard of the Crawford Art Gallery. It stands two and a half metres tall and echoes the form of a cloak, cowl, or folded cloth. The form curves gracefully around and upwards, it tapers at the top to a point. There is a human presence evoked by the shrouded form, a strong, immovable, protective force that seems ancient and magical. The dense, bronze surface is gently curved and encompassing and at the same time reassuringly robust and impermeable.

DISCUSSION

- How would you describe the lines and shapes in this sculpture? What sort of form does it take?
- This sculpture is abstract in form; do you think it looks organic or mechanical? Or what do you think it might relate to?
- Do you think the sculpture is made from one piece or more than one?
- How would you describe the texture and surface? Does the surface appear natural or mechanical?
- The colour of the work is quite subdued, do you think this is in keeping with the form of the work? Would you describe the piece as subdued?
- What words can you think of to describe the form and presence of the sculpture?
- This piece was made in 2003, yet there is an ancient, primitive quality to it, where does this come across?
- The sculpture is sited in the courtyard of the Crawford Gallery, is this good location? Are there any elements in the sculpture that are echoed or reflected in the surrounding area?

- Most sculpture sits on a plinth in art galleries, but this sculpture stands outside on the ground beside you. Do you think you relate to it differently because you occupy the same space? How might it be different looking at a work on a plinth?
- What considerations would the artist have to take into account when making a piece of sculpture for an outdoors public space? Has this piece of sculpture been designed well to consider these?
- Scale in sculpture, especially sculpture in an outdoor space, is very important for the work to have resonance. Do you think the scale of this piece is appropriate?
- Imagine this piece smaller or much bigger; on what other scale might it work?

In the gallery find these objects in the display case for the Gibson Bequest. Can you find forms that would make interesting elements for a large scale sculpture? What else in the case might be of interest in terms of form, material, or texture?



HANDS ON

This is your design brief, take one of these following theme words as a starting point for an abstract sculpture, protect, nurture, strive, conquer. Your sculpture is to be sited indoors at a junction in a modern shopping mall. It will be viewed from all sides but will not be accessible by the public. The finished piece will be cast in bronze. Use fine wire mesh to create your structure and chose from plaster, clay, paper mache or wax for surface and detail. Consider scale, form, surface texture, and reflection from all directions and note these decisions.

Find some organic or mechanical forms that interest you. (Parts of engines, old machines, bones, exotic fruits etc... are all good to explore.) Make drawings of the more interesting elements, looking at different angles. Design a sculpture based on this investigation. Decide on scale, medium, texture. Show the piece from different angles. If you have the opportunity, make a maquette of the piece.