

Kirsi Backman, Tale or True, 1999

Residency 30.8.–15.10.1999 as an exchange artist in Dublin, Ireland



Backman worked for 1.5 months in the autumn at the Tallaght Community Art Center in Dublin, where she taught locals how to make ceramics and held an exhibition on the Kalevala with Maija Kantanen.

Raumars registered as an independent association in 1999. In the same year, artists Maija Kantanen and Kirsi Backman were elected to the residency at Tallaght Arts Center in Dublin. Maija applied for a residency for three months and Kirsi for a month and a half. The selection was made on the basis of applications and an interview. The interviewer was Mary Grehan, Director of Tallaght Arts Center.



During the first weeks, Finnish artists jointly led community projects, e.g. directing pottery workshops to local groups.

Besides artists had an opportunity to work on their own for the future exhibition and to get to know Irish everyday life as well as local people. During the artist exchange, local art as well as the enchanting nature of Ireland became known e.g. Ring of Kerry, Galway, Killarny, Glendalough, Howth and Glifden.



Later, Maija Kantanen participated in several events organized by the Arts Center, such as the Halloween celebration of the whole family as a children's face painter and the jury of music competitions. Kantanen also visited Cork and the home of artist Siobhan Doyle on the southernmost island of Ireland, Cape Clear.

At the end of the residency program, an exhibition of Finnish artists "Tarua ja Totta" (Myth or Truth) was organized, where they created sculptures during the stay in Ireland. Kirsi Backman implemented a Kalevala-themed exhibition and Maija Kantanen took up the topics of the impulses of the residency period because the longer residency period made it possible. Among other things, the New Grange burial mound 40 km from Dublin, appeared in exhibition works. Kantanen hung the "Tale or True" exhibition at the Tallaght Art Center Gallery after Kirsi Backman returned to his home country. Workshop groups got their work out to the workroom.

The exhibition was opened by Olavi Jalkanen, Ambassador of Finland to Ireland, and Finnishness was strongly taken into account in the opening ceremonies organized by the Art Center, e.g. in serving and decorating. Irish and Finnish songs were sung alternately at the opening. The exhibition was covered on TV, radio and in magazines in Dublin.

The following spring 2000, artists Kirsi Backman, Maija Kantanen and the then Raumars artist, Tom Meskill from Ireland organized a joint exhibition in the courtyard studios of the Lönnström Art Museum. Kantanen and Backman's "Memories of Ireland" exhibition was seen in the same year at the Galleria Leonardo in Tampere. The exhibitions focused on experiences from Ireland.