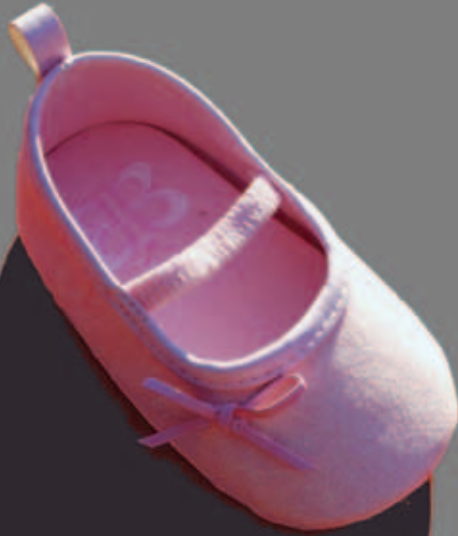


The Amulet

A Collaborative Arts Project 2009 – 2013

Marie Brett



The Amulet - was a national, multi-site participatory arts project initiated and led by artist Marie Brett, as a community collaborative programme, following a two year research phase based at Cork University Maternity Hospital. The work was supported by The Arts Council via Create AIC awards, The HSE (South) Cork Arts + Health Programme and Cork University Hospital Arts Committee; with multiple partners and advisors.

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COLLABORATION + AMULET AS OBJECT SIGNIFIER

The artist collaborated with bereaved parents in various parts of Ireland, together with HSE midwifery staff plus arts and health specialists from Cork University Maternity Hospital, Waterford Regional Hospital, Waterford Healing Arts Centre and Limerick's Mid-Western Regional Maternity Hospital, to creatively explore the idea of an amulet as an object signifier of ethereal farewell, particular to pregnancy and infant loss. This work was supported by The Coiscéim Counselling Programme.

BABY LAYETTES AS FIRST AND LAST ROBE

Alongside this stage of work, the artist partnered with the community group Ballyphehane/Togher Arts & Craft Initiative and together they explored how the traditional craft skill of crochet might be re-imagined conceptually; and subsequently crochet layettes were created as a deceased baby's first and last amuletic robe; these layettes continue to be created for several maternity hospitals nationally.

ANAMNESIS EXHIBITIONS

The artworks produced, re-imagine the individual's memory as that of a collective cultural memorial. The work consists of a gallery installation including ten audio-visual pieces, plus a series of drawn/pierced-photographs. As part of the amulet project, two gallery venues exhibited the work: Sirius Arts Centre, County Cork and The Index Gallery at Waterford Central Library.

BOOK

A book was published to coincide with the exhibition and accompanying events, and includes a series of photographs plus six commissioned essays written from a variety of cultural perspectives.

SEMINAR + GALLERY TALK

Alongside the exhibition in Cork, a discursive seminar titled 'The Amulet Collaboration : A Journey of Trust' was presented at The Crawford Art Gallery. The event was chaired by the Arts Council's arts and health advisor, with three key speakers: a participant, the artist, plus a bereavement midwife; together with invited guests from various arts and health contexts. A documentary video of the event was produced. Alongside the Waterford exhibition, Waterford Healing Arts Centre organised a public talk where the artist, a participant, BTACI members plus the WHAT arts director discussed their differing project perspectives. A witness writer produced a creative written response to this event.

PITT RIVER'S MUSEUM, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

The museum houses an extensive amulet and talisman collection, where the artist spent time in research. Subsequently one of her photographic works was selected as part of the museum's international 'Small Blessings' project and exhibition. The artist's research was supported by an Arts Council travel and training award.

SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

is extended to: bereaved family members who collaborated with the artist • HSE staff • arts and health advisors • the amulet project steering group members.

For more information about the artist's work, please see www.mariebrett.ie

