Since its inception the sculpture trail of Tír Sáile has heightened the scenic beauty with the wealth of cultural heritage.  Trail was inspired by the Céide Field’s interpretive centre nearby.   The use of natural sourced materials was an important element in the project.  The rugged coastline allowed for exploration of a variety of sites.  These sites varied from a disused quarry, small fields, stones, sand dunes to agricultural lands on stony ground.  A sculptural symposium was held initially before the traditional ‘*Meitheal*’ form of work was the chosen ethos.  Work commenced during June 1993, then continued over three weeks.  Art works were in situ for the Year of Mayo 5000.  Several sketches feature at this link. [[vi]](" \l "_edn6)

This was the largest public art project developed during 1993 in County Mayo.  Initiated originally by artist Marian O ‘Donnell at a symposium related to the discovery of the Céide Fields.  The outcome suggested the installation of fifteen mixed media sculptures based on various locations along the North Mayo coast.  Primary aim of the Tír Sáile was the *‘intention* *of artist with the natural environment by way of imagination’ in order to celebrate the past, relish the present & embrace the future.’*  An update during 2018 revealed that several sculptures had worn away or had been removed.  Remedial work was undertaken on several with new signage installed along the route. [[vii]](" \l "_edn7)

Several descriptions below may be of interest:

**Tearmann na Gaoithe**

This installation is a vernacular sculpture born of its environment. *‘This is a vernacular sculpture born of its environment.  The stone quarried and thrown up by the waves, has been laid so as to form a shelter, a sanctuary, a place near the pulse of the tide, the breath of the winds.  It belongs only here.’*  according to Artist Dubliner Alan Counihan.  Site is located on a headland just to the right of Killala Bay, left of Lacken Bay.  Stones were sourced locally then he produced a cell of sandstone slabs inside a ring of flush - laid stones on the Atlantic Ocean’s edge.  The sculpture evokes mediation with sanctuary that recalls the monastic tradition with eremitical cells of the western seaboard.  Latitude is 54280501, longitude  9.226558. Several images feature on this site: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-e>

**Court Henge**

This installation is located in a green area at Ballycastle cottages close to the Ballyglass Megalithic Court Tomb in North Mayo.  Artist Tony Murphy from Ballina suggested the site as *‘a meeting* *place –* *‘an open circular enclosure of stone;* *incorporating seating in its inner circumference, with an earthen embankment falling behind, inspired by the Megalithic monuments.’* The grassy mound structure encloses a central courtyard flanked by two smaller enclosures.  These are lined with Lacken sandstone flags.  Latitude 54.277808, longitude 9.361285. Images feature at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-g>

**Battling Forces**

Danish artist Fritze Rind’s sculpture portrays that this is a place where strong elements – sea, storm, land provides continuous battle to man with each other.  The thirty metres long sculpture gives form to a frozen moment in an on - going struggle between two forces of a different nature*.*  He states his art *is ‘a cutting versus a throttling force – no one knows which will win or how long the struggle will endure…’*Sculpture was produced from Lacken sandstone with local uncut limestone that symbolizes two very different forces, one of pure clean - cut man - made while the other is a vast pile of organic uncut stone that attempts to surround it.  Latitude is 54.321842, longitude 9.344341. Images feature at this site: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-h>

**Acknowledgement**

Westport artist Marian O ‘Donnell designed this art piece as a fifty metres sculpture of earth & stone, that provides both shelter that also draws attention to the existing unmarked burial mound.  She stated that *‘Acknowledgement is a liturgy to communal memory, an earthwork monument to all the anonymous dead, whose memories have been lost ana are only remembered through the tradition of the placing of unmarked stones.’*Use of earth with gneiss stone produced the sculpture that is bisected by a narrow - curved passageway.  This draws a visitor right through the Artwork into the earth then to emerge into the surrounding sea’s vastness.  Latitude is 54.180133, longitude 9.70805. Several images may be viewed at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-l>

**Stratified Sheep**

Niall O ‘Neill from Wicklow designed this sculpture that reflects the land structure.  It expresses the rural culture that formed it over the millennia.  Structure is located at Ballinboy visitors farm on the Bangor road in North Mayo.  The work was constructed from Lacken sandstone together with local granite. Each form is produced with several stone layers to reflect the natural stratification of the land itself.  Latitude is 54.221237, longitude 9.753175. Images are featured at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-k>

**Deirbhle’s Twist**

This sculpture overlooks Blacksod Bay: it was based on St. Deirbhle’s legend.  Offaly - born Michael Bulfin stated that *‘The Stone is the Landscape.  It was always here.  I have just, in a sense, rearranged it!’*His sculpture was made as he raised the existing granite boulders prior to their arrangement in an ascendant order in situ.  The spiral is a representation of the megalithic sites whilst it also is a reference to atomic physics.  The sculpture remains in good condition.  Latitude is 54.09549, longitude is 10.08511.  Images feature on this site: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-o>

**Echo of Nawascape**

This art - work by Japanese Mariyo had as its theme a likeness to *‘nawa’* or a DNA Rope.  The theme recalled the DNA Helix with representation of continuity of life on earth, sea also sky. The site is located at Lacken Bay on the sea - shore edge, it also drew attention to water as the organ of life in this complex relationship.  Project consisted of a group of earthen mounds that appeared like rolling rope.  It had a central space paved with Lacken sandstone. Latitude 54.280501, longitude 9.226568.  The site is under review now in need of restoration.  Images feature at this site: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-e>

**Intercommunions Park in Killala**

This installation was located on the western side of the Bay.   Japanese artist Mariyo created an environmental work in the form of a small art park.  She stated that *‘Walking around the mounds, sitting on the stones, listening to the wind and the waves…All of us were in the maternal sea before we came.’*  A sketch is portrayed where the land was reclaimed from the sea then returned later to the sea. The artwork is now decommissioned.  Sketches with images feature at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-b>

**Tionnta na mBlianta**

This sculpture according to artist Englishman Simon Thomas represents a timeless pattern, ten by eighteen metres inlaid on the concrete retaining wall on the shoreline.  Gneiss, the oldest rock at the centre emanating outwards, with basalt on through the ages of man. Symbolized by copper, iron & stainless steel this structure itself was Incorporated into the existing retaining wall at Kilcummin Bay.  The pattern was a fermat spiral: projected at midnight from the top of a 8.5 metre pole guyed into the seabed at low tide. A motif was chalked into the wall, later drilled then plugged with in - bands from the centre outwards. The motif itself may be viewed as a representation of time influenced by the source of the Belmullet gneiss with its proximity to Céide Fields.  Materials used in the construction included the following: Belmullet gneiss, basalt also copper.  The sculpture has degraded with the motif now faded.  Latitude is 54.263845, longitude 9.209397.  Images feature at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-c>

**Wind Trees**

Nigerian artist Eilish designed this sculpture with the purpose that *‘the work forms a gigantic handprint set into the hillside.'* Her sculptural work stated that *‘At each fingertip a dry – wall reflects the rock strata below.  The wind blowing across Muingelly hill will play upon pan pipes set in each wall and sculpt the five different indigenous trees growing there.’*The site was located on the Ballycastle / Belderrig road that overlooks Down Patrick Head & Dún Briste.This site is off limits at present due to repairs.  Latitude 54.303318, longitude 9.424460.  Images feature at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-h-1>

**Coachain**

German artist Walter Michael produced this sculpture based on the local legend of the one - eyed giant.  It also is named after the nearby Dun Caochain townland.  Located on a hill in Cathru Thaigh in North Mayo the sculpture is a one - hundred - foot - long structure.  When viewed from the site entrance the exceptionally long face shrinks to present the perfect correct proportions of the structure. Latitude is 54.311139, longitude is 9. 821348.  This site is weather dependent also under review: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/site-h-1-1>  [[viii]](" \l "_edn8)

**New Artworks**

During early 2017 Mayo County Council with Aras Inis Gluain commissioned three public art residencies project in Erris, Co. Mayo.  The selected artists were Garath Kennedy, Joanna Hopkins, Noah Rose & Selma Makela.  They produced structures in Carrowtigue, Bellmullet also on Claggan Island.   Original artworks trail was installed over twenty - five years ago: most sculptures underwent a thorough maintenance programme that included new signage, repairs with the creation of a new website.  The website was launched with the finalized project. (*NBC*)

These three Sculptures are featured below:

**Marram Meitheal**

Artist Joanna Hopkins’s project involved the assistance of several local Islanders also school children.  The initial idea was to create a socially engaged project with discussion or exploration of the marram grass.  Several events were organized to assist with replenishment of the marram grass cut for the paper making.  Her project included marram grass or bent grass being planted along the Claggan coast to help slow down erosion also to enforce the Island’s access route.  Members of the public produced handmade paper from the grass.  This was incorporated into a sculptural sand fence installed on the dunes.  A video was produced that documented the process with local people’s narration of the Island’s daily lifestyle. The sand fence is located on the left - hand side of the road that leads to Clagggan.  One may view video or Images at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/about>

**Time Rite**

Artist Garath Kennedy stated his vision was to *‘unbury & recover the material culture from the bog at a time collectively agreed upon as prescient.’*His exploration was a critical play with material, place, trace & legacy within Carrow Thigue with its surrounding area.  Bog wood was exposed by Bord na Mona industrial harvests of the bog.  That process was dated to the so - called ‘*Pine Flush*’ a natural afforestation of north Mayo that followed the collapse of the Neolithic farming activity in the area over  five thousand  years ago.  Trees were interred but preserved within the bog by the climate change.  Images of bog with view from Corrán Buí Beach across Broadhaven Bay features on this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/newartworks>

**Cóitheach**

The translation of the title of sculpture is *‘a sudden gust or wind which comes out of nowhere, particularly noted along the cliffs.’*This joint project by Noah Rose with Selma Makela focused on maritime or meteorological local knowledge of north Erris.  Both artists looked at the particularly descriptive detail that existed in Erris with the Irish dialect related to sea or weather.  They combined their own field recordings from across the Mullet Peninsula, offshore islands as well as beneath the sea.  They created temporary sculptural sound installations that layered Erris - Irish words with English translations also mixed with natural environmental sounds.  Those were installed at various locations in & around Belmullet.  Both artists worked with children from Belmullet national school then held a small ceremony where they became *‘ekeepers of the weather – wordsí ’* as a prerequisite to protect then pass on to the next generation. Several images feature on this site: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/noah-rose-selma-makela>  [[ix]](" \l "_edn9)

**Additional Information**

Talk by Gemma Tipton of *The Irish Times* on Tír Saile may be accessed at this link: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/new-blog/2018/1/9/the-irish-times-gemma-tipton-on-tr-sile-spirt-of-place>

This site features information with images of art sculptures: <https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/en/history>

In *The Mayo News* on 10th October 2017 a report stated that during 1993 as Mayo celebrated Mayo 5000 the largest art project within Ireland was installed in North Mayo.   Designed to explore a number of themes that included the role of art in the making of community or place - themed related humans adorning of the historic landscape whether agricultural, settlement, mythology, folklore also life or death.  Project consisted of fifteen site - specific artworks created by use of a specified limited range of organic materials installed at intervals along the North Mayo coastline from the Moy Estuary to the top of Erris Peninsula.  Over the years several pieces have disappeared.  During the twenty - fifth anniversary of the project in 2018 a maintenance programme was initiated with new signage created; a website developed also new art works.  A two - day symposium was held in Áras na Gluine in Belmullet to launch the website, to celebrate also to reflect on the project. (*Anne - Marie Flynn* )  [[x]](" \l "_edn10)

**Footnotes**

[[vi]](#_edn6) Tír Sáile (<https://www.mayo-ireland.ie/en/things-to-do/museums/tir-saile.html>) [Assessed 25th April 2020]

[[vii]](" \l "_edn7) Tír Sáile (<https://www.northmayo.ie/tir-saile-the-north-mayo-sculpture-trail/>) [Assessed 25th April 2020]

[[viii]](" \l "_ednref8) Home Tír Sáile (<https://www.northmayoarttrail.com/en/home-english>) [Assessed 25th April 2020]

[[ix]](" \l "_ednref9) ibid

[[x]](" \l "_ednref10) *The Mayo News* 10th October 2017