

donegal days



noah bullock
donegal days: recent photography
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bisignano art gallery
university of dubuque
catalog

Essay

Many photographers love to focus on one object. It seems like the camera with its finely crafted lens is made for isolation. We all still marvel at the objects in those gritty 19th century photographs. Often it seems that photography is naturally predisposed to zoom in (to the exclusion of the rest of the world) on one solitary item. And in this way, the work of Noah Bullock seems rather standard, almost predictable. A house in a field. The skeletal remains of a boat. A truly Irish cow. Ah, but artists have a way of fooling you. I know, I've spent a lifetime training them and looking at their work.

DH Lawrence said it best, "Never trust the teller, trust the tale."

So even as magnificent as that house is...those swirling clouds - nature's fingerprints - are truly spellbinding. Did those puffs in the bluest sky you've ever seen just happen to be there? Did he create them to complement or contrast the house, or visa versa? That skeleton of a boat seems is so well preserved - is it modern or medieval - like the bones of some bygone beast. You can't really know, but in a moment, somewhere in that bright horizon to the lower right will clearly break and add to this otherwise calm still life. And that cow has a grimace as if it's going to share one of those subtle Irish jokes in a pub later this evening.

I can only imagine the considerable number of images that Noah took of each image in this show, only to examine and reduce those multiples to the one, unique essence, so that the story dominates. At the end of the day, all art (like religion) is about the story. And yet, you can examine these pictures formally just as easily. It's all there, the photographer's careful use of depth of field, the rule of thirds, the thermal properties of color. I could go on.

James Turrell in his 2017 book, *Slow Art: The Experience of Looking*, observed that Americans, on average, spend between six and ten seconds with individual artworks in museums or galleries - hardly time enough he observes (and I agree). I suspect an update to this, in our heavy social mediated and distracted lives, would reduce the time even more. How, then, in our culture of distraction, might we extend attention? Make the artwork participatory, he suggests. Let it directly engage the viewer. I am reminded of Turrell's thesis and his solution when viewing Noah Bullock's work. These are not simple images and, in fact, they encourage contemplation with time.

Noah Bullock graduated from the University of Dubuque with a BS in Digital Art and Design in 2021 and immediately joined the Bisignano Art Gallery as Coordinator. He is currently working on his MMSM, Master in Management - Sport Management (and never far from photography).

Alan Garfield, Director

Cover photograph: Mt. Errigal, Co. Donegal

Home Sweet Home



If These Bones
Could Talk



Lazy Days





“An Grainan of Aileach” - The Ancient Ring Fort of Inishowen



18th Century Ruins



From the Heavens



GAA



Gears and Thread



Good Morning



Magee of Donegal Town



Gents



Dan the Man



The Great Resist



William B. Yeats 1939



Surf's Up



Silver Rose D492



No Littering Please



Mt. Errigal, Co. Donegal



Derryveagh Mountains - Co. Donegal





Out for a Stroll



Off to Galway



Sea Worthy



Slowly Fading But
Never Forgotten



The Pub



Surfing the Wild Atlantic Way



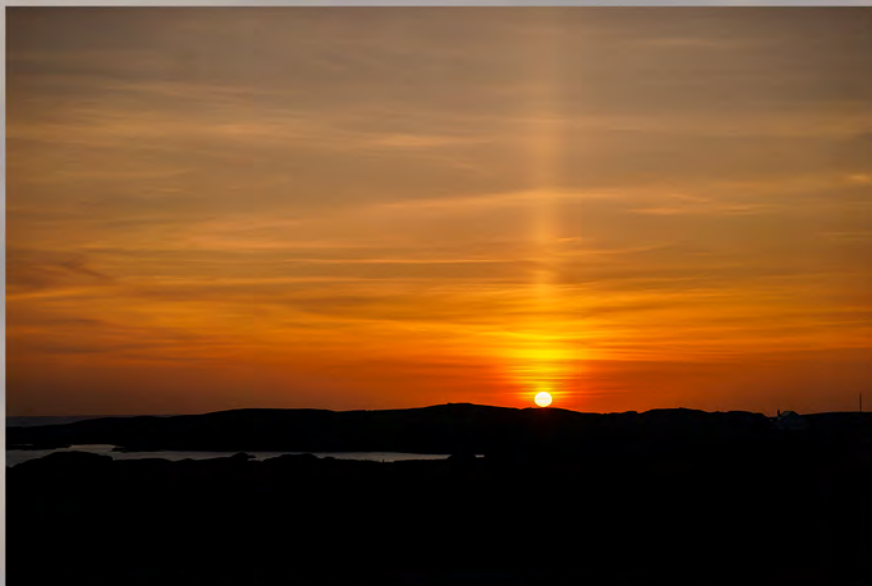
Galway Streets



Donegal Highland Cattle



Hand Weaver, Eddie Doherty



Good Night Cruit



Gryffindor



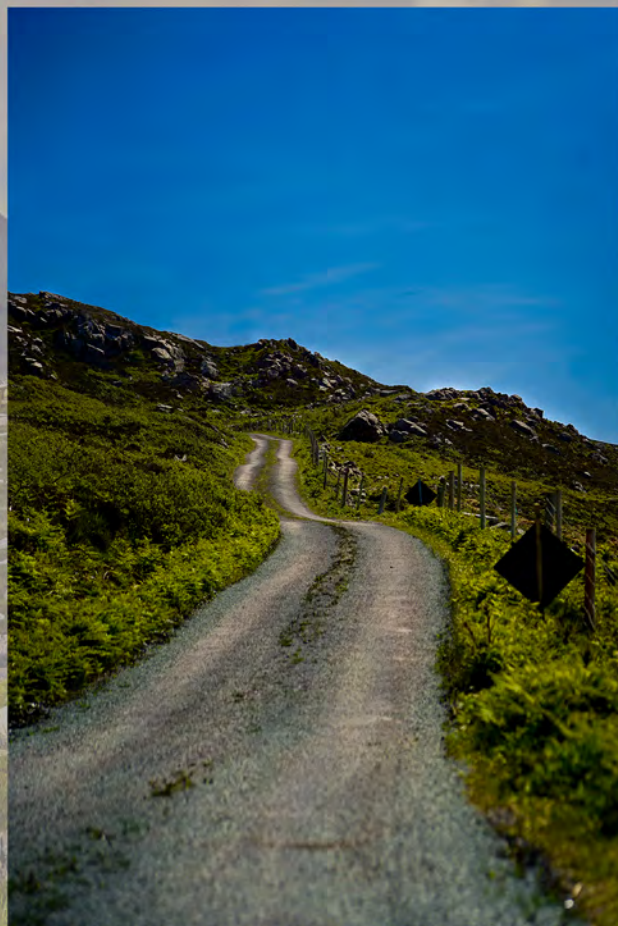
Cruit Island Golf Club



Cruit Island



Black Faced Sheep



Crohy Head



20 Stones



Cash is King



Tidy Town



The Full Irish

Photography Checklist:

An Grainan of Aileach
18th Century Ruins
20 Stones
Blackface Mountain Sheep
Cash Is King
Crohy Head
Cruit Island Golf Club
Cruit Island
Dan the Man
Donegal Highland Cattle
From the Heavens
GAA
Galway Streets
Gears and Thread
Gents
Good Morning
Good Night Cruit
Gryffindor
Hand Weaver - Eddie Doherty
Home Sweet Home

If These Bones Could Talk
Lazy Days
Magee of Donegal Town
Derryveagh Mtns - Co. Donegal
Mt. Errigal, Co. Donegal
No Littering Please
Off to Galway
Out for a Stroll
Sea Worthy
Silver Rose D492
Slowly Fading but Never Forgotten
Surfing the Wild Atlantic Way
Surf's Up
The Full Irish
The Great Resist
The Poisoned Glen
The Pub
Tidy Town
William B. Yeats 1939

Artist's Statement:

"An rud is annamh is iontach" – The thing that is seldom is wonderful.
Traditional Irish Proverb.

I was first introduced to Donegal, Ireland, in May of 2017 on a school trip led by Professor Alan Garfield. I remember packing my suitcase and thinking "what's so great about Ireland?". Specifically, a place I had never heard of - Donegal. We landed in Dublin, packed all eight of us and our suitcases into a very small van and off we went. Six hours on narrow, winding roads with Professor Garfield driving wasn't exactly the greatest first impression. We arrived at Alan's modest Irish cottage, unloaded the van, and started exploring.

Words can't describe the immense beauty of Co. Donegal. But perhaps the most beautiful part of Donegal is the people. They are some of the most genuine, charismatic, interesting people I've ever met. Over the course of the next seven years, I have gained friendships and developed relationships that will last a lifetime. I have experienced things I'll never forget and found a place that I'm proud to call home. Cruit Island, Co. Donegal, Ireland.