

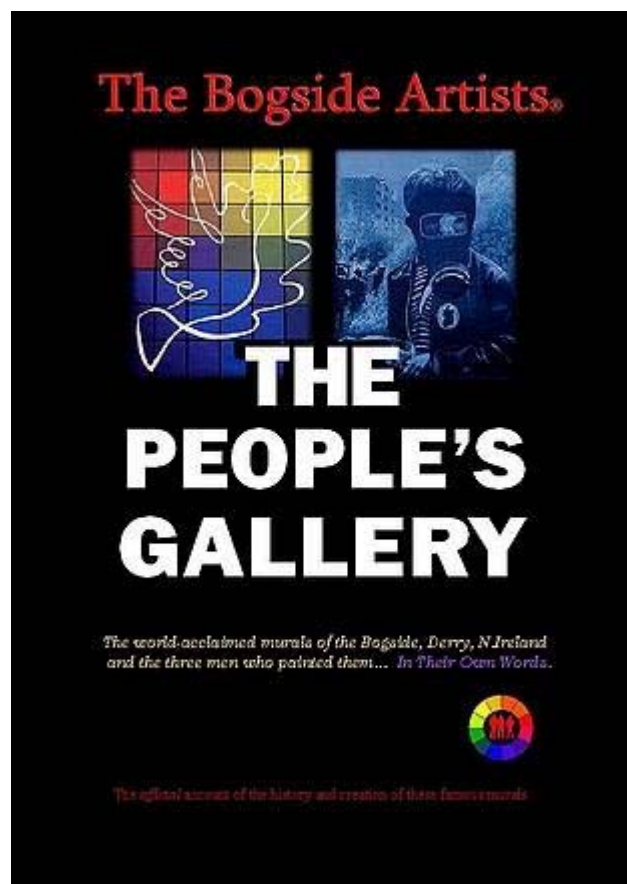
The Bogside Artists' Book

Released on: March 2, 2009, 11:09 am

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Industry: [Travel](#)

Last Friday saw the publication of a book called **The People's Gallery** about the work of **The Bogside Artists** from Derry, N.Ireland. This informative and challenging book, written by them, is on the subject of murals in general, but more specifically, about their own work as painters in the heart of Derry itself, the Bogside. It contains not only spectacular photos of their huge murals from their own archives but commentaries from playwright Brian Friel, Bernadette McAliskey, John Hume, retired Bishop Daly and other figures from the worlds of art and politics. Among its pages you will find humour, anecdote, historical fact and a step-by-step account of the making of a mural. It explores the American-Ireland connection in depth and gives a highly entertaining synopsis of that period of political and spiritual ferment known as The Sixties. For students and visitors alike it is also packed full of historical facts that will make Irish history a breeze for those who want to learn it.



In the wake of the ongoing fiasco that is 'The Turner Prize', this book comes as a breath of fresh air to the musty studios and galleries of modern art. It serves to remind the alienated public what art was originally meant to be and to do. It is a measure of the artists' achievement that they were able to do this work in the face of impossible circumstances and general indifference from the arts funding bodies throughout the UK. It is a measure of their resolve that they continue to paint, in service to their goal of 1993 to make of the Bogside an open-air gallery, a people's gallery, that they have humorously dubbed "The Bogside Modern".

Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume launched the book on the afternoon of Friday, 30th January 2009. He had this to say:

*I feel very privileged and honoured to be with the Bogside Artists on this very important day for the launch of their book - "**The People' Gallery**". The book is a fascinating and entertaining read. As well as accounts of each of the twelve murals, there is a short history of Ireland with special reference to Derry, an interesting look back at world event in the second half of the twentieth century, especially the struggle for civil rights in America and here in the North....As Brian Friel the world renowned playwright said of their work - "The work of the Bogside Artists is celebrated locally and internationally, but it is their reputation that is important both to the artists and to their locality.This publication is an important record of a pivotal period of our history, and I have no doubt that it will make an enormous contribution to the respect for and interest in our city. ... My warmest congratulations again to the Bogside Artists on this outstanding work and I wish them every success."*

The Bogside Artists' Studio in Derry, N.Ireland is home to the three men who painted the famous **People's Gallery** of the Bogside. There, the artists give presentations on their history and conduct tours of their twelve large-scale murals. Two of the artists have recently returned from a U.S. promotional tour for their book *The People's Gallery*. Lavishly illustrated with unique photos, it throws open a high window onto three decades of conflict. You can find out more about the artists from <http://www.bogsideartists.com> where you can also order their book.

It is interesting to note that unlike the famous murals of Mexico the majority of these murals were painted while the conflict was still going on. Moreover, they were financed, not by the government, but by the small contributions of the local citizens. Tom, William and Kevin collected the pennies, cap-in-hand, to finance a project that is now a must-see destination for anyone visiting Ireland and a boon to a struggling city.

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