

Blogpost 31 August 2020 #antainartists

Conor McGinnity, writer in residence of An Táin Arts Centre checking in, to update those interested in my progress.

These last few weeks and months have been totally novel and inspiring for me as an artist. We're currently on draft four of the play that I am working on for production in An Táin Arts Centre and plans are starting to coalesce for its future.

The play itself is called 'Evacuation' and concerns three German soldiers waiting for rescue at the end of World War II.

It's 'Waiting for Godot' but with Nazis, that's how I quickly pitch it anyway.

As a writer, I've always heard tell of the fabled Hollywood 'elevator pitch'. You meet someone prominent as they're getting into the lift and you have less than two minutes to sell them your script. "It's like this but with more of that and set in space," that kind of thing. Although the concept of rolling up and bundling something you care so deeply about into a vaguely tasty ball and quickly tossing it to relative strangers is mildly nauseating, it does serve a purpose. Having a short one or two lines does help in gauging interest and is a good indicator of your concept's solidity. If people react positively to your elevator pitch, there's more of a chance that the actual work itself might be received in a similar manner.

I don't think that's a hard and fast rule, but it does offer a little bit of comfort to the lonely writer; to know that what they're doing, even a bitesize version of it, is in someway half decent/worthy of someone's time.

After draft three of the play itself, we had a reading with several professional actors at a location in Drogheda. I've had work produced and performed before in the radio and short film worlds, but this was very different. It was a much more intimate, purely story and character focused experience. An actor approaches a script or idea in a very different way to a director or producer, even a writer. I'd imagine the off stage creatives view work as an engineer or planner might look at a building; how they're going to set it up, how it might be used, what they want to put here or there. An actor's point of view is very much as a person who's living or working in the building. A lot of fairly obvious things were pointed out fairly quickly. Such is the difference between being a tailor and someone who actually wears the suit.

Speaking of suits, August also marked my wedding to my longtime partner, Rachael. Due to Covid, we had to scale the day right back and ended up travelling across the country with just our immediate families. We had great weather and we couldn't have been happier with the day. It is Rachael's continued support and belief that allows me to be a writer, a dreamer and a scribbler. It is her hard work that ensures that I'm an artist, not a starving one. I'll be forever in her debt.

This residency continues to be a great adventure for me and I'm looking forward to seeing what the rest of it holds!

Conor McGinnty is An Táin Arts Centre's writer in residence. Conor will be in residence during July, August and September 2020. Follow his progress on @antainarts #antainartists