

Endless Beauty
(adornments of joy and despair)

An exhibition by Jane O' Sullivan

Space out Sister
88, Francis Street
The Liberties
Dublin 8
March and April
2025
Tuesday -Saturday 11-6

The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling can create both the worlds of heaven and hell
Emily Brontë

Installing my pieces last week felt performative with some beautiful moments of engagement from passers by.

I was the window dresser, placing my own altered pieces of clothing and handmade adornments on rails as if they were waiting backstage for a performer to wear them.

During the shop hours of March and April (Tuesday -Saturday 11-5) my new work will occupy a unique hovering space of the window area which is inside a lingerie shop, and is also facing the outside world.

The exhibition is waiting patiently to be seen by interested passing persons and people specifically visiting the shop window to view the work.

I'd like to thank Kiki Forrester the owner of Space out sister for inviting me to show my work. I decided to exhibit my growing collection of altered clothing as it hadn't been exhibited before and this venue was ideal to show it.

There are five main pieces of clothing with three bags , all with added embroidered text, two necklaces and four *poetic vessels* (ceramic vases with ribbons and lace cascading out)

There is also an accompanying zine , which is for sale, with the same title as the exhibition. These are all pieces that I have found ,kept until the work starts, and there comes a knowing that it is their time to re- enter the world transformed.

The act of sewing as emotional repair

as described by Louise Bourgeois is the method that I have always used intuitively in my art making.

The act of sewing feels most immediate and natural to me because it's what I have always worked at.

The wording comes intuitively from my own writing or random words I read that resonate with me. A process ensues and through the meditative act of the repetitive stitch just like a mark on a page, a form evolves.

Firstly the blue dress which has courage embroidered on the heart space area of the dress. This dress was found in Paris flea market in 2018.

I was attracted firstly to the beautiful shade of blue which had much sun fading but remained exquisite.

I was going to repurpose the bodice as a jacket to sell but decided to hold on to it. I took some still life photos of the dress placing it on the bed of our beautiful room in the Marais district, it was then the dress started to take on a new existence, indeed a mood. It was left aside until 2023 when I visibly repaired the split seams as an act of salvage and as I needed courage at that time of making so that is what I sewed.

Whilst I was examining it back home in Ireland , I found a label discreetly hand sewn behind a seam, Philippe Venet d.2021 a French couturier with an extremely well respected Paris fashion house.

Philippe was also the life long companion of Hubert de Givenchy. How was it that this dress ended up in such a humble and tattered state.

Courage was a word I was exploring at that time in my research and it is central to my ongoing exploration of the heart space.

Cœur is the French word for heart, this dress is French.

Courage the word is derived from cœur, this dress became so much more than a dress.

To have courage is to speak from the heart and this is my space of exploration with everything I do in my life.

My most recent research has lead me to find a literal embodiment of heart space which is to be found in the traditional Tzeltalero dress made by women from both the Tzeltal and Tojolabal communities in the Lacandón forests in southeastern México.

This dress is made in defiance of their previous colonialist existence and is a uniquely Mayan concept.

The heavily worked, with woven and pleated ribbons, square in the middle of the dress is called the Sni' - yaltis meaning *the heart of the dress*

The dress has a heart, it is alive.

The soul is housed in the heart and you can only imagine how this discovery made me feel.

The yellow organza dress in my exhibition and featured in this zine, with a silk apron which has the words

I am made for this moment and it for me

embroidered in blue thread,

also has a sni' - yaltis of woven vintage ribbons and attached pieces of sacred ephemera.

If I can stop one heart from breaking I shall not live in vain

Emily Dickinson

May blessings around you continue to fall are the poetic words embroidered on to a scrap of antique woven jacquard silk in blue and gold as an "apron" with an extended gold metallic lace precious scrap, red oversized bow , red plastic fake "coral" beads and long string of blood red glass beads which had belonged to my mother.

The whole intricate piece was attached at a later date to a wedding dress crinoline skirt which definitely made the piece into a complete work.

It has been filmed outside gently blowing in the wind like a balloon, and exudes joy.

The last clothing piece is the set of blouse, necklace, corsage and purse titled adornments for joy and despair.

The blouse was a treasured vintage piece made of the romantic sounding *star mist* celanese fabric by Courtaulds textile company.

The emotions of Joy and despair can exist in the same moment and this is a truth that deserved a set of adornments.

The red thread of protection, widely recorded as a colour of higher strength and powers is used to embroider the words Joy (and) Despair.

A necklace of dried rose heads sewn on to red ribbons with very fine real rose gold chain looped along the ribbon as an adornment of great beauty strength and fragility.

A tiny beaded repaired knitted purse with crocheted red thread loops, and minute heart shaped glass perfume bottle.

This piece is now sewn on to the crinoline skirt now as the beginnings of a chatelaine.

The corsage on the star mist blouse, features an empty miniature Nina Ricci heart shaped box with dried rose petals inside and a red threaded crocheted braided handle.

Lastly are the poetic vessels, which consist of three bags and four ceramic , chain and cascading ribbons necklaces.

Following the concept of poetic space as written about by Gaston Bachelard, these pieces contain a much ness and a lightness and serve as points of contemplation.

Sacred stillness

Poignant sorrows

It is all too much

Jane O' Sullivan

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