

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

Within the arts there is an archival impulse, Hal Foster wrote of the instance where the 'archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present'. An archivist develops knowledge of the past through its remains; this can take many forms. In The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969), Michel Foucault refers to the 'archaeologist of knowledge' whose aim is to recover past knowledge and reveal how it relates to our past and how it constructs historical meaning. In his writings the archive governs what is said and unsaid, recorded or unrecorded. For this project the artist, Carol Anne Connolly used old texts and the knowledge of Irish speakers as her source material to create a glossary of terms around the subject of water.

While the Irish language has had considerable institutional and political support as a national language of Ireland, a small minority speaks it. When a culture loses its language, it loses an important aspect of its cultural identity. It relays one's culture, intellect, myth and rituals. As a culture we historically had a close connection with nature and the landscape whereas in more recent times we have become urban centered.

The Water Glossary reclaims our relationship with nature through language. The collection of words reminds us of lost expressions in our native tongue. TULCA, the title of the visual arts festival is "flood, deluge, wave, gust, gush, outpouring". As one reads through the glossary you are struck by the specificity of the terms that relate to Irish weather; such as breacla meaning "dappled day, a day of sun and rain". The poetics of the language are lost in translation and it's the cultural specificity to our landscape as Island dwellers this glossary endeavours to retain.

