

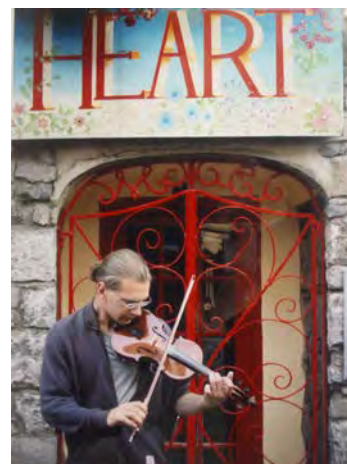
## Galway - A city that brings joy - Merve Yilmaz

I came to Galway for the first time two years ago, in July 2018. It was for an internship occasion and was only for 7 days. When I get off the bus and started walking on Shop Street, I was really surprised and amazed. There were like maybe seven different bands or musicians on the street. They were playing with all their energy, changing the whole atmosphere of the street, crazy crowd -which are mostly tourists- listening to those buskers. I have never seen that kind of thing in my life. Even it was my first day and the first impression of the city, I knew that I do not want to be anywhere else anymore. The thing that is most love about buskers -especially musicians, they have something special between each other.

Everybody can join the bands and there is a bond between the musicians. They are so welcoming and always support each other. I suppose one of the things that Galway City famous for is definitely the buskers. Thinking about the Galway 2020, they have a Galway International Busking Festival for next year in Spanish Arch. Galway is a great city without a doubt but if there were not too many buskers in here I cannot be sure I would be here right now. As a musician -playing ukulele, bodhran and drums, and a performer -contact juggling, the city held me and I wanted to be here. Now it is kind of not possible to do that because of the covid-19 situation. The city mostly empty and when I compared with two years ago Galway and now, it is very heartbroken for me. In conclusion, this is the most amazing thing about Galway City, there are different artists working and playing with so many varieties and forms of arts on the street. It is very inspiring to see how important art to these people and how they make the art available for others to experience and enjoy and be part of. When I first looking at the NUIG's Art Collection in the Photograph section, a musician who plays a fiddle caught my attention. A busker playing from the "Heart" in the city.



Photo by Merve Yilmaz



From the Heart by Aengus McMahon in NUIG Art Collection



Here Comes the Sun by Aengus McMahon in NUIG Art Collection



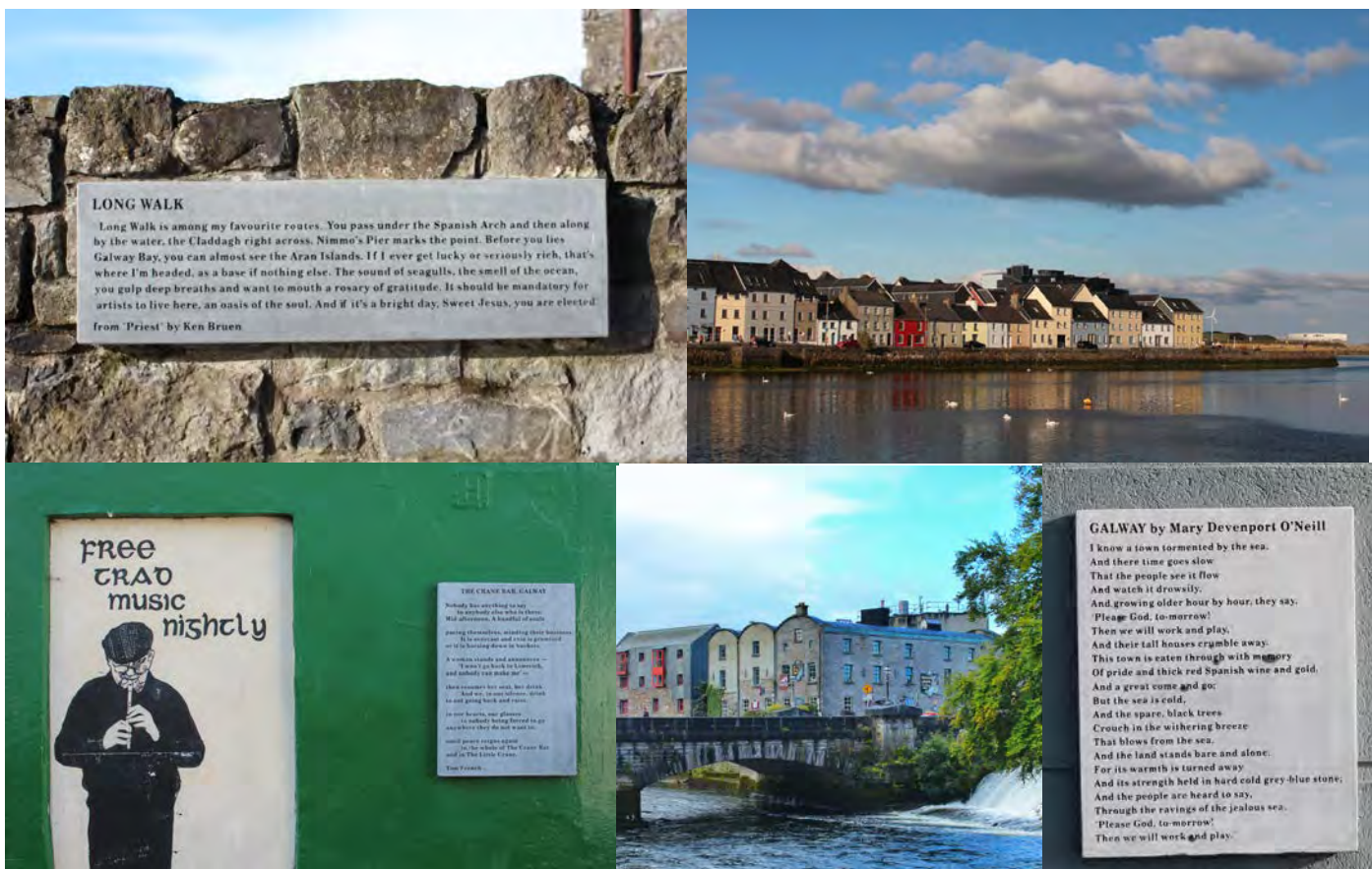
Photo by Merve Yilmaz



Talkative Swan by Pat O'Connor in NUIG Art Collection



Photo by Merve Yilmaz



Photographs by Merve Yilmaz

in Istanbul so far. But in Galway, there is the ocean -which has a view of mountains, river, many beaches, canal, and woods. They are all together and you can go on foot all of these places. It is a small city but it does not feel like a city for me, it looks and feels like a village. It is also on Wild Atlantic Way and Galway is very famous for that. Moreover the NUI Galway near the river and we can have a lovely walk while heading to university. I fall in love with the university campus when I visited two years ago. I thought people who study here really lucky. Now I am here studying at this university. But the thing is, I am not able to experience fully university life. That is really disappointed. I had many dreams about this experience not only in the university, but also in the city. But luckily I live in the city center so I am able to go for a walk or stroll along by the sea, in Long Walk, South Park, River Corrib. I really like the photo of Talkative Swan in the Art Collection. You can see Long Walk, River Corrib and a lovely Swan of Galway. When I walk in Long Walk, I saw a quote on a plaque about the place and then I realize there is another poem just beginning of the River Corrib walk. I really like these poems or pieces about Galway. Then I research it and I found out there is a Galway Poetry Trail which consists of 24 poems around the city and they have situated in the place these poems writing about. I really like this idea and even though we are in lockdown, we still go for this trail and learn something new about Galway culture and art. I learnt that The Galway Poetry Trail is organised jointly by Kennys Bookshop and Galway City Council, and in conjunction with Cúirt International Festival of Literature and has been added to annually since the first plaque was installed in 2005 ([kennys.ie](http://kennys.ie)). I search for this festival and it is Ireland's premiere literary event. Founded in Galway in 1985, Cúirt International Festival of Literature is one of the oldest and most recognised literature festivals in Europe ([evenbrite.ie](http://evenbrite.ie)). I heard of this festival before but I did not know anything about it. I saw that NUI Galway one of the sponsors of this festival.

One of the things that I would like to write about is the Galway International Arts Festival (GIAF). It is one of the first reasons that Galway became a Galway 2020. I could only saw one thing about this festival for this year. I arrived on the 26th of September to Galway I was literally tired as hell.





But it was the last day of Mirror Pavillion and I really wanted to see it. Thus, I went and see that fascinating work. Something that bigger, reflection of the city and the installation... It was magnificent. GIAF also had many online event for this year like everything in this situation. But in my opinion, it does not effective. Even before covid-19, there are some exhibitions that you can visit online. But I believe that it is important to be in the place. The atmosphere, lights, people, roads. Experiencing art and culture cannot be irreducible to fully digital. I am really hoping that covid-19 will get out of our lives and we can experience the city, university and the festivals.

Bio: Merve Yilmaz is from Istanbul and currently studying for her Master's in Creative Arts: Producing and Curation at NUI Galway. While she was studying Journalism in her home town, she has worked in different arts festivals and the Istanbul biennial. She also has worked at in an arts organisation in Ireland.