we make our own histories

— Artist Statement

My artist residency began in 2021 when I established a studio in the National Museum of Ireland — Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks, conceived as a learning lab where dynamic conversations, workshops, and durational art processes resulted in the co-creation of artworks that reflect an exciting time of change in Ireland. The Museum's collections reveal Ireland's past as a colonised country entangled within the British Empire and its revolutionary struggle for independence, reflecting cultural identities and nationhood.

A central proposition during my residency was to consider the National Museum of Ireland as a potential site of social transformation. The residency was an exciting opportunity to generate culturally diverse conversations resulting in artworks positioned within a historical-contemporary nexus, an intersection of colonial and postcolonial histories.

A Dress For Akunma is an African Irish dress designed and produced collaboratively with Nwanne Diuto, a Nigerian women's collective, and artist Bláithnaid McClean. The dress invites a conversation about social change in Ireland, where cultural identities are transforming through a process of hybridisation, described by Homi Bhabha as a reversal of colonial domination.

Many of the collections in the Museum reflect a history of European colonisation of Africa, the subject of my most recent collaboration, a series of postcolonial dialogues mediated through artefacts selected from the Ethnographic Collection by participants from Sudan, South Africa and Nigeria. In the resulting short film, *Remember to Forget the Past* three women narrators explore how the shadow of nineteenth century colonialism continues to affect their lives today.

A Flag For Ireland consists of more than 300 flags produced during a series of artist-led workshops where participants gathered to redesign Ireland's national flag and to reflect on how Ireland can embrace a republic recognising people from all traditions and cultures.

In a similar register, Young People's Assembly, a video installation documenting an all-island forum of 15 - to 18-year-olds engaged in deliberative democracy discussing urgent issues facing their generation. An outcome of the forum is a Manifesto, declaring their beliefs, values, and intentions for a future Republic.

The culmination of my residency is the accession of severalco-produced artworks into the Museum's permanent collection — a multitude of cultures entering and transforming the Museum. The exhibition title, *we make our own histories*, adapted from Karl Marx, insists that we are central to shaping historical narratives. The discovery of my grandfather's contribution to the 1922 War of Independence (documented in the Bureau of Military History) led me to the National Museum of Ireland and the residency. The outcome, a historical continuum that continues to shape and inform collective identities.