

VOICES IN CONFLICT

A

“Many people would love to think the content of the murals is consigned to history, and it’s becoming more and more ancient history, but the reality is some of those issues are still prevalent in society. I don’t have the answers to whether [the murals] support or help that move from a conflict society or whether they don’t, but that’s part of the discussion we have around them.”

Aeidin McCarter, head of culture for the Derry and Strabane Council

B

“These murals are not passive, they don’t just exist there, they’re active spaces. Do they serve to educate people about the past, or do they transfer this sense of trauma and this specific narrative on to new generations?”

Sara McDowell, a lecturer at Ulster University

“These murals are part of our heritage and it’s important for the next generation and foreign visitors who come to Belfast to understand that history. Getting rid of the murals is like bulldozing Auschwitz. The murals came out of a time when the British controlled the media and we needed a voice, when British soldiers were shooting at us. The murals reflect things that are going on in our community, with the support of the community. The fact that they are never graffitied over, and that people approach me on the street to ask me to paint murals, shows how important they are. It is a total insult that politicians say they have been forced on the community.”

C

Danny Devenny, Republican muralist and former IRA prisoner

D

“The history is literally painted on the wall, in the memorials. The story of republicanism and loyalism as a narrative is being told all around you. It’s very visual: it’s fantastic to do a tour.”

Dominic Bryan, a lecturer at Queen’s University, Belfast

E

“I believe the murals have a huge impact on children. Children are very easily influenced and easily led. It’s not hard to pollute an innocent mind. I believe we should be careful about what we show our children because we’re the people that are going to shape them. We need to be fearful that we don’t shape monsters.”

Mark Ervine, a loyalist muralist