

## Afterword: Reflection of Project in Relation to Discourse

The intention behind the project proposal was to have as a theme something intrinsically related to Ireland, to its history and cultural identity but, at the same time, still relevant in relation to the current moment of the country. The folly seemed to satisfy these conditions, even though it belongs to a category of building that is hard to determine: it cannot be considered a type, nor it has a precise definition. At first, the folly offered a good opportunity to discuss current issues of the Irish landscape and also speculate on the possibilities of architecture when detached from the notion of program. More than just a postmodern exercise of overcoming the “form follows function” paradigm, the question was how to guide the decisions involved in design making, without the restrictions or limitations imposed by a programmatic structure. One of the key arguments is that the folly is not just a “programless” building, and its lack of commitment with a specific use does not imply lack of purpose. Architecture has the ability of carrying embedded meanings that stem from its relation to cultural identities and social dynamics, and the folly is an example of that. The Irish follies in the eighteenth century had a political background, making reference to the Plantation period, battles, wars or the Great Famine. The project refers to its essence as a political artifact to claim it as a still relevant, or even necessary tool to discuss the Irish landscape of present days. The symbolism, the processes involved, the link between observer and landscape are the elements to guide the design. The transposition of the conceptual framework of the folly as an architectural object to nowadays sought to update its measuring aspect and to adapt the relationship with the observer from the figure of a stroller walking in a garden to a passer in a highway, but in character the folly remained the same as the picturesque tradition.

The underlying idea of using the folly to reveal processes of change unfolding in landscape is to incorporate the variable time in the design process. In many cases, architectural design focuses on the steps from conception to construction, not taking in consideration how the building itself evolves after that moment. The project is based on the observation that any object placed in the landscape will affect and be affected by the dynamics of the surroundings. Having in mind that the aim here is to debate on the impact of political and social dynamics on the natural environment, process and temporality must be incorporated in the design in a thoughtful way. In discussing the effects of any decisions on nature, one must consider that natural processes keep developing over the years. Hence, the contemporary follies proposed by the project have its time of meaning as a continuum from the moment of placement of the object in the site onwards. Its purpose belongs to the future time. Lies here the idea of an everlasting construction, an architectural device that will be responsive to shifts in the environment and will develop over time with the site where it belongs. This presupposes designing with natural resources in the present, foreseeing a future of uncertainty. Through the folly, the project proposes a reflection of architecture as a narrative discipline.