

Landscape design firm Cavanaugh Stewart Design Associates, jointly headed by NELDHA members Jean Cavanaugh and Ginny Stewart, is among 15 international design firms chosen to participate in the first annual International Garden Festival to be held this summer in Emo Court in County Laois, Ireland. Modeled on similar, world renowned garden exhibitions in Chaumont-sur-Loire, France and in Metis ,Canada, the International Garden Festival was conceived to showcase innovative ideas for outdoor space within the setting of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Neo-classical estate located approximately one hour outside of Dublin. The festival will run for 10 weeks from July 4 to September 9, and is expected to attract landscape designers and garden enthusiasts from all over the world.

As a response to the Festival's inaugural theme of the Gaelic *an Dúchas* or "Roots", designers were asked "to explore and draw inspiration from the richness of their individual cultural background in order to reimagine the contemporary garden". CSDA's winning design draws on the abstract patterns represented by the American patchwork quilt, reinterpreted to express both the stylized naturalism of local landscapes, and to symbolize the larger geometries of American land settlement. CSDA's submission organized a wide variety of largely "immigrant" plants from the Old and New Worlds into strong patterns of form, texture and color. The motif is punctuated with plants indigenous to the United States, as well. "We wanted to include native, purely American botanic representatives in the design", observed Ginny, "in order to suggest the visual and spatial richness that occurs when migrant and native species come into vibrant contact with one another".

Vintage steamer trunks, placed in a curvilinear arrangement provide intriguing counterpoint to the strict geometric composition of the quilt design. "Small, portable trunks were often the only way in which immigrants coming to the United States could transport their few material possessions and memories", noted Jean. "The trunks suggest both the profound dislocation felt by many of the ethnic groups who have immigrated to the United States over the last three hundred years, and the boundless promise implied by a cycle of social migration, adoption and regeneration". The trunks overflow with loose, random arrangements of non-native species, and act as the actual and symbolic conveyor of the wide variety of naturalized plant life that characterizes the American landscape today.

Both Jean and Ginny are quite excited about their firm's participation in the Emo Court event. "We're delighted and honored to represent the United States in a festival that acknowledges both the contributions of our cultural heritage and our own aesthetic vision for the modern landscape", remarked Ginny. "We consider this sort of competition to be an ideal forum in which to test design ideas that pose as many questions as they attempt to answer. It's an approach that defines our everyday landscape practice, and it's gratifying to be recognized for our effort. And we had a lot of fun doing it."