

Irish museum gives leprechauns their due

愛爾蘭博物館平反魔法小精靈



Ireland is hoping to reclaim the leprechaun from Hollywood with a new museum that, with a twinkle in its eye, places the fabled little figures back in their mythological context.

If you are expecting to find leprechauns nestling in a mock Irish valley, you are likely to be disappointed — instead the ultra-modern museum in Dublin aims to give visitors a view of the world from a leprechaun's eye-level.

You are cut down to size in a living room complete with a giant armchair and table and chairs and “shrunk” in a visual trick inside a long tapered tunnel.

The museum even has a rainbow fashioned from hanging ropes leading to a crock of genuine gold — but keeping true to the legend, the bullion is **tantalisingly** out of reach.

The National Leprechaun Museum, which fully opens to the public on April 15, is the brainchild of Tom O'Rahilly, a 43-year-old furniture designer who has let his creative energy **run riot** in a little corner of the Irish capital.

He believes the world has lost sight of the fact that leprechauns and the spirit world from which they sprang have been part of Irish culture for 1,300 years.

But when Irish emigrants to the US carried leprechaun stories across the Atlantic in the 1800s, their image became **distorted**, O'Rahilly says.

“They became shorthand for Irish people — little people, small image,” O'Rahilly said. “I felt leprechauns were getting an unfair press.”

In fact, O'Rahilly argues, the leprechaun embodies much that is good about Irish people — playful and cunning, and prepared to **outwit** you, without resorting to violence.

“There hasn't been an Irish person who has visited so far who hasn't said they had a story handed down through their family about a leprechaun,” O'Rahilly said.

(AFP)

愛爾蘭希望藉由新的博物館取代好萊塢，扭轉世人對小精靈的印象。博物館要在屬於他們的神話環境中，以全新風貌呈現這些神話中的小東西。

如果你以為看到精靈在模擬的愛爾蘭山谷裡過著舒服的生活，那你可能要失望了——這個坐落於首都柏林的超現代博物館，希望讓參觀民眾從精靈的觀點來看世界。

進到博物館，走過一條圓椎型隧道之後，你便感覺身高矮了一節。到了客廳你會看到巨大的扶手椅和桌椅，這些日常熟悉的東西似乎在對我們視覺開玩笑。

博物館中甚有道利用吊繩作成的彩虹，上面掛著裝滿真金的罈子——且為了與精靈的傳說相符，這罈黃金只能遠觀不可褻玩。

國家精靈博物館由四十三歲的家具設計師湯姆·歐拉希利一手策劃，他恣意發揮想像力，讓位於愛爾蘭首都的這個小角落發光發熱。博物館將於四月十五日完全開放。

他認為世界已經遺忘精靈的精神與樣子，而精靈在愛爾蘭文化已經超過一千三百年之久。

歐拉希利表示，一八〇〇年代愛爾蘭移民遠渡大西洋到美國新大陸之後，精靈的樣子就遭扭曲。

歐拉希利說：「對於愛爾蘭人而言，精靈的意義被消滅——他們成為小矮人，形象遭矮化。我認為精靈遭受到不公平待遇。」

歐拉希利說，事實上，精靈代表的就是許多愛爾蘭人好的一面——愛玩又狡猾，不用訴諸蠻力永遠想表現得比你聰明。

歐拉希利說：「所有來過這邊的愛爾蘭人都說他們家庭裡，總是留傳著一則跟精靈有關的故事。」

(法新社／翻譯：吳岱瑋)

Racegoers dressed as Leprechauns talk with bookmakers during St. Patrick's Day at the Cheltenham Festival on March 17, 2010.

PHOTO: AFP

三月十七日，聖派翠克節的切騰翰嘉年華活動上，打扮成小精靈的賽馬觀眾與賽馬賭注登記人說話。

照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **tantalizingly** /ˈtæntl, aɪzɪŋli/ adv.

差一點 (cha1 yi4 dian3)，令人著急地 (ling4 ren2 zhao1 ji2 de5)

例：He was tantalizingly close to winning a gold medal.
(他差一點就贏得金牌。)

2. **distort** /dɪsˈtɔrt/ v.

扭曲 (niu3 qu1)

例：It's alleged that the report deliberately distorted the truth.
(據說那篇報導故意扭曲事實。)

3. **outwit** /ˈaʊt,wɪt/ v.

以智力勝過 (yi3 zhi4 li4 sheng4 guo4)

例：Will outwitted his colleagues to secure a promotion.
(威爾機智勝過同事，獲得升遷的機會。)

LANGUAGE POINT 重要片語

run riot

恣意妄為，任意發揮

If somebody or something is **running riot** it is out of control. According to the article, Tom O'Rahilly let his creative energy **run riot** when designing the National Leprechaun Museum.

Example: “The Lakers **ran riot** against the Hawks in last night's game.”

如果說某人或某物「**run riot**」，就表示失去控制。根據上文，湯姆·歐拉希利在設計國家精靈博物館時，恣意發揮自己的創造力。

例如：「昨晚的比賽中，洛杉磯湖人隊大勝亞特蘭大老鷹隊」。