



## Green Statue in Green East

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**Question:** What is the tall green statue on the first floor of Green east, near the Information Center?

**Answer:**

The green statue in the Information Center is a sculpture titled *Ogham Speaks*, by Irish artist John Coll, acquired from The Kenny Gallery in Galway, Ireland.

[Ogham](#) [1] - or Ogam - is a script that preserves the earliest known form of the Irish language. Druidic in origin, it appeared in Ireland around the second century AD, carved as a series of lines on the edge of "standing stones" and read from the base upward. Standing stones usually marked an important feature or person in the Celtic landscape. The name Ogham is derived from Ogmios or Ogma, the classical god of eloquence.

John Coll notes that "A unique achievement of the Irish nation is that it has produced four Nobel Prize laureates, [W. B. Yeats](#) [2], [George Bernard Shaw](#) [3], [Samuel Beckett](#) [4], and [Seamus Heaney](#) [5]. The success of these modern writers is, I feel, rooted in something that began in the mists of time with our Celtic ancestors. Their verbosity and joy at playing with words has been remarked upon by many early observers. I felt that this should be celebrated in sculpture - the result being *Ogham Speaks*."

Coll's use of a standing stone or othostat-type design suggests this historical link. To further enhance this ancient feel, the Nobel laureates' names are depicted in Ogham on each of the stone's edges. As viewed from the base upward, each face emerges from the stone in a series of steps; the distinctive character of each particular writer is revealed by the individual texture of his face.

- [FAQ](#)

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### Links:

[1] <http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor=ogham &type=subject&submit=Search>

[2] [http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor="Yeats, W. B. \(William Butler\), 1865-1939"&type=author&submit=Search&sort=author](http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor=)

[3] [http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor="Shaw, George Bernard, 1856-1950"&type=author&submit=Search&sort=author](http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor=)



[4] [http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor="Beckett, Samuel, 1906-1989"&type=author&submit=Search&sort=author](http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor=)

[5] [http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor="Heaney, Seamus, 1939-"&type=author&submit=Search&sort=author](http://searchworks.stanford.edu/vufind/Search/Home?lookfor=)