



WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2005

# Ireland's first national Festival of Architecture announced by Environment Minister Dick Roche

Mr Dick Roche, TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, today (Wednesday, 28 September) announced the programme for **Loving Architecture**, Ireland's first national Festival of Architecture, organised by the newly established **Irish Architecture Foundation**. Running throughout October and with some events continuing into November, the festival features more than 50 major architectural events and exhibitions.

**Loving Architecture** is a celebration of all aspects of the built environment and the people who shape it and is timed to coincide with World Architecture Day, which takes place on 3 October. The Foundation has collaborated with a wide range of State, local authority and private organisations to stage more than 50 free events nationwide including walking tours, building visits, exhibitions, conferences, talks, book launches, musical performances and TV programmes.

## Festival highlights will include:

**Master of All the Muses**, an exhibition marking the centenary of the birth of Michael Scott (1905-1989), the symbolic father of modern architecture in Ireland. Michael Scott was not only Ireland's most celebrated architect, but one of the major figures in twentieth-century Irish culture. The range of his achievements is awesome: an actor who toured with the Abbey in the United States and starred in London productions before abandoning the stage for architecture, he was also a leading patron and champion of all the visual arts, from architecture to stamp design.

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) will announce and exhibit ten finalists for the **RIAI Triennial Gold Medal**, Ireland's premier architectural award. On this occasion the Gold Medal is for buildings completed between 1998 and 2000. The winning building will be announced on November 10, when the Mrs Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland, will present the RIAI Gold Medal to the successful architects.

The Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI) will present **Sound and Space**, a series of four musical performances exploring the relationship between architecture and music. On four consecutive Saturdays, musical performances, ranging from Victorian singing to jazz to opera to electronic music, will take place in four buildings in Dublin City Hall, the Chapel in Trinity College, Michael Scott's Busáras and the Irish Architectural Archive on Merrion Square. The AAI has also developed an introductory course of lectures on contemporary architecture for the general public, which will take place in Trinity College on Saturday mornings throughout the festival.

The National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks will host an international conference with speakers from Japan, the United States, Europe, Britain and Ireland celebrating Enniscorthy-born architect and designer **Eileen Gray** (1878-1976), who was "probably the sole representative from Ireland wholly immersed as an outstanding exponent in the pioneering work of the modern movement".

**Galway** and **Roscommon** County Councils will show the results of their pilot Architects-in-Residence programmes, including a series of workshops on domestic architecture for rural locations. Towns and cities will not be forgotten: an exhibition in **Westport, Co Mayo**, will document the building of the town, while in Dublin, The **Reflecting City** exhibition in Pearse Street Library will tell the story of the changing capital during the years 1995-2020. The Irish Georgian Society will set out to explore **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly** on a walking tour of Temple Bar next Monday evening.

Another key moment in the **Loving Architecture** festival will take place next Wednesday, 5 October, when RTE 1 broadcast **Saving Letterfrack**, the television documentary of Ireland's award-winning entry at last year's Venice Biennale, the Olympics of Architecture.

Other highlights will include an exhibition of twentieth-century architectural drawings at the **Irish Architectural Archive**; the Irish Georgian Society's lecture series on **Dublin's Georgian squares**; and the launch of Frank McDonald and James Nix's eagerly awaited book, *Chaos at the Crossroads*.

The Architecture Foundation's Curator, Shane O'Toole, who led the team that co-ordinated Loving Architecture, says there is a very simple idea behind the festival: "Ireland is changing fast and sometimes it's hard to keep up," he said. "You can see the changes in the buildings that surround us. They're part of who we are. And thankfully many of them are getting better. So isn't it time that we started loving architecture again? To pause a while, open our eyes and celebrate the world about us? To let a building put a smile on our faces today?"

Mr O'Toole explained that the primary objective of the **Irish Architecture Foundation**, which was established by Minister Roche in 2005 under the terms of the Government's architectural policy, Action on Architecture, 2002-2005, is to increase the understanding and impact of contemporary architecture in Ireland and to excite a wider public to its aesthetic and cultural value. The Foundation is committed to developing an annual programme to achieve this goal. One initiative is the development and running of an annual festival to coincide with World Architecture Day, which takes place on October 3rd.

Initial core funding for the Foundation has been made available by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Arts Council and the Office of Public Works, as well as the RIAI. Key partners in the Foundation are the RIAI, the Architectural Association of Ireland, Dublin City Council and the Irish Architectural Archive, which provides a home for the Foundation at their newly refurbished headquarters at 45 Merrion Square.

Full details of the Loving Architecture Festival are available at [www.lovingarchitecture.com](http://www.lovingarchitecture.com)

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