



Cultúr Éireann
Culture Ireland



OPEN CALL FOR
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN CURATION
OF IRELAND'S REPRESENTATION AT
THE 19th INTERNATIONAL
ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AT VENICE,
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2025

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INVITATION

Culture Ireland and the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon are inviting expressions of interest to curate Ireland's representation at the *19th International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia* in 2025.

Compelling, ambitious and imaginative proposals are sought for consideration from Irish architects, architecture practices, curators or teams with expertise in architecture.

Please engage with this opportunity, if you are interested in:

- presenting Irish architecture and architecture practice to an international audience;
- using this global platform to stimulate discussion on architecture in and from Ireland;
- gaining international profile and creating future global opportunities for Irish architects;
- touring the exhibition nationally in 2026.

Through Ireland's participation in the *19th International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia*, we seek to reflect the statement of Shelley McNamara and Yvonne Farrell of Grafton Architects, curators of the 2018 Biennale to:

“celebrate the shared culture of architecture, demonstrating how inventive, comforting, exhilarating, modest, heroic architecture can be”.

You are invited to submit a proposal by **noon on Friday, 6th October 2023**.

BACKGROUND

The *International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia*, is the world's leading architecture event. Along with the International Curated Exhibition and collateral events, it features more than 60 national exhibitions from around the world. In 2021, having been postponed from 2020, despite the ongoing challenges of global pandemic, the Venice Architecture Biennale attracted over 300,000 visitors.

Ireland at Venice is Ireland's national representation at the Venice Biennale which is led by Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon. Culture Ireland and the Arts Council are committed to building on Ireland's growing reputation at previous Architecture Biennales.

Through Ireland's participation in the *International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia*, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council aim to raise the profile of Irish architecture and create opportunities for Irish architects internationally.

As well as serving as a global platform for Irish architecture, the Venice Biennale offers architects the opportunity to engage with a diverse international audience, stimulate discussion, and influence future trends in architecture. It also offers the participants a unique opportunity to engage and connect with international architects, curators and collaborators.

2025 Theme

At the time of publishing this invitation, the overall curatorial theme has not yet been announced.

It is the preference that the national representation of Ireland respond to the overall curatorial theme, when available. Should the theme be made public by the closing date it will be found on La Biennale di Venezia website (www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/).

Ireland's Pavilion

Subject to confirmation, it is intended that Ireland will reserve the space currently used in the Arsenale for 2025 (in the same location as Ireland's national exhibitions over the last decade). [Images and maps are available in Appendix 1.](#)

The 19th *International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia* will be held from May to November 2025 and Ireland's Pavilion must be open throughout the full exhibition period.

Irish Tour

It is a requirement that the exhibit is returned to Ireland for a national tour in 2026 for the benefit of Irish audiences. Consideration must be given to this tour in the development of proposals.

DETAILS OF OPEN CALL

Culture Ireland and the Arts Council are seeking expressions of interest from those who wish to curate and present an exhibition to represent Ireland at the *19th International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia 2025*.

The applicant must be

- an architect, architectural practice or curator with expertise in architecture or
- a team, which must include an architect as a core member of the team and may comprise, curators, makers and other practitioners.

In the case of all group applications the application must name the curator as lead applicant who will then be the main contact throughout the project.

Those making a submission must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge and skill to develop, manage and deliver an exhibition of the scale to represent Ireland in Venice in 2025 and to tour it in Ireland in 2026.

For the *19th International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia 2025* proposals are sought on the following basis:

- The focus of the proposal must be a topic or subject area which is explicitly relevant to contemporary aspects of architecture in Ireland, such as its culture, theories, practices, practitioners, histories, future directions. Such focus should relate to the international context and forum for architecture that is part of the Venice Biennale;
- The proposal may involve presenting one architect or architectural practice or presenting the work of a number of Irish architects. In such cases the architect or architects to be exhibited must be listed and their engagement confirmed at the time of making the proposal;
- The proposal should be ambitious and reflect the scale of the opportunity, and the fact that the exhibition will be representing Ireland on this world stage;

- The curator to lead the delivery of the exhibition must be identified in the proposal. The curator must be Irish or resident in Ireland;
- The appointed team will be responsible for concept, design, delivery and management of the exhibition in Venice in 2025 and its subsequent return and national tour in Ireland during 2026;
- Consideration should be given to sustainability in all stages of the life-cycle of the project.

CULTURE IRELAND SUPPORT

Culture Ireland is the named Commissioner for the Venice Biennale. Culture Ireland will work with the successful applicant and support the project in relation to communications, launch and opening events. A guide to exhibiting at the Venice Biennale will be made available to assist in delivery of the selected project for 2025.

Experience

It is desirable that the applicant has experience of:

- Developing, curating and mediating large-scale exhibitions / projects;
- Communicating architecture to the public through exhibitions;
- Working with a range of international contacts and networks, relevant to the arts and cultural sectors;
- Generating and managing private and public funding;
- Experience of working with the media and stakeholders in the promotion of the arts and/or cultural projects.

BUDGET

A core budget has not yet been finalised for the 2025 Biennale, although a baseline operating budget of approx. €410,000 may be used as a guideline, comprising €280,000 from Culture Ireland and €130,000 from the Arts Council.

The space used by Ireland in the Arsenale has a venue rental estimated to be €160,000. This rental cost is included in the overall budget of c. €410,000 and paid directly by Culture Ireland to La Biennale. Therefore, the estimated net operating budget is €250,000. It has been the experience of previous representations at Venice that significant fundraising was required to supplement the budget to realise the ambition and scale of the selected project.

A separate budget of up to €100,000 will be made available by the Arts Council for the national tour in 2026. This will require a separate application to the Arts Council in late 2025.

Within the operating budget, the successful applicant must cover:

- The design, development and production of their concept;
- The delivery of all appropriate exhibition graphics, images, equipment and materials as needed to communicate and mediate the exhibition to a public audience, internationally and nationally;
- All shipping, installation and de-installation and return costs of the exhibition;
- All travel and accommodation in Venice for the curatorial team, installation team, participating team and invigilators;
- Costs associated with the promotion of the exhibition;
- The delivery of an opening launch event in Venice in May 2025.

The successful team will be required to set up a project management plan, including a financial management and reporting structure, and agree this with Culture Ireland and the Arts Council when signing the Grant Agreement.

EXHIBITION BRIEF

Criteria

Applications will be assessed and selected on the basis of the following criteria:

Artistic Quality

- The clarity of the proposed architectural concept, design and output and its relevance to contemporary Irish architectural practice in the context of architecture culture, ideas, challenges and practices in Ireland;
- The artistic track record of the applicant and the artistic personnel involved in the project as evidenced in their CVs and other supporting materials submitted;
- The creative vision, ambition, originality and competency demonstrated in the proposal.

Meeting the Objectives

- The ambition, innovation, quality and appropriateness of the proposal to represent Ireland to an international audience in the context of the platform of the Venice Biennale;
- The relevance and compatibility of the proposal to represent contemporary Irish architectural practice in the international context of the Biennale taking account of trends, issues or themes in contemporary practice;
- The ambition and capacity to deliver the national tour in 2026.

Feasibility

- Experience, expertise and success in mediating, communicating and delivering exhibitions of architecture to diverse audiences including networking skills and international connections;
- Experience in project management of significant projects and evidence of producing and delivering projects internationally bearing in mind the need to meet significant time and travel commitments;
- Experience in budget management and fundraising capacity;
- A full life-cycle plan for the exhibit setting out the sustainability of the project considering materials, travel and transport, re-use etc.

SUBMISSION

Proposals outlining the applicant's ideas, approach and capacity to deliver a presentation of the scale required to represent Ireland at the 19th *International Architecture Exhibition at Venice, La Biennale di Venezia* in 2025 should:

- Include a completed cover sheet ([please use the template provided at Appendix 2](#));
- Include a working title;
- In the case of a team, identify the full team and their individual roles including that of the lead applicant / curator;
- Include confirmation of agreement from an architect or architects in cases where their work is to be exhibited;
- Include a detailed outline of your creative vision for the proposal and the architectural output to be exhibited;
- Explicitly address all criteria outlined above;
- Include an outline plan for the national tour of the exhibition in Ireland in 2026 (where and why);
- Include a life-cycle sustainability plan for the exhibit;
- Not exceed **5 x A4 pages in PDF format** (excluding the cover sheet);
- Be accompanied by all relevant biographies

All applications must be submitted by email to IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie by noon, 6th October 2023

SELECTION PROCESS

STAGE I

All proposals will be evaluated by Culture Ireland and the Arts Council according to the above assessment criteria and shortlisted candidates will be invited to Stage II of the selection process.

STAGE II

Interview

Stage II will be an interview by a panel comprising:

- An independent Chair
- A representative of Culture Ireland
- A representative of the Arts Council
- Two architects of international standing

As soon as the jury members have been confirmed, their names will be notified to (shortlisted) applicants by Culture Ireland and the Arts Council and any change in panellists will be advised to shortlisted candidates in advance of interview.

It is envisaged that interviews will take place in Dublin in late November 2023.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- This call for submissions is open to architects, architecture practices, curators or teams with an expertise in architecture. Applicants should be Irish or resident in Ireland.
- Submissions will not be returned.
- No fees or expenses will be paid for participation in either stage of the selection process.
- The receipt of each proposal will be acknowledged by email.
- All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application following each stage of the process they participated in.
- Culture Ireland and the Arts Council reserve the right to appoint an individual or team to curate Ireland's national representation at Venice if the open submission process does not lead to a successful outcome.
- The decision made by the selection panel is final.

FEEDBACK

Written feedback will be provided to all shortlisted applicants based on the evaluation criteria outlined.

Ireland at Venice is an initiative of Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon

SELECTION TIMELINE

*Submissions must be received by **noon, 6TH October 2023***

All proposals will be acknowledged by Culture Ireland.

Successful short-listed applicants will be notified in early November 2023 at the latest. Shortlisted applicants will be provided with details of Stage II submission requirements at that time.

Stage II applicants will be required to present at interview at a date in late November 2023 (to be confirmed at a later stage).

Announcement of successful proposal will follow completion of Stage II of the selection process.

CONTACT

Any enquiries regarding submissions should be sent by e-mail to:
IrelandAtVenice@cultureireland.gov.ie