Press Release

**Infra –Éireann – Ireland’s entry at Venice Architectural Biennale 2014**

Friday, 9th May, 2014: The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan T.D., today announced details of Ireland’s participation at the 14th International Architecture Biennale Exhibition in Venice this June.

Busáras, Dublin was chosen as the location for this announcement as it is an iconic building of the past century and honours the memory of the recently deceased artist Patrick Scott, who worked on this build as a young architect and is generally accredited with the design of the mosaics on the cantilever style roof terrace.

Ireland’s entry for the 2014 exhibition has been commissioned and curated by John McLaughlin and Gary Boyd. The theme of La Biennale 2014 ‘Absorbing Modernism’ invites countries to look at the interaction between global modernisation on the one hand and local architectural cultures on the other.

Ireland’s presentation 'Infra Éireann – Making Ireland Modern 1914 – 2014' chronicles the iconic and landmark structures which have formed the backdrop to an emerging, and developing Irish nation. Presenting landmark infrastructure in Ireland, on a decade by decade basis over the last one hundred years, it simultaneously captures the story of the Irish nation-building.

Speaking at the launch, Minster Deenihan said:

“Contemporary Irish architecture has a global identity and reach. This exhibition, ‘Infra – Éireann’, provides a wonderful overview of the last 100 years of architectural development within Ireland. By highlighting iconic buildings such as the Ronald Tallon designed RTÉ Studios at Donnybrook, the Roseleven Telephone Exchange in Athlone by Noel Dowley, and the designing of bridges, interchanges and roads by Grafton architects, this exhibition tells the story of an Ireland emerging from the past and the foundation of the State, to the present day.”

The International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia - is the world’s most important international showcase for architecture and represents a unique opportunity to present and promote the strength of Irish architecture to a world-wide audience.

Ireland at Venice, an initiative of Culture Ireland of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in partnership with the Arts Council, aims to extend a worldwide awareness of the best of Irish architecture and increase opportunities for Irish architects abroad.

As well as serving as a global showcase for architecture, the Biennale allows Irish architects engage with international audiences, showcase their work, and influence future trends. Recent figures for the architectural biennale show that in excess of 178,000 visitors, including
thousands of students from around the world visit the Biennale. The Biennale runs from 7th June 2014 to 23rd November, 2014.

John McLaughlin added:

“Infra-Éireann looks back at the role of Irish architects in the design of everyday infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, roads and bus stations. It highlights the way that these architects contributed to the making of the cultural identity of modern Ireland, and it looks forward to the emerging field of data and the role that the profession can play in the ongoing absorption of modernity under globalisation.”

Ireland at Venice exhibition will be presented in the Arsenale in an area which attracts a high footfall and is a strategic location for visitors. The presentation will also be available online through Irelandvenice.ie in order to access the widest possible audiences.

Audiences at home will have the chance to experience this informative and exciting exhibition - Infra Éireann when it undertakes a national tour in 2015 on its return from Venice. The Irish tour of Ireland at Venice 2014 will be supported by the Arts Council as part of its commitment to promote architecture to Irish audiences.

ENDS/

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Notes to the Editor

About Ireland at Venice

The Venice Biennale has for over a century been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. The Biennale dates back from 1895, when the first International Art Exhibition was organized. In the 1930s new festivals were born: Music, Cinema, and Theatre (the Venice Film Festival in 1932 was the first film festival ever organised). In 1980 the first Architecture Exhibition took place, and in 1999 Dance made its debut at the Venice Biennale.

The Venice Biennale remains the most important international showcase for contemporary arts. The biennial International Art and Architecture Exhibitions offer a unique opportunity for Ireland to showcase Irish imaginations to the world. The Biennale is a vital platform for Irish artists, curators and commissioners to gain international profile and to generate opportunities for them to present their work outside of Ireland. Irish artists Norah McGuinness and Nano
Reid, were the first of many Irish artists to exhibit at the Venice Biennale in 1950. The late Patrick Scott represented Ireland at Venice Art Exhibition in 1960.

Since 2005, national representation at the Venice Biennale has been an initiative of Culture Ireland, in partnership with the Arts Council. Both partners consider the Venice Biennale to be an important opportunity for artists' development and for Irish curators to work in an international context.

**Previous Irish Representation at the Venice Architecture Biennale**

**2012**

Heneghan peng

**2010**

deBlacam and Meagher

**2008**

**Commissioners**

Ms. Nathalie Weadick, Director of the Irish Architecture Foundation, and Dr. Hugh Campbell, Senior Lecturer in Architecture at UCD

**Architects**

Grainne Hassett.

Gerry Cahill

O’Donnell + Tuomey

Patrick Lynch and Simon Walker

McCullough Mulvin

Dara McGrath in association with Robinson Mcllwaine

De Paor Architects

Cian Deegan and Alice Casey from TAKA

Grafton Architects

**Biographical Note:**

**John McLaughlin: Co-Comissioner/Curator**
John McLaughlin is a practicing architect whose work covers a range of scales integrating architecture with urbanism, landscape and art. He is interested in exploring an expanded field for architecture through interdisciplinary work and has collaborated in this with other architects, engineers, landscape designers and visual artists.

He actively engages with opportunities for research projects and exhibitions. In 2012 he curated the Irish Pavilion at the Venice International Architecture Biennale, under the title *Shifting Ground* (www.shiftingground.ie) which was very well received both nationally and internationally. He has participated in many other international architecture exhibitions including: *Architectures of Protest* – Third Lisbon Architecture Triennale (2013); *New Urbanity* - Deutsches Architektur museum Frankfurt (2009); *The Flood* – Second Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (2005); *43 Schools of Architecture* – Fifth Venice Architecture Biennale 1991 (college thesis project).

He is a graduate of UCD. After college he worked in Paris and London for over a decade on major cultural and civic projects before returning to settle in Dublin. He was director of architecture with Dublin Docklands Authority where he directed many groundbreaking projects including the Grand Canal Square development before starting private practice. He is currently Senior Lecturer (part-time) in Queens University Belfast School of Architecture and a Visiting Lecturer in both UCD School of Architecture and Cork Centre for Architectural Education.

www.johnmclaughlin.ie

**Gary A. Boyd: Co-Commissioner/Curator**

Gary A. Boyd has a long established record of communicating architecture through teaching, publications and other means. He has been involved in teaching both history and theory and architectural design in schools of architecture since 1998, initially as college lecturer in UCD before embarking to UCC as senior lecturer at the inception of the new school there in 2006. Earlier this year he took up the post of Reader in architecture at Queens University Belfast.

Having graduated from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow in 1997, he took a PhD from University College Dublin in 2002. He was one of the founding members of GLAS: Glasgow Letters on Architecture and Space (www.glaspaper.com) and edited building material: the Journal of the Architectural Association of Ireland between 2004 and 2006. Other publications include *Hospitals, Spectacle and Vice: Dublin 1745-1922* (Four Courts Press, 2002) which looked at the influence of institutions on the spatial and cultural development of early modern Dublin and, more recently, (with Denis Linehan) he co-edited *Ordnance: War + Architecture & Space* (Ashgate Press, 2013) which investigates the relationship between militarism and the production of the built environment. Current projects include co-curating (with Fiona Kearney) *Folly: Art after Architecture*, an exhibition at the Glucksman Gallery, Cork.
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