

T1918

NC 0021247 4



m0057296NC

The National College of Art and Design
Fine Art: Painting

The Irish Museum of Modern Art

*An assessment of the Irish Museum of Modern Art
as it enters a new phase of self-definition.*

by
Niamh Ann Kelly

Submitted to the
Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of
B.A. Joint Honours in the History of Art and Fine Art: Painting
1997

The National College of Art and Design
Fine Art Training

The Irish Museum of Modern Art

An account of the Irish Museum of Modern Art
by a series of articles by the following

John and Kelly

Richardson

History of Art and Design and the Fine Arts
by Richard Richardson for the Library of
the Irish Museum of Modern Art and Fine Art Training

1997

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Philomena Byrne, Aileen Corkery, Orla Dukes, Charles J. Haughey,
Vivien Igoe, Gordon Lambert, Catherine Marshall, Declan McGonagle, Brenda
McParland, Helen O'Donoghue and Jean Stanley.

Table of Contents

Introduction: A Paradigm of Ireland or a Homage to Internationalism?...	page 06
Chapter One: The History - A Personality Forms.....	page 10
The Founding.....	page 10
The Director.....	page 12
The Building.....	page 13
The Infancy.....	page 16
Chapter Two: The Internal Structure - A Personality Develops.....	page 19
The Education and Community Programme.....	page 20
Projects with Older People.....	page 21
Unspoken Truths.....	page 22
Projects with Children, Young People and Third Level.....	page 22
The Ideology of the Programme.....	page 23
The Artists Work Programme.....	page 24
The Ideology of the Programme.....	page 25
Chapter Three: A Personality is Presented.....	page 27
The Temporary Exhibition Programme.....	page 27
Main Exhibitions: 1991-1996.....	page 27
The Ideology of the Programme.....	page 29
The Permanent Collection.....	page 30
Donations and Longterm Loans.....	page 30
Purchases/Commissions.....	page 32

Table of Contents

Introduction: A Symposium of Ideas on a Hong Kong International	page 1
Chapter One: The History of a Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Two: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Three: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Four: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Five: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Six: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Seven: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Eight: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Nine: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Ten: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Eleven: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twelve: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Fourteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Fifteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Sixteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Seventeen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Eighteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Nineteen: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-One: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Two: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Three: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Four: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Five: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Six: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Eight: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Twenty-Nine: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-One: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Two: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Three: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Four: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Five: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Six: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Seven: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Eight: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Thirty-Nine: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-One: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Two: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Three: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Four: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Five: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Six: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Seven: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Eight: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Forty-Nine: The Personality Form	page 10
Chapter Fifty: The Personality Form	page 10

	The Ideology of the Collection.....	page 32
Chapter Four:	A Personality is Contested.....	page 34
	The Press and Public Relations Department.....	page 34
	The Corporate Identity Research Project	page 35
	IMMA, The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery And The National Gallery.....	page 36
	The Name.....	page 37
Conclusion:	Whose Museum Is It?.....	page 39
Appendices:	Interviews - in chronological order.....	page 43
	Helen O'Donoghue.....	page 44
	Philomena Byrne.....	page 52
	Orla Dukes.....	page 59
	Catherine Marshall.....	page 63
	Gordon Lambert.....	page 69
	Charles J. Haughey.....	page 75
	Declan McGonagle.....	page 77
	Brenda McParland.....	page 90
Bibliography:	Books.....	page 97
	Articles, Press Releases and Archives.....	page 100
	Interviews.....	page 101

List of Plates

Figure 1:	Chart - Functions of the Museum.....	page 41
Figure 2:	Chart - Departmental Structure of the Museum.....	page 42

Introduction

IMMA - A Paradigm of Ireland or a Homage to Internationalism?

Much of the current cultural discourse, that of postmodernism, is concerned with non-definition, relative definition and polemic definition. Through these analytical processes it is assumed that the positive definition of an identity emerges. It is as the Hungarian poet Janos Pilinszky wrote "I am because I am not" (Pilinszky, 1989, p.68).¹ If the Irish Museum of Modern Art is an institute of the present time, as it undeniably is, then its identity is inextricably bound up with the postmodern discourse. The institute is 'something' because it is not 'something else'. Any ideology is in part a rejection of previous ideologies and therefore an engagement with the tradition of ideologies. As Charles Jencks wrote: "Post-Modernism has the essential double meaning: the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence" (Jencks, 1996, p.30).

Indeed IMMA stands firmly in a 'new wave' of a museum ideology, which whilst defying the older absolute model of the 'treasure house', roots itself in an engagement with it through questioning, and thereby providing queries, debate and outright contention. The Victorian and Albert Museum in London no longer looks to consolidate preconceptions; the Museum of Modern Art in New York rotates its collection in different groupings. This presentation of the 'unfixed' is a recent ideology, an international ideology, based on a reaction to the nineteenth century model of the museum, though as such is yet still involved with it. By its very nature, the new 'museumology', crucial to a discussion of IMMA, is difficult to define. It implies that it self-consciously addresses the notion of multiculturalism. In crude terms, multiculturalism is an umbrella notion implying the equality of cultures, all cultures. Specifically relevant to this discussion is the suggested egalitarian state of divergent culture production: the source of the

¹ The poem of Janos Pilinszky (1921 - 1981) quoted here is *Two*, and in complete form runs: *Two white weights are watching each other, / Two snow white and pitch black weights. / I am because I am not.*

divergence being considered a unifying factor in an inter-cultural zone. Hence IMMA can be seen to have embraced this movement through its exhibiting of artists' work from many countries and communities. There is an inherent and unavoidable problem in the multicultural discourse which stems from its 'idealistic' (as opposed to realistic) basis. It is not a fundamentally practical notion. There is the omnipresence of a dominant culture, specific to the situation, where multicultural becomes a mechanism for the reduction of culture or cultures. This is perhaps best exemplified by Charles Jencks when he writes: "There are six thousand languages today and the predictions are that in thirty years, if modernization is not slowed, there will be three hundred" (Jencks, 1996, p.8). The hegemony of discourse is a constant threat to a multicultural reality as the muscling of one presence over another is inevitable when culture meets culture. As Jean Fisher writes:

'Multiculturalism', as interpreted and practiced by western institutions, has been their response to pressure from the postcolonial world to acknowledge in some way the diverse histories and effects of modernity's vast global migrations to and from centres of power and their peripheries and the consequent multiple communities of the 20th century metropolis. This in itself, however, is a narrow interpretation that tends to lead to homogenize complex global relations (Fisher, 1994, p.x).

Perhaps multiculturalism is best interpreted as a proclaimer of the 'New Internationalism', as cultural production becomes increasingly linked to the 'nation' state, (an artist is defined as Irish, British, American etc.). Whilst the new language of Internationalism could itself be a homogeneous threat to the doctrine it claims, the provision of a truly 'international space' through museum spaces is ideologically possible, if not practically proven. It is a highly fragile zone to operate within, and the realistic probability of successfully re-zoning space within a country as non-specific, i.e. 'International', seems slight. However, it is just this that IMMA claims to do, or wants to do. Declan McGonagle, Director of the museum, has spoken of IMMA 'in conversation with the world and in an Irish accent'. He has unwittingly addressed the source of the contradiction that IMMA implies - its physical location seems to be a contravention of its ideological location.

The Royal Hospital Kilmainham exists in a significantly Irish paradigm. The building and grounds which house the museum and studios are a standing symbol of Ireland's history. The history of the site and its close proximity to Kilmainham Gaol all lend to a

significance which points to what Fintan O'Toole describes as "an unpredictable past" (Kilmainham Gaol, 1991, p.11). There is a double meaning suggested in the name of the museum, *The Irish Museum of Modern Art*. On one hand it is a specifically Irish appellation, and on the other, it is an obvious reference to an international code of museums. It is this that has led to much criticism of the museum.

Public critics like Gerald Davis and Marie-Therese Farrell, have focussed their criticisms on what they consider a lack of an Irish content. In the Irish Times, on the 11th November 1996, Marie-Therese Farrell wrote: "We all feel very deprived and long for the opportunity to see again our own Irish artists". On the 25th July 1996, also in the Irish Times, Gerald Davis took the criticism further, writing: "The current policy of promoting that which is internationally fashionable is, in essence, provincial". This criticism was endorsed by the recent market research findings which demonstrated that the public visiting IMMA expect and want a greater Irish emphasis. This is an issue which raises the question as to whether the museum is, or should be, to reference Barthes, 'author-based' or 'reader-based'.

These issues of both the 'Irish' and the 'International' are paramount to a discussion of IMMA and its emerging identity. Perhaps the most testing point is to divine whether this embodiment of the 'double meaning' is active or passive; planned or unplanned; conscious or unconscious. To assess the standing of the museum, a close look at what it does and what it claims to do is fundamental. There were no policy documents published for the museum in 1991, or indeed since, which meant that in order to establish the aims of those working there, direct communication was essential. In order to do this, interviews were undertaken with all key members of staff, and with other figures significant in the museum's founding. Hence all direct quotations from these interviews are not referenced as they are printed in full at the end of this document. Also, the NCAD Archive Files proved to be the source for much of the historical research which relies considerably on newspaper coverage and press releases from IMMA. Arising out of this primary information, was the definition of an identity which the staff coordinators were clear about, but the pertinent question to be explored is, *is any one else?*

The Irish Museum of Modern Art, a State sponsored institution, was opened in May 1991. Since then it has become essential to the growing visual culture of Ireland. A site of both Irish and International art practice, its presence is strongly felt in Dublin. The Glen Dimplex Award now ranks alongside the prestigious Turner Prize of the Tate Gallery; to be part of the Artists Work Programme is an ambition of many working artists in Ireland and there is also considerable interest from abroad; the building and grounds are majestic in scale and quality. There is rarely a discussion in Dublin among artists or critics in which the museum and its policies are not raised, questioned and debated. An aspiration of many, it had taken years for concrete action to be taken to initiate Ireland's own museum of modern art. Once the final decision was made to house it at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, the museum very quickly established an undeniably tenacious presence in Dublin. It has become the centre of artistic attentions and debate.

* * * * *

In order to present a balanced discussion of IMMA, given the nature of the resources available, the following is an attempt at compiling a critical document of IMMA - a mapping out of the founding, the history to date, the departmental structure, the declared ideologies and through this an assessment of the inherent implications and criticisms, both public and ideological. As Suzi Gablik wrote in her introduction to *The Re-enchantment of Art* :

To start with, I shall argue the case for both sides... without pitting one side against the other, in order to draw the whole picture... I believe that the most fruitful developments are likely to take place where these opposing lines of thought meet (Gablik, 1991, p.9).

Chapter One

The History - A Personality Forms

On the 26th of May 1991, Aidan Dunne wrote in *The Sunday Tribune*: "The opening yesterday of the Irish Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, marks Dublin's cultural coming of age in the special year". In 1991 Dublin was the Cultural Capital of Europe. The Irish Museum of Modern Art, it was hoped, would place Ireland firmly on the cultural map of the world. The founding, setting up and subsequent establishing of IMMA seemed to the public eye like a sudden occurrence, but it had been a much promoted idea for many years. The intense persistence of a number of people central to the art world lead to its eventual establishment. It now seems difficult to imagine an Ireland without IMMA - yet it is only five and a half years in existence.

The Founding

The museum was launched amid much publicity and public debate, at a time previous to the establishment of the Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht. As Helen O'Donoghue, Coordinator of the Education and Community Programme at IMMA, stated: "The museum opened at a time when the politics of art were very relevant to this type of development..." A key figure in this development was Gordon Lambert. He is a prominent collector of artwork, both Irish and International. By the mid-eighties, his collection had become one of the largest private collections in the State and he wanted it to be seen by a larger public. Since much of the work dated from the 1960s onwards, it seemed most suited to a museum of modern art. The starting point of the museum was this collection, along with works donated to the State by Sidney Nolan.

Another instrumental figure in the founding of the museum, arguably the founder of IMMA, was Charles J. Haughey, the Taoiseach of the State at the time. An apt definition

of his involvement was provided by a report in the *Irish Independent*, on the 8th of February 1990, which referred to IMMA as Charles Haughey's "pet project". A noted and committed pioneer of the visual arts in Ireland (he was responsible for introducing the tax exemption for practising visual artists in 1969), he had been interested in the idea of a new museum of modern art for some time, and was in a position to make it happen. When questioned as to his motivations for founding IMMA, he replied: "We had the National Gallery, which was the traditional home of the Irish collection - the traditional type of National Gallery. There was no national institution for Modern Art".

In the public mind, there were two sites in consideration for the new museum. One was the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, which already housed the National Centre for Culture and the Arts; the other was a site known as 'Stack A', which was in the city centre, on the quays. There was considerable public debate concerning the choice of site. Both Gordon Lambert and Charles Haughey felt that 'Stack A', which would have to be extensively rebuilt, would take too long and cost too much to prepare. The Royal Hospital building, on the other hand, would require comparatively minor adjustments to convert it into a museum of modern art. Gordon Lambert has pointed out in a recent interview that the estimate for the 'Stack A' project was £20 million, and that he saw the Royal Hospital as "the only place that would do justice to my collection". Whilst Charles Haughey may have perceived that Stack A was "never a serious proposition", many quietly considered it a more central location. As Joan Fowler remarked in an article in *Circa* which coincided with the opening of IMMA: "there was an undercurrent of apprehension because the location was widely considered to be unsuitable" (Fowler, 1991, 32). This marked the beginning of the debates that were to follow most aspects of the new museum's emerging identity. This debate however, was halted by authoritative action on the part of Charles Haughey, who announced on October 5th 1987, that a Gallery of Modern Art would be established in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

He set up an advisory committee chaired by Pádraig Ó hUiginn (then secretary at the Department of the Taoiseach) to investigate the possibilities of the new museum. The committee included Gordon Lambert, Dorothy Walker (an art critic), Anthony Cronin (the Taoiseach's arts advisor), Noel de Chenu (principal architect at the Office of Public

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms of the system. It highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that considers both the physical and biological aspects of the problem. The authors argue that a purely mechanical model is insufficient to capture the complexity of the system, and that a more integrated approach is necessary.

2. The second part of the paper presents a detailed analysis of the experimental data. The authors show that the data is consistent with the proposed model, and that the model can be used to predict the behavior of the system under various conditions. They also discuss the limitations of the model and the need for further research to improve its accuracy.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the implications of the findings for the field of research. The authors suggest that the results could be used to develop new treatments for the condition being studied, and that they could also be used to improve our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the system. They also discuss the potential for future research in this area.

4. The final part of the paper is a conclusion. The authors summarize the main findings of the paper and reiterate the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms of the system. They also discuss the potential for future research in this area and the need for a comprehensive approach that considers both the physical and biological aspects of the problem.

Works), Patrick Murphy (chairman of Rosc), and Raymond Keaveney (deputy director of the National Gallery). In November 1989, Charles Haughey issued a directive from the Taoiseach's office which stated that the funding of £500,000 for the establishment of the new museum would be from the National Lottery as, in his words, "One of the areas stipulated for support by the National Lottery is culture". The immediate 'adjustment' scheme cost £1.1 million, with the Office of Public Works providing the balance. Thus the initial decisions were made.

Charles Haughey then appointed the following committee as the first Board of the museum: Gillian Bowler as Chairperson (businesswoman and art collector), Louis le Brocquy (artist), Anthony Cronin, Brian Fallon (chief critic of the Irish Times), Gordon Lambert, Shelley McNamara (architect), Adrian Munnelly (then Director of the Arts Council), Padraig O hUiginn, Lochlann Quinn (businessman and art collector), Dorothy Walker, Mike Murphy (broadcaster and businessman), John Meagher (architect), Maurice A. Foley (businessman and art collector) and J. Donnelly (businessman and art collector). Their term of office was five years.

The Director

The initial and foremost objective of the Board was to appoint a director for the museum. According to a report in the Irish Independent of February 1990, there were over twenty applications for the directorship. In 1990 the board announced that Declan McGonagle was to be appointed the Director for the inaugural five years of the museum starting from January 1991. The appointment was hailed both in national and international circles. Aidan Dunne writing in the Sunday Tribune on the 15th of April 1990, on the appointment, referred to Declan McGonagle's "individual flair". He went on to write that Declan McGonagle was "just the man to provide that imaginative, unconventional approach". Also on the same day, John Hutchinson wrote in *The Sunday Press* of the appointment as a "courageous and welcome decision", declaring that "all of a sudden, the Museum of Modern Art has come alive". Certainly, the original promoters of the museum were satisfied. Charles Haughey recently referred to it as a "superb

appointment”, and Gordon Lambert claimed “being an Irishman and a Northern Irishman, he was just ideal - it was fate.”

A noted curator, Declan McGonagle was a well-known figure in the Irish art scene. Having elevated the Orchard Gallery in Derry to international status, on a ‘minimal budget’, it was hoped he would do the same for the Irish Museum of Modern Art. He made history in 1987, being the only gallery director to be nominated for the Turner Prize. On his appointment to IMMA, he made it clear that he intended a museum of the present, albeit with controversy. In an interview with Ciaran Carty on the 15th April 1991, in *The Sunday Tribune* he is quoted as saying:

We don’t have the financial where-with-all to collect retrospectively or to attempt to be a museum that ought to have been started in 1923. So we simply say we start now and go to the future. We can define the whole idea and build new structures that will be required into the next century.

In *The Sunday Press* on the 15th of April 1990, John Hutchinson astutely observed that “Declan McGonagle has left-wing ideas and is used to running a one-man operation with a great deal of local political support...” The terms of appointment were significant because on application for the job, Declan McGonagle had outlined *his* terms of working to the board. This meant that the museum was set up as a Limited Company, with one Chief Executive Director. The board is a non-executive board with a non-executive chair. Declan McGonagle explained this as follows:

What that means technically is that they review what we do rather than preview... In a green field situation, administratively and conceptually, starting from scratch, you really needed freedom to maneuver, needed to be very flexible.

He submitted a diagrammatic chart of the ‘functions of the museum’, which he has described as “a family tree of jobs and functions”, see Fig.1, p.41. It was apparent that he had clear ideals and aims for the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

The Building

The building, site and location have proven hugely significant elements in the identity of IMMA. Previous to the opening of the museum, John Olley wrote in *The Irish Times* on

the 14th February 1991 that "...housing the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Kilmainham is a stroke of genius...A building of such status has to live, to breath and grow, to acquire layers of meaning and importance for the nation". The history of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham itself is significant in the founding of the Irish Museum of Modern Art and its emerging identity. The historical record of the site goes as far back as 606 AD, when it was an abbey. Later, in 1174, Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, founded a priory hospital of the Knights of Hospitalus, or the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1680, James Butler, the Duke of Ormond, petitioned for its use as an army hospital, and was granted permission for the project from Charles II. James Butler was Viceroy in Ireland and a man of cultural vision and enthusiasm. The Royal Hospital was symbolic of his desire to make Dublin a part of the European culture, on a par with the 'grand' cities of the time. William Robinson built the hospital which now stands, and it is widely considered the finest seventeenth century building in the country. It was modelled on 'Les Invalides' in Paris, which had been built in the reign of Louis XIV. Similar to 'Les Invalides'. It was to be used as a retirement home for army pensioners and remained as such for nearly two hundred and fifty years. The building was built to be "...on a grand scale, classical in layout and 'continental' in style..." (NCAD Archive, File: IMMA 1991). In the early part of the nineteenth century, the architect Francis Johnston, considerably altered many external and internal aspects of the building. John Olley described this, in *The Irish Times* on the 14th of February 1991, as the building having been "forced to submit to the somber severity of Francis Johnston's neoclassical style"

During 1916 the building was occupied by some 2,500 British troops. In 1922, the site was handed over to the Free State and was Garda Headquarters from 1930 to 1950. From 1950, it was used as a storage area for the National Museum, essentially becoming an inactive space. In the late 1970s its use was re-considered and it was decided to restore it for use as an EEC conference centre. The building underwent an extensive, £21 million, restoration project initiated by the Office of Public Works, which focused on retaining the nineteenth century character of the building. Aidan Dunne referred in *The Sunday Tribune*, on 26th of May 1991, to this restoration project, directed

by John Costello, as being 'realistic'.² However, halfway through the restoration it was decided that Dublin Castle would be restored instead for EU conferences. There was debate about using the Royal Hospital as an extension of the National Museum or as the National Gallery. No decision was made, so as an interim measure in 1985, the building was made The National Centre for Culture and the Arts.

In 1987 when it was decided to house the new Irish Museum of Modern Art there, there were further alterations to the building before it opened in 1991. Shay Cleary was the architect for the alterations, which John Olley writing in *The Irish Times* on the 14th of February 1991, referred to as "breathing life back into this corpse, reawakening the possibilities that a 17th century building provides and demands". In a press release issued by IMMA, written by Shay Cleary, he outlined the alterations as follows:

A new entrance hall contains a ceremonial cascading staircase in a double height volume and will by its form and location make public the connection to the first floor...These first floor rooms combined with what were corridors but are now long galleries are ideally suited to the new use with minor modification ...The courtyard has been changed to a rolled gravel surface with some markings indicating the entrance hall.... (NCAD Archive, File: IMMA, 1991).

Declan McGonagle has said the "the first room in the museum is the courtyard, the building is then the exhibit and then you come into the other exhibitions". The fact that the Royal Hospital Kilmainham had been a British military retirement home and later a Garda headquarters, lend an association to the building of power; dominant, controlling, defining, forceful and moralizing power. To present the building as the first exhibit is to present a presence of a historical authority. The very fact of the building's dated magnificence has lead to much public confusion on arriving there - *it just doesn't look like a museum of modern art*. The advent of the architecture associated with the 'white cube' syndrome, along with its stainless steel and glass neutrality, has affected its grip on visual definitions of what an art space should look like.³ IMMA claims its heritage in the

² There has been some public dissension between various architects and historians as to whether this nineteenth century emphasis was, in fact, the better choice or not. The most relevant aspect presented by this is the provision of an analogy of contention, relating to the museum's identity.

³ The 'white cube' refers to an international notion of the gallery space as an ultimately neutral zone, achieved through the paradigm of a specific architectural language. The implication being that the space is unobtrusive and anonymous, inkeeping with the Modernist ideal of the 'autonomous' art object, supposedly existing within a non-specific zone. Brian O'Doherty has critically discussed this theory in a seminal book-essay, *Inside the White Cube*.

building, externally and to lesser extent internally. Whilst the rooms are in respect of the original room layout, there is within each a certain anonymity apparent. But this is minimized by constant reminders of the site's heritage, such as the view from any of the windows. The small scale of the room sizes allow for an intimate engagement with the work not possible in larger exhibition spaces. The entrance hall and stairs, however, are an overt homage to the international language of the 'white cube', and as such seem peculiarly at odds with the rest of the building and grounds.

The Infancy

"Is this art...or just a pile of stones?" ran the headline of an article by Michael Conway in The Irish Press, 21 May 1991 which previewed the opening exhibition of IMMA entitled *Inheritance and Transformations*. IMMA was sure to attract debate. The initial allocation budget was £250,000 and there were proposed annual allocations of £100,000 for acquisitions, along with a £160,000 programming budget. This was hardly enough to sustain 'high level international' purchase or exhibition programmes, on a financial par with other museums of modern art. When IMMA was set up as a Semi-State body, and a Limited Company, the path was made to seek funds independent and additional to the Government sponsorship, though to date, not much use has been made of this freedom in relation to the collection programme.

Originally, it seemed from the press reportage that the museum was established to house a collection of Modern art. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the initial stages of IMMA's development was the speedy establishment of the Education & Community Programme. Indeed, prior to the opening in May 1991, Helen O'Donoghue had worked on an agenda and produced a show for the inaugural exhibition. There was no policy document published so the museum operated in its initial stages in response to the chart Declan McGonagle produced in 1990 for his interview for the Directorship (See Fig.1, p.41). Gordon Lambert described its infancy process: "I suppose it's like any new organization; you find your feet first and then define the objective." That objective was defined by the Board as a 'remit to represent significant Irish and international

contemporary and Modern art (Modern meaning twentieth century as opposed to right now), through exhibition, collection and education and community programmes'. In the Irish Times in December 1990, Declan McGonagle had published a manifesto:

...I feel a great sense of personal and professional excitement about the opening of a museum of modern art in the context of the community of Kilmainham...I want the opening to map out all the territory I think the museum should inhabit.

Within the first six months of the museum's opening there were 185,000 visitors, in addition to over 20,000 educational visits. IMMA started press-briefings in January 1992, which undoubtedly helped to widen the audience awareness for the years to come. In the first year of the museum, a Mainie Jellett Retrospective Exhibition, with an accompanying publication by Bruce Arnold, marked the start in an ongoing series of retrospectives "planned by IMMA which will explore key figures in the development of art in 20th century Ireland and elsewhere" (NCAD Archive - File: IMMA 1992).

In 1992, a deal was struck between IMMA and Glen Dimplex (Lochlann Quinn, a partner in Glen Dimplex, was also a Board member in 1992), which saw the establishment, in 1994, of the first of the Glen Dimplex Awards. Originally intended to be a three-year annual award, it has since been extended on an annual basis. It is worth £15,000. Also in 1992 the Education and Community Programme, which had been established by the time the museum opened, received a financial boost with a donation from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which gave £24,000 to the programme.

In 1993 an International Council was established for the museum, at the suggestion of Gordon Lambert, who had been on the International Council of MOMA, New York. This council was made up of the following: Kevin Cahill, Paul Hamlyn, Anjelica Huston, Barbara Jakobson, F. Donald Kenny, Fumio Nanjo, Brian O'Doherty, Cormac O'Malley, Chrissy O'Reilly, Pierre Restany, Kevin Roche, Hilary Weston. Its sole function was to "develop and promote the international profile of the museum" (NCAD Archive - File: IMMA 1993). The same year the Artists Work Programme was initiated and in 1994 the studios were occupied. Again, the idea stemmed from Declan McGonagle's chart of 1990. The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust donated £10,000 towards the project. The Office of Public Works also contributed to the programme's initiation.

The Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht was established in 1993, with Michael D. Higgins as the first Minister. He appointed a new Board in 1995, which saw five new appointees, Brian O'Doherty, Eoghan Harris, Brian McGuire, Amelia Stein and Ruth Ferguson. The new Board of IMMA appointed a Curator for the Permanent Collection, on the recommendation of a presentation made by Declan McGonagle. Another development at this time was a reassessment of the museum's objectives and success. This was in the form of a Market Survey, which was carried out under the headings of 'Qualitative' and 'Quantitative' research. This research was undertaken in the summer of 1995. The findings of these surveys have lead to a Corporate Identity Research Project, as the museum attempts to redefine its identity. In the meantime, Declan McGonagle's first term of office was over and he was re-appointed by the Board for another five-year term. Also, in 1995 IMMA received an increase in budget to £1,338,000, as a result of the reshuffle between the Arts Council and the Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, concerning funding for the arts. More recently, Nissan have sponsored a new art award in collaboration with IMMA and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation have announced a three year funding scheme of approximately £75,000 to create a new post for a Regional Programmer. This post will allow for a more cohesive approach to touring shows and project coordination external to Dublin.

IMMA's founding was dependent on the political atmosphere of the time. As Gordon Lambert said of Charles Haughey: "he was the motivating force and decision-maker. Tremendous credit is due to him, whatever one thinks of his policies". The climate of the late eighties and early nineties were conducive to the development of the arts in Ireland and lead to the establishment of the Ministry. Since 1991, IMMA has managed to expand its programmes with financial backing from Glenn Dimplex Ireland and Nissan. Financial sponsorship such as this, is of course publicity for the sponsor, it is a political move to be seen as a promoter of the arts. It is as Carol Duncan has written in the conclusion of her book *Civilizing Rituals - Inside Public Art Museums*, that "whatever their (museum's) potential to enlighten and illuminate, they work within politically and socially structured limits" (Duncan, 1995, p.133).

Chapter Two

The Internal Structure - A Personality Develops

“It was a process which essentially developed organically - we very much went with what was good ...” Helen O’Donoghue was referring to the compiling of the *Intersections* catalogue in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name in May 1996. This catalogue provided an account of the Education and Community Programme in terms of a review of their activities for the previous five years, and a point of assessment to decide on future strategies for the programme. This statement, however, could be easily transferred to practically any aspect of the museum’s development to date. The evolution of the museum has been for the greater part intuitive and in some instances bordering on the spontaneous. Whilst certainly a recipe for ensuring a dynamic programme for the museum as a whole, this approach has led to ideological difficulties, simply because IMMA is an institution and as such needs a definitive structure if it is to survive beyond the tenure of the immediate staff. This situation became apparent in the Qualitative and Quantitative Survey undertaken in the summer of 1995, which underlined a need for a stricter policy undertaking.

IMMA operates its programmes through departments, see fig. 2, p.42. The departments relevant to this discussion are: the Education and Community Programme, the Artists Work Programme, the Permanent Collection and the Exhibition Programme. All of these departments are, for the most part, publicized through the Press and Public Relations department. There is considerable fluidity in the interdepartmental relations. For example, someone from the Artists Work Programme may become involved with a project in the Education and Community Programme, or the Permanent Collection might work in conjunction with a temporary exhibition, or a community workshop might take its cue from a current exhibition in the museum. This fluid interrelationship of the museum’s activities is purposefully intended, as an attempt to create a ‘dynamic’ of

presentation. The temporary exhibition programme, however, works independently in its programming agenda and is curated by Brenda McParland. There are regular Programming Meetings which allow for all the coordinators to communicate their projects to each other and the Director.

There are three working committees - an Acquisition Committee, a Financing Committee and an Exhibition Committee. There are over fifty people employed at any one time, on a full-time or part-time basis. All the staff are on five-year contracts. The departments of the Education and Community, the Permanent collection, the Temporary Exhibition Programme and the Artists Work Programme are each spearheaded by one coordinator. The 'Mediator' staff work under the Press and Public Relations department. Initially, the mediator staff were coordinated under the Security Department, but significantly, as a direct result of the recent market research, they were transferred to the Press and Public Relations department. They work in general mediation, providing guided tours of the museum and exhibition and as 'general receivers' of the public in the gallery spaces. Interestingly, the current coordinator of the Artists Work Programme, Orla Dukes, had worked as a mediator previously. There is also a technical crew, who assist in the hanging of all shows.

The Education And Community Programme

I don't think we are seen as a pretty good education programme attached to a museum. I think we are seen as a museum that is effecting change and raising questions about how the arts are being perceived externally - Helen O'Donoghue.

There is one full-time curator of the Education and Community Programme, Helen O'Donoghue, one full-time assistant curator, Ann Davern and one part-time administrator, Liz McMahon, who are employed by the museum directly. However this employment figure is misleading as, depending on the project in process, there could be as many as twenty employed. Many of the Programme's projects involve a jointly funded approach, where the community/education group involved on a specific project will provide some of the overall costs. The resources available through the greater

museum itself are also important and these include workshop space, artists and technical assistance. In respect of what projects are undertaken and in what circumstances, it is a very open-ended programme. Helen O'Donoghue described the process as follows:

To date, at times we've stimulated projects and at other times we have responded to requests...financing something like this is like an elastic band - it expands and contracts with what you are doing...we are fortunate as Declan has a healthy approach to budgeting. For example, if we say that is an exhibition cost, it comes out of the exhibition fund..

In 1992, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, described by IMMA as 'working internationally to create access for people who are culturally or physically disadvantaged, granted £24,000 to the programme (NCAD Archive, File: IMMA, 1992). This was the first such grant in Ireland and was used by the programme over a two-year period. Many of the projects rely on partnerships with other groups, and this has become a 'working model' for the greater programme. These partnerships have included to date; The Family Resource Centre, St Michael's Estate, Inchicore, Wet Paint Arts, Barnardos and Age and Opportunity.

Projects With Older People

In the opening show, *Inheritance and Transformation*, the Education and Community programme was represented by an exhibition of work by members of the St Michael's Parish Active Age Painting Group. This made the link intended between the museum and its local community clear. That was the start of the project to eventually be known as the *Programme for Older People*. Coming out of this project, was an involvement with a national organization called Age and Opportunity, funded by the Department of Health. 1993 was European Year of Older People, and an organization called Euro Age used IMMA's *Programme for Older People* as a model of activity which other European countries have since adopted. Also, as a direct result of this programme, the Arts Council are re-assessing their approach to the arts for older people and intend to produce a policy on this. Arising from the partnership with Age and Opportunity, was the establishment of, each May, a *Maytime Festival*, which is aimed at giving older people from all around the country an opportunity to 'explore the arts through tours, talks, heritage, Artists Work Programme, poetry readings, dance, music and drama' (IMMA, 1996, p.60).

Unspoken Truths

In 1991 a project was initiated which became known as *Unspoken Truths*. This resulted from a link already in place between the Family Resource Centre, and a submission by artist, Ailbhe Murphy. The work that followed involved Ailbhe Murphy working with thirty-two women from Dublin's inner city, over an eighteen month period. The exhibition in 1992, following the project caused a stir in the art world. Significantly, as the *Intersections* catalogue tells us:

In addition to the decision to place their work on public exhibition, the women decided to become the mediators of their own work by facilitating workshops and by being present to talk about their work and broader issues it raised (IMMA, 1996, p.13).

The show subsequently toured to Derry and Belfast. This work contributed to the fact that the women were invited to be represented at the Beijing Women's Conference in 1996. The project was also represented at an EU conference in November 1996, which was looking at access to the arts for people living in poverty. The Government Poverty Agency funded the evaluation of *Unspoken Truths*, which resulted in a summary document. As a result of their four-year investigation into community arts and IMMA's programme and their subsequent report, they are considering setting up an independent body to influence the channelling of arts financing at community level.

Projects with Children, Young People and Third Level

Since the museum's founding there have been continual children's workshops, coordinated by Liz McMahon. Also, there have been projects coordinated with schools and community groups, such as the Francis Street CBS and Youthreach. The projects result from current exhibitions or from artist's projects on the AWP or from collaborative initiatives. IMMA also provides Incareer courses for teachers, in conjunction with the Department of Education.¹ In June 1992, IMMA announced the opening of an exhibition entitled *The Exhibition of European Primary School Children's Art*. There were workshops accompanying the show, the first of its kind in Europe, which consisted of

¹ When asked if she considered the Schools and Incareer programmes to be fulfilling a role perhaps lacking in the Department of Education, Helen O'Donoghue answered: "Yes and no: Yes if you were to take the attitude that the Department should do everything. In a positive way, it's very much a twinning of their ideas and our ideas and it being adopted by the Department, a verbal agreement and support of everything I do" (O'Donoghue, 11th November 1996).

paintings by a hundred and forty children from EC countries.

The catalogue of *Intersections* provides a comprehensive list of all projects to date. The children's projects are listed under the following headings: Primary Schools Pilot Projects, Primary Teacher/Childcare Workers Incareer Development Courses, Classroom Based Projects, Short-Term Inputs, Child Support Programmes, Family Programmes, children's Playcentre Workers Inservice, Saturday Morning and Holiday Workshop Programmes. The Young People's projects are listed under the following: Youth, Second Level Schools Pilot Projects, Youth Workers and St. Michael's House Pilot Projects. This gives an indication of how expansive the programming of the Education and Community Programme is. There have also been link-ups with Third Level colleges, the most successful of these being the association with the DIT. In 1993 a programme called the Third Degree was set up to facilitate graduates of Art Colleges, in 'finding their feet'. It ran for over a year, but had to be dropped due to a poor response, which IMMA claims resulted from a lack of interest on the part of the third level institutions involved.

The Ideology of the Programme

Helen O'Donoghue was the first appointed Coordinator of the programme and also the first appointee in the museum, after the Director. This swift appointment emphasized Declan McGonagle's concern with a community programme. He saw the programme as a direct response to the locality of the museum, and as an agent to widen the public interest in the museum. Helen O'Donoghue had been working previously in the area, on 'Pilot Schemes'. Indeed her interest in the job came from a desire to realize the 'pilot scheme' approach to community arts in terms of something continuous:

When I came to the museum this was an opportunity to channel all that energy and for someone to take responsibility....responsibility in terms of advocating work and support, not necessarily to take it all under its wing.

Her approach to the role of an Education Officer of a museum of modern art, was as distinct as it was oblivious to the norm. She identifies this as having allowed her a freedom of programming and objectives, which would have been stifled if she were to have enlisted the role traditionally taken by Education Officers in museums.

Discussing the initialization of the programme, Helen O'Donoghue stated that:

A fundamental belief that we had was that an understanding of the arts comes, sometimes more easily, through practical experience - not to make artworks, but just to have the experience of communicating in a visual way.

Since the first exhibition, an ideology has been apparent, namely a stated and acted-upon commitment to 'accessing the arts'. It is undeniable that the programme, as a whole, has provided a strong energy for IMMA - as an integral and distinctive part of its ethos. The programme has, in real terms, managed to motivate a broadening of public interest in the arts, alongside an opening up of the debate of what the arts can mobilize in a social sphere. Whilst obviously having addressed the locality of Kilmainham, greater Dublin and to a lesser extent Ireland, the most challenging point for discussion is whether the programme would, in fact, survive without the present staffing arrangement. In other words, *what tangible terms of reference are instated for the successors?*

The Artists Work Programme

The crucial question is why is art made at all... the first thing in the plan should be more exhibition space. For what? For products? It should be for process. - Declan McGonagle.

Initiated by Declan McGonagle from his 1990 chart projection of functions of the museum, the Artists Work Programme was fully inaugurated in 1994. Funded by the Henry Moore Trust and the Office of Public Works, the former stables were converted into studio spaces, some of which have residential capacity. Mary McCarthy was appointed the first Coordinator of the programme and in November 1996 was succeeded by Orla Dukes. In its first year there were eighteen projects conducted, from the Spring of 1994 through to 1995. In 1996, the programme was expanded to allow thirteen artists to participate in residencies. There have been a number of coordinated projects with the Education and Community Programme, under artists such as John Ahearne, Marie Barrett, Ailbhe Murphy and Catherine Harper. Others who have participated in the programme include: Louise Walshe, Paul O'Neill, Jimmie Durham, Alice Maher, Billy Quinn, Finola Jones, Abigail O'Brien and Hughie O'Donoghue.

The programme claims to actively encourage applicants from both Ireland and abroad. It provides a studio, rent-free. Some studios have living accommodation for those who come from outside of Dublin city, and return flights from the artist's country of residence are paid for. Most of the proposals accepted are projects ranging from four months to one year. The stipulation from IMMA is that each artist must have an open day when the studio is open to the public and the artist is available to discuss issues arising. Also, each must give a public talk about their work and write a report on their experience of the programme. It has been emphasized by both the coordinators and Declan McGonagle, on numerous occasions, that there is no compulsion for the artists to complete any particular project: it is purely a residency. Jimmie Durham described his residency in just such terms:

To spend time actually living in a museum is an opportunity to work with great intensity on a specific (if not exactly specified) project without having to necessarily get trapped into the business of deadlines (IMMA, 1994, p.4).

The Ideology of the Programme

Orla Dukes defined the programme's objective as "taking away the mystique surrounding the art process" - accessing the process, as it were. In the introduction to *The Artists Work Programme*, published in association with the *From Beyond The Pale* exhibition, Declan McGonagle defined a double objective as follows:

The Artists Work Programme is intended to provide opportunities for artists to develop new ideas and ways of working in the context of the developing identity of IMMA. The Museum has a responsibility to make available what artists make and do, but also to show how and why work is made, in order to test the definitions of art and artists and their mediation (IMMA, 1994, p.1)

The programme has proven successful and popular with artists; the majority of the reports have been positive. Whilst the proximity of the studios to each other is very close, there hasn't yet been much obvious interaction of the artists with each other. However, there are plans to upgrade the 'common room' and create the circumstance for more informally productive interaction, which would benefit the programme from the artists' perspective. Orla Dukes discussed the criteria for accepting proposals as being closely linked to the greater museum ideology, often manifested in the temporary exhibition agenda. The artist selected for the programme can coincide with a particular show, or a

current ideological concern of the museum. The market research found that the public were confused as to what the studios were and to what extent they were entitled to enter them. A continual stream of visitors would inevitably lead to a 'zoo situation'. The programme claims to have a dual agenda - both the artists and visiting public should benefit. To successfully achieve this objective, a new balance is required, but as yet undefined.

Chapter Three

A Personality is Presented

In the end it's all about access...A museum is in the distribution business, to put it crudely. There is the production of art and the distribution of art...we should distribute as widely as possible... Communication cannot take place if people are not experiencing the work - Declan McGonagle.

Two recurrent terms that came up in discussion with IMMA's staff were 'access' and 'process'. The programming of the museum lays emphasis on these terms - the 'process' and 'access' of the various Education and Community Programmes and the National Programme, and the 'process' and 'access' of the Artists Work Programme. Certainly IMMA goes a long way toward accessing the process of art and using processes in order to widen access; but as an institution, it is also caught up in 'processing access'. It claims, through its exhibition programme, to present alternatives and opportunities for re-readings of history that seek to provoke questions and not necessarily give answers. *Is it possible for an institution of this scale to avoid seeming authoritarian in tone?* There are inherent problems in an idealistic agenda.

The Temporary Exhibition Programme

Suiban Barry was the first curator at IMMA, while the current curator of exhibitions is Brenda McParland. The annual budget for exhibitions is approximately £200,000, and operates on a two year projection. There are also plans to set up a 'project room' which would mean that 'young' curators would be working two months in advance. From the opening exhibition, *Inheritance and Transformation*, IMMA has stated an agenda through its exhibitions .

Main Exhibitions: 1991 -1996

In 1991, the *Kremlin Gold* exhibition, was a blockbuster show of "ninety-six magnificent

objects from the world-famous Kremlin Museums many of which had never been seen in the English speaking world" (NCAD Archive - File: IMMA 1991). It attracted some 100,000 visitors to IMMA and was sponsored by Aer Rianta, in association with Aer Lingus Cargo and Independent Newspapers plc.. 1991 also saw the ground-breaking *Mainie Jellett Retrospective* with the associated publication by Bruce Arnold. *Joseph Beuys: Bits and Pieces*, a 'miniature archive of Beuys concerns and working processes,' opened in December and continued into 1992.

In 1992, IMMA put together a show called *The Artist's Studio: Alberto Giacometti*, borrowing from the Tate Gallery, a selection of Giacometti's sculpture and some paintings. There was a *Richard Hamilton Retrospective* in late 1992, and *Sounding the Depths*, a multimedia installation by Pauline Cummins and Louise Walshe was shown in early May of that year. IMMA provided Alanna O'Kelly with her first 'major' show in autumn of 1992. Among others represented in various shows in 1992 were Gilbert and George, Craigie Horsfield, Terry Atkinson, John Heartfield and Barbara Broughel. 1993 saw one person shows by Tony O'Malley and Marie Foley and a large-scale exhibition of John Hinde. In the autumn of that year there was work shown of Lawrence Weiner, Stephen McKenna and Patrick Swift. In late 1993, there was an exhibition with Sheela-na-Gigs and pre-Colombian sculptures juxtaposed with contemporary work.

Josef Albers, Antony Gormley, Rob Smith and Chung Eun-Mo were among the artists shown in the early part of 1994. In February, the first Glen Dimplex exhibition was in place. In September *From Beyond the Pale* opened, launching a season of exhibitions, projects, lectures and round-table discussions "exploring aspects of contemporary art which connect the shifting ground of the 1990s to an equivalent period of change at the start of the 20th century" (IMMA 1994). The central exhibition, *Picasso to Koons*, featured work by Picasso, Duchamp, Warhol, Beuys and Koons. Simultaneously shown was an exhibition of Sheela-na-Gigs. *From Beyond the Pale* continued into 1995, with works/projects by Cindy Sherman, Joan Jonas, Marina Abramovic, Damien Hirst, Willie Doherty, Philip Napier and Maurice O'Connell, to name just a few. There was also a film programme in association with the Irish Film Centre, Eustace Street. Also in 1995, Janine Antoni had a show and the collection featured in three exhibitions. Sean Scully

and Louis le Brocquy both had Retrospectives in 1996. Pat Steir and Beverly Semmes had one-person shows. *The Event Horizon* was a two-part show which was presented "in the context of Ireland's presidency of the EU" (IMMA 1996). Again, as with *From Beyond the Pale*, this show involved exhibitions, films, collaborations and artists' projects.

The Glen Dimplex was initiated in 1994, on a three-year plan. In March 1994, the first Glen Dimplex award was presented to Alanna O'Kelly. In 1995 was received by Willie Doherty and in 1996 by Janine Antoni. The award is £15,000. It is being continued on a year-to-year basis. Nissan have recently announced, in association with IMMA, a project which will annually award a budget of £40,000 for an artist's project to take place during the summer months. 1997's project stipulation is for a focus on central Dublin.

The Ideology of the Programme

Brenda McParland has stated that:

We are not trying to be exclusively Irish or International. We are trying to accommodate both, through that our role is as a promoter of Irish artists...We have a totally international vision and approach..it's much more beneficial to Irish artists in Ireland to be seen alongside their international counterparts, rather than ghettoized as Irish.

Whilst there is a concern with the promotion of Irish artists, it is evident that the programme is operated primarily on the basis of the museum's international standing. As such, it provides for Irish artists a sort of 'international arts report'. Whilst the programme informs, this 'report' from the international art scene is completely dependent on a constant commitment to all things contemporary. That commitment is, for the most part, reliant on just two people, Brenda McParland and Declan McGonagle. To date the programme has demonstrated a strong international awareness and a recurrent public criticism arising out of this is a concern that the exhibition agenda is more interested in international art than it is in specifically Irish art. Such criticism seems bizarre in the face of the fact that if IMMA were not to exhibit international work at that level, where else in Ireland would?

IMMA has a stated a secondary agenda of promoting Irish art, as Brenda McParland said,

referring to the Mainie Jellett, Patrick Swift and Louis le Brocquy Retrospectives: "I think it's been a strand to get ourselves on the map. No one else is going to do those shows". The artists shortlisted for the Glenn Dimplex have been predominantly Irish and many of the larger composite 'theme' events, such as *Beyond the Pale* and *The Event Horizon*, have had a balanced Irish input. However, a considerable gap in the programme has been the absence of any in-depth representation of Irish work dealing with gay/lesbian/queer issues. As the only real international platform in Ireland for Irish art, (even though a secondary concern to the museum), IMMA has set itself a tough agenda which demands that all sectors of Irish art be represented. It remains to be seen whether it can consolidate this over a period of time.

The Permanent Collection

IMMA should collect in order to show not simply to possess.
IMMA should only purchase works by living artists.
IMMA should position itself in the present and should represent the past through loans and donations.
IMMA should always be prepared to shift emphasis as necessary to pursue a multi rather than single strand approach to acquisitions.
- The Acquisition Committee, 12th December 1995.

The above are the main points agreed upon on the 5th December 1995, by the Acquisition Committee and presented to the Board on the 13th December 1995. The Curator for the Permanent Collection is Catherine Marshall. She was appointed to the post in June 1995, after the new Board's first meeting. The collection has been developed by 'purchase, commission, long-term loans and donations' (NCAD Archive, File: IMMA 1996) and comprises, to date, of approximately seven hundred and fifty works. It is a stated policy that IMMA buys work only from living artists and accepts donations of work going back to the 1940s. In the Visitors' Room there is a CD guide to the Collection and a catalogue is to be produced in the near future.

Donations and Longterm Loans

Featured in the museum's opening exhibition, *Inheritance and Transformation*, was the Gordon Lambert Collection, the O'Malley Collection and the Klaus Lafrenz Collection.

Gordon Lambert's donation is ongoing and includes work by many leading Irish artists from the sixties onwards, as well as international works. Among the artists represented in his collection are Josef Albers, Robert Ballagh, Georges Braque, Joseph Beuys, Barrie Cooke, T. P. Flanagan, Patrick Ireland, Brian King, Joan Miro, Theo McNab, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley, Patrick Scott, Camille Souter and Barbara Warren, to name but a portion. The O'Malley Collection is on permanent loan from the Irish-American Cultural Institute. The collection was donated by Helen O'Malley Roelofs in memory of Ernie O'Malley and includes works by Jack B. Yeats, Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone. The Klaus Lafrenz Collection is on long-term loan to IMMA from Lafrenz. (He had previously loaned some works, on short-term, for the Rosc exhibition of 1980). The collection includes works by Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Robert Ryman and Robert Mangold.

More recent donations include the P.J. Carroll Collection, the Weltkunst Foundation Collection, the Eli Broad Family Foundation, the Mary Farl Powers Collection and the Madden Arnholz Collection. The P.J. Carroll Collection is on long-term loan and features works from 1960 to 1980, including works by Anne Madden and Felim Egan. The Weltkunst Foundation Collection is on loan for seven years and features work by British sculptors of the late 1980s and early 1990s, including Rachel Whiteread, Tony Cragg and Damien Hirst. The Eli Broad Family Foundation collects works by American artists, such as David Salle and Cindy Sherman, and lends on a short-term to galleries and museums all over the world. The Mary Farl Powers Collection consists of prints and sculpted paper works by Mary Farl Powers and is on permanent loan to the museum. The Madden Arnholz Collection is a print collection, including works by Durer and Renoir. It was donated to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in 1989 and was passed on to IMMA.

Much of the Permanent Collection has toured. For example: The O'Malley Collection was shown in Mayo in 1993; The Madden Arnholz in Waterford, Tralee, Listowel and Galway in 1993; The Gordon Lambert in Galway in 1994. There have also been a number of donations of works by living artists. These include, recently, Dorothy Cross, Javier De la Garza and Billy Quinn.

Purchases/Commissions

There is an acquisition committee which report to the Board and have an acquisition budget of £150,000 per annum. The Committee is made up of Catherine Marshall and a subcommittee including Maurice Foley, Dorothy Walker, Mike Murphy and Brian McGuire among others. On occasion, works are also bought at the discretion of the Director. Recent purchases by IMMA include works by Jaki Irvine, Abigail O'Brien, Kathy Prendergast and Felim Egan. There are plans to commission works for the grounds of IMMA.

The Ideology of the Collection

Catherine Marshall stated: "The collection is really about the present as much as it is about the past...the present reads from the past and the past can provide a context". There is a current ongoing redefinition of the policy of the collection, initiated at the time of the 1995 Board appointment. Catherine Marshall has said that this process should be completed by January 1998, but the implementation may take some time. The collection is focussed from the 1940s onwards, which IMMA has identified as a watershed period in Irish art. Also, the collection sees itself as taking up where the National Gallery has, more or less, left off. Catherine Marshall has outlined the aspirations of the collection:

...we would like to provide a service to Irish artists and Irish art, that we can bring to them whatever is going on anywhere. So there is an opportunity in Ireland to see what's happening outside of Ireland - so it is available to contemporary artists. Contemporary art doesn't happen out of nowhere. There is a context. And with the collection, we hope to provide that context...

The collection has been perceived, in the public sphere, as the reason for IMMA in the first place and as such there is considerable debate as to its presentation. It is significant that it wasn't until 1995 that there was a curator for the collection: the Education and Community and Artist Work Programmes both had Coordinators previous to the Permanent Collection. It is only now that a definitive ideology regarding the collection is emerging.

The Permanent Collection has been the source of the main thrust of the contention surrounding IMMA. This is hardly surprising, given that there was considerable publicity relating to the donations made to the museum by Gordon Lambert, Sidney

Nolan and others. It is true that a public on hearing of acquisitions by a museum, will invariably expect to see them when visiting the museum. *So where is IMMA's collection?* A portion of it is always in store, a portion is always on display. The difficult ideology of the collection is rooted in a rotation - not a constant rotation, but an-ever changing rotation as part of a specific agenda of display. Catherine Marshall has explained the policy of presentation as follows:

We show work and provide background information on it that is relevant to that context, but then we might shift the context of that work for a different show. Or we show work from the permanent collection in an exhibition and channel that show by showing it with other exhibitions.

The West Ground Floor galleries have been used in 1996, to rotate exhibitions from the collection, for example, *IMMA Collection : Literary Themes*, (January to June), and *IMMA Collection: Figuration*, (June to December). It has been announced in the 1997 Press Release that funding has been approved from the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht to convert the Deputy Masters House, in the grounds beside the museum, for use as gallery spaces. The intention is to house the collection in 'long-term displays'. This seems at odds with the policy of the 'non-fixed' display of the collection up to now, but perhaps signals a realistic compromising response to the survey findings and should result in making the collection more accessible to the visiting public.

In an essay entitled *Counting Visitors or Visitors Who Count?*, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill wrote that "the history of the institution and the decisions made over collection policies by former curators will deeply influence what is possible in the present and the future" (Lumley, 1988, p.228). IMMA, in identifying the 1940's as a 'watershed' period in art history, is at once both acknowledging the National Gallery's supposed 'endpoint' and addressing its own limitations. In doing so, it is using an authoritarian voice which is claiming a stake in art-historical discourse. If IMMA is to present its collection without endowing it with status, then the task asked of the viewer is huge. The display of the collection in rotations of "sometimes a few years"(NCAD Archive, File: IMMA 1997), as is planned for the Deputy Masters House, will certainly claim a status for the work shown. If there is to be a continuation of what Declan McGonagle has referred to as a 'contest between the past and the present', then the relative permanency of the proposed display will provide a difficult challenge to be overcome.

Chapter Four

A Personality is Contested

IMMA's history has been defined by debate - its agenda is to stimulate debate, however the debate around its own identity impedes this agenda. There have been some recurrent criticisms of IMMA over the last five years, a lot of which are bound up with a certain amount of confusion as to what the museum is, does and represents. Though this does suggest a problem with the mediation of the museum itself, it seems also to reflect a surprisingly common misconception as to what a museum of modern art is.

The Press And Public Relations Department

The Press and Public Relations department spends an annual budget of up to £120,000. Approximately £65,000 is spent directly on advertising, about one third of which is spent on museum publications. The advertising costs for IMMA vary greatly with different projects, for example Glen Dimplex do most of the publicity for the show with their award, as the sponsor. The rest of the budget is spent on salaries and general expenses. Philomena Byrne is the Press and Public Relations officer for the Royal Hospital as a whole and is assisted by Rowena Neville, who focuses on advertising. The mediator staff are under the Press and Public Relations department, which means that scheduling of rosters and mediation strategy are coordinated by Philomena Byrne.

The museum was launched amid a highly critical and skeptical press run in the years following Charles Haughey's announcement. There was a public apprehension as to what the museum could offer. In 1992, IMMA started press-briefings which have continued every January since. These briefings have served to provide the press with little room to complain of not being fully informed. In 1992 and 1993, the press department also made several deputations to large organizations such as those that were

involved in the tourist trade, hotels, taxi companies etc.

The Corporate Identity Research Project

In 1995, on the recommendation of the second Board, a market survey was conducted to assess the public interpretation of IMMA. This took the form of Quantitative and Qualitative surveys. The Quantitative survey found that the main source of awareness of IMMA was word-of-mouth (27%), with television features (16%), and newspaper/magazine features (12%) being more productive than direct advertising. To sum up the most significantly problematic findings of the Qualitative survey: many people were confused as to what the museum did, found it hard to find, found the building intimidating, the atmosphere lacked welcome, and wished for a particularly 'Irish' dimension. As a direct result of the findings, IMMA is undergoing a Corporate Identity Research project in order to establish a specific identity structure. *Behaviour and Attitudes*, an audience research company, are carrying out this research and suggesting strategies to address the situation.

In her essay on the museum visitor, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, makes reference to research undertaken by Marilyn Hood in conjunction with the Museum of Art in Toledo, which identified 'six major attributes underlying the choices adults made of their leisure time'. They were, in alphabetical order: 1) being with people, 2) doing something worthwhile, 3) feeling comfortable and at ease in one's surrounding, 4) having a challenge of new experiences, 5) having an opportunity to learn, 6) participating actively (Lumley, 1988, p.221). IMMA does present a challenge to the viewing public, but the survey findings demonstrate the lack of a comfortable atmosphere. It has been suggested that the entrance hall needs to be redesigned, to create a warmer and more welcoming area. Another finding of the survey was that many visitors felt intimidated by the presence of the Mediator staff, and were unclear as to their role. In theory, the Mediator staff represent a 'facilitating' aspect of the museum, being not just involved in security but also informative should the viewer wish to engage them in discussion. The difficulty in interpreting their presence seems to arise out of the fact that their role simply isn't obvious enough. In effect, they should satisfy numbers 1, 3, 5 and 6 on the 'attribute list' above. The existence of such a body of staff is a highly significant move forward in

the new museology that implies a desire to actively address the viewer as an individual. No longer is the object displayed anonymously in a clinical space; the Mediators add a very real 'human' dimension to the museum.

IMMA, The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery And The National Gallery

...overlapping areas of interest with the National and Municipal Galleries or equivalent collecting institutions should be developed to mutual advantage where possible - Acquisition Committee, 12th December 1995.

Some of the original contention surrounding the founding of IMMA arose out of confusion as to what IMMA would do, and the implied competition between its presence and that of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery and the National Gallery. A recurrent question in the press at the time was; *was there not already a gallery of modern art, the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, Parnell Square?* Julian Campbell voiced his concern in a letter to the *Irish Times*, on the 22nd of March 1990:

....more worrying I find it to hear plans for the new Museum of Modern Art being discussed, when in fact a gallery of modern art already exists in Dublin - namely the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery in Parnell Square...(which) already has a substantial collection of late 19th and 20th century paintings and sculptures, both Irish and foreign...Moreover it is only a few minutes walk from the city centre.

This paragraph succinctly raises the main criticisms of the plans for the new museum of modern art, but also unintentionally makes perhaps, the most important distinctions between the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery and the Irish Museum of Modern Art to be. These defining distinctions are, firstly, that the new museum would be a *museum*, not a *gallery*, and secondly, that the new museum would not be a *municipal*. Catherine Marshall, as Curator of the Permanent Collection at IMMA, lays much emphasis on the distinction between The Hugh Lane Gallery and IMMA:

I think there will be contention, but it does lead to a lot of confusion in people's minds. IMMA is a national collection, the Hugh Lane is a municipal collection... It couldn't be a national collection It didn't have the encouragement of the State or the support of the State...

Declan McGonagle has stated a concern over this issue and in a submission in 1995 to the

new board concerning the Acquisition Committee, presented it as a point for further discussion: "Acknowledge overlapping concerns with National Gallery and Municipal. Turn to advantage in some way" (Acquisition Committee: Aims 12/12/95). There is a distinct overlap between the National Gallery's collection and that of IMMA, in the sense that the dates of works do cross over; the National Gallery has works which date later than 1940. Both Catherine Marshall and Declan McGonagle have said that this issue is on their agenda, but since 1995 nothing has proceeded in formal terms. This can only be read as loss for both institutions and the country's visual arts in general. It is cause for endless speculation as to what could be, were these two institutions to develop a programming dialogue. When questioned about this non-event situation, Declan McGonagle pointed to a view that suggested that 'the National Gallery have everything that was out of copyright and that IMMA concern itself with everything that was still in copyright...as time went on IMMA would hand its collection over to the National Gallery...maintaining its concern with seventy years back to the present'. This would certainly sustain the 'dynamic' so often referred to by IMMA's programme coordinators.

The Name

The general confusion of the public demonstrated by the research findings is a huge stumbling block in the way of IMMA's programme. Whilst there is a problem with IMMA's own mediation, there also seems to be a misconception as to what the name might imply, the most problematic words being 'museum' and 'Irish'. Initially IMMA was referred to as a *gallery* of modern art but by 1989 it had become known as the *museum* of modern art. It is an important distinction which addresses a fundamental point in the identity of IMMA. Most 'western' capitalist countries already possessed their own museum of modern art, and in that sense it is a statement of a national cultural interest, a sort of emblem of national cultural awareness. Declan McGonagle has said that "as a social mechanism, museums and galleries are a distribution mechanism that also infers value". However the museum, as an institution infers a value more suggestive of a cultural statement than any gallery could. Whilst a gallery is also a place of exhibition, the traditional interpretation of a 'museum' implies an institutionalized exhibition and

study area. A museum traditionally pertains to cultural statements; it is an institution of a particular culture and, as such, is by dictionary definition: "established law or custom; familiar object; organization for promoting public object" (Oxford University Press, 1969, p.278), an association not easily shaken. Yet IMMA is essentially a 'museum of the contemporary'.

This is the point of divergence - the diverging of IMMA from the expectations of the visiting public. The market research findings point firmly to a confused and bewildered viewing public. There is a seeming contradiction in terms, when one considers that IMMA has a Permanent Collection, is called a 'museum' and yet claims to concern itself with non-permanence, whilst IMMA states a desire to redress the traditional notion of the museum, in-keeping with contemporary thinking of the 'unfixed' presentation of exhibition. Declan McGonagle has addressed this issue in argumentative tone:

I think that one of the questions we have to put back to people over the course of a period of work...is 'what is this preoccupation with permanence?' ...I do not believe it is possible, any more, to present a permanent consensual representation of anything...

The other stumbling block presented by the name is contained in the word 'Irish'. Fintan O'Toole wrote in an essay in the catalogue of an exhibition on national identity, *In A State*, at Kilmainham Gaol, in 1991: "Heritage is what we are given, culture is what we make of it day to day and year to year" (Kilmainham Gaol, 1991, p.14). A simplified definition of culture, it bears a striking resemblance to the approach taken by IMMA in 1991, with its inaugural exhibition entitled *Inheritance and Transformation*. If IMMA intends culture to be the transformation of the given, then certainly there is an acknowledgement of the Irish content, in terms of geographical positioning. However, it has been reiterated by both Declan McGonagle and Brenda McParland that IMMA is not functioning purely in order to nurture Irish art and artists - it functions primarily as an international art venue, located in Ireland. Catherine Marshall said that 'procedures in the museum are dictated to by the temporary exhibition policy', and this implies that the museum is orientated primarily toward inhabiting an international arena. That it does this, is beyond question. IMMA is first and foremost a Museum of Modern Art in Ireland, with a stated agenda of bringing to the home public contemporary international art practice.

Conclusion

Whose Museum Is It?

Brian O'Doherty wrote: "Progress can be defined as what happens when you eliminate the opposition" (O'Doherty, 1986, p.27). IMMA has considerable opposition in the way of what it hopes to achieve, most of which is presented by its very entity. Declan McGonagle has said that "what we want in the next period is 'museum' to revert to the original meaning of the word. That is 'to think, consider, reflect upon' and the end of that is a decision". If it intends to do this successfully, IMMA needs to educate its public, because quite clearly at this point in time, this public is confused. In order to guide the viewer to IMMA's point of view, preconceptions must be actively deconstructed.

Declan McGonagle outlined his projections for the museum in the following terms:

We must present debates. I would like to think that ten years from now, people would at least understand that this museum is about debate and energy and questioning our patrimony, rather than simply accepting it.

This implies an agenda which is concerned with the public itself, to expand it, to engage with it, to provoke it. This seems to imply that IMMA is primarily 'reader-based', but in balance it would be more appropriate to define IMMA as being actively engaged with the reader, rather than actually reader-based. Brenda McParland has stated that she is "artist-centred", and identified the production of a show as "a dialogue....a collaboration between artist and curator". In doing so, she declares the temporary exhibition agenda to be most definitely 'author-based'. The Education and Community Programme can be said to direct its energy toward the 'readers', whilst the ideology of the Artists Work Programme embodies a concern with both the 'authors' and 'readers' of art. The instigation of the surveys and the museum's concerned response to the findings signify a leap forward in IMMA's own museology where, by extension, the public have been placed as advisors to the author of the museum, as it redefines its identity. This leads to a

vital question - *who is the museum's author?*

Obviously the role of the curator in an art institution of this magnitude cannot be underestimated. During a discussion in Temple Bar Galleries in October 1996, about museums, galleries and the role of the curator, Declan McGonagle declared that "art doesn't have legs". Throughout the discussion, it was evident that he did not perceive the role of the curator in neutral terms. The curatorial role is a strong and distinct presence in IMMA: the decision-making power regarding projects and exhibitions lies ultimately in the hands of a few coordinators and curators. With no cohesive policy document for the museum, the Director's own philosophy remains the only perceivable uniting force. All of the programmes, projects and exhibitions rely on this broader agenda for their starting point. As an executive Director, Declan McGonagle is the curator of the museum's ideology and this he has identified as follows: "the crucial question is why is art made at all... In exploring that you can empower people, you can give people a voice of their own..." Significantly, in an art institution power is always *given* before it is received.

* * * * *

In 1991, IMMA faced the challenge presented by the location, site, building, budget and general public apprehension: it declared an inheritance and the transformations are well under way. IMMA has made significant strides for Irish visual culture - exhibiting work not otherwise seen in Ireland, creating an international platform for Irish art and cherishing an active commitment to the expansion of art readership. In his book, *O The Museum's Ruins* investigating the significance of 'art institutions', Douglas Crimp has pointed out that "the museum(generic) seemed to be equally a space of exclusions and confinements" (Crimp, 1993, p.287). This bears great significance in relation to IMMA, for what is outside of its ideology defines what is confined within it. IMMA has developed thus far by a process of reactive and relative definition: by not being one thing, it is another. As IMMA leaves its infancy behind, it has developed a distinct personality and the challenge now is, *how to express it?*

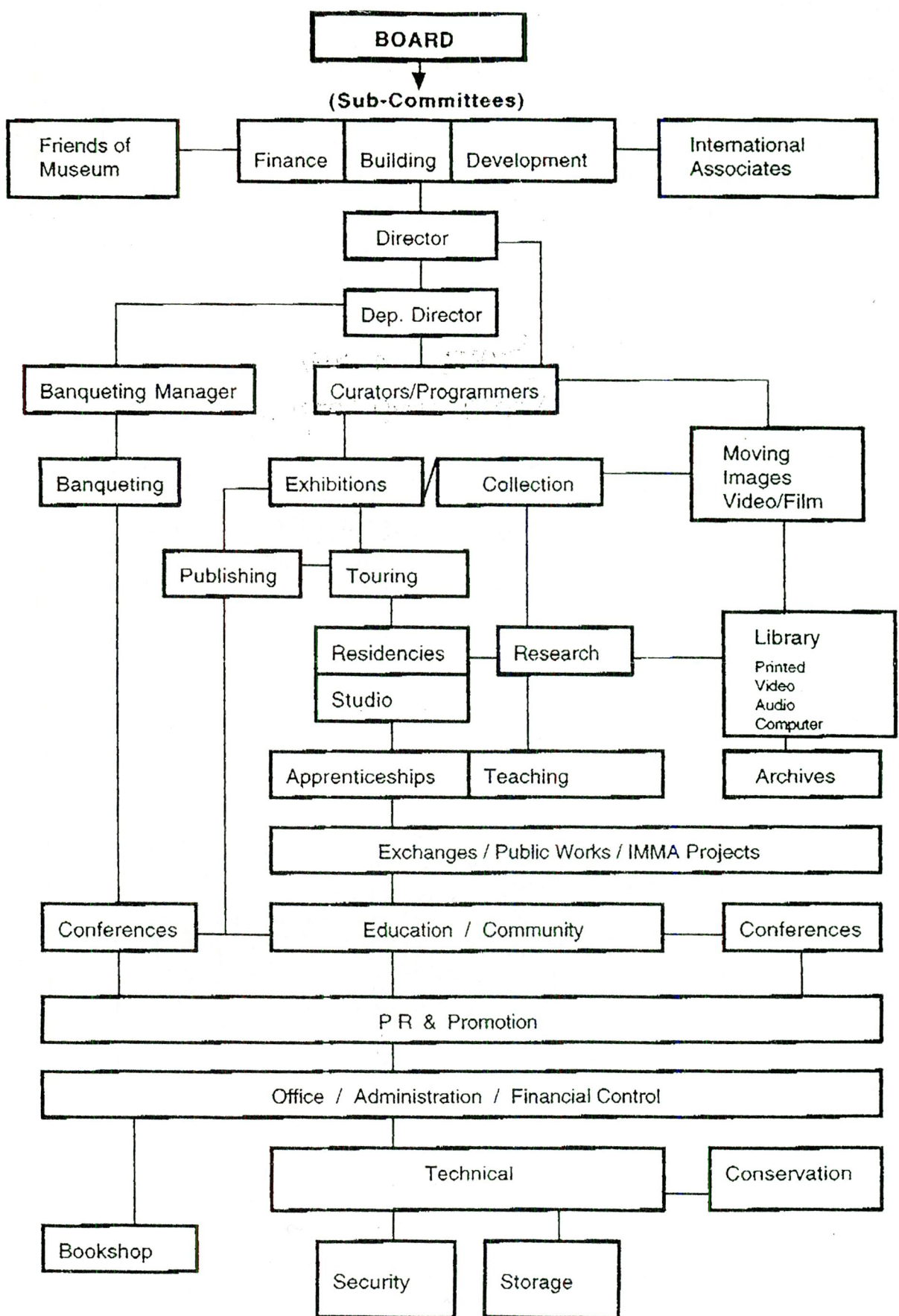


Figure 1: 'Functions' of the Museum.

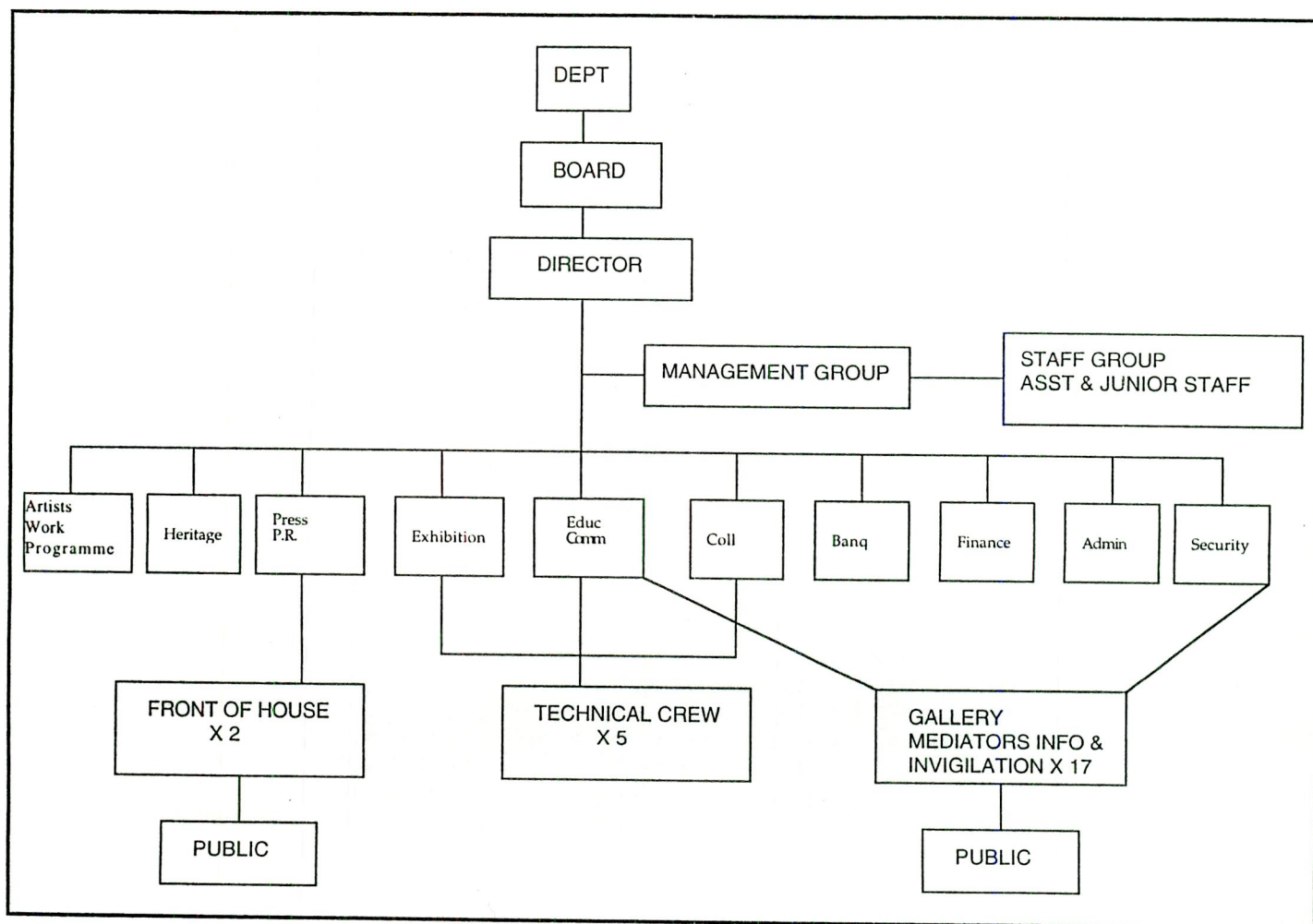


Figure 2: *Departmental Structure of the Museum.*

Appendices

Interview with Helen O'Donoghue
Coordinator of the Education and Community Programme
IMMA, 11th November 1996

Niamh Ann Kelly:

How does the Community/Education department operate - how many employed and in what capacity, etc.?

Helen O'Donoghue:

There are full-time and part-time posts here. We employ an artist who designs all of our project programmes, and after that we employ artists for the projects-projects run by artists. It's a programming budget which sometimes swells to the employment of up to twenty people, and sometimes shrinks back to the employment of myself full-time, full-time assistant curator and the part-time administrator. We run throughout the whole year and because the museum is rarely closed, and because our responsibility is to the public, we have a huge agenda. To date, at times we've stimulated projects and at other times we've responded to requests. The holidays are busy, the break at Halloween, the break at Easter, Christmas and the summer...we run different programmes.

NAK: *What resources are available to the programme, in terms of financing, space and exhibiting?*

HO'D: Firstly, the financial resources would swell according to what project we are doing. The central budget, the museum budget, would have to fund the pay of the full and part-time employees. For all the projects that we run, we look for joint funding - that wouldn't be a prerequisite. If we felt that something was really worth developing, we would access the funding totally ourselves, but that is rare. Within a year of my operation, I found that the people who really wanted to enter into partnerships and work with the museum, found the funding. It would work out, for all community-based programmes, because they generally had their own funding, that they would contact us to collaborate with the museum and they could cover their costs... There are some programmes that we fund perhaps 90% of.

Obviously there is also a resourcing of financing. Financing something like this is like an elastic band - it expands and contracts with what you are doing. We are fortunate in the way we operate in the museum because Declan has a healthy

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

TO THE HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AND THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

approach to budgeting. For example, if we say that is an exhibition cost, it comes out of the exhibition fund....The difficulty with budgets is you have to put in an application usually at the end of November for the next year, and because of the types of programmes that we run, which aren't fixed, often later in the year, I need more funding.

The resources in kind are hugely enhanced by our budget, we have a policy of no volunteers and we don't take Fas trainees. Resources in kind include the internal museum, we have a huge staff, on top of that we have technical crew who don't come out of our budget; the mediators don't come out of our budget; the artists on the Artists Work Programme don't come out of my budget. All of those people internally and indeed Declan himself, the Curator for the Collection and the Head of Exhibitions, would have input now and again. That is all 'plus' and 'added'. Because of the projects I run are essentially partnerships, I get huge resources from people from outside of the museum in terms of skills and commitment to that development.

NAK: *How are decisions reached as regards what projects are taken on board and who coordinates them?*

HO'D: When I started first of all, it was very daunting because I had never worked in a museum before. I didn't come with any on-the-ground experience. What attracted me to working here was the fact that I felt there was an awful lot of things that had been started in Ireland, and there was no overall institution taking responsibility for the development of these projects. The arts, in general, suffers greatly from 'pilot schemes', and I would have been a 'pilot' of a number of those schemes. When I came to the museum this was an opportunity to channel all energy and for someone to take responsibility. Responsibility in terms of advocating work and support, not necessarily to take it all under its wing. In answering your question, I would say to look at the Intersections catalogue; you can see a data-base of what we have done. Putting this together was very productive. We were almost five years up and running, when we decided to put this together. Partly it was a retrospective, but it also helped me look at how a process which essentially developed organically - we very much went with what was good - how it evolved and what it meant for the future in terms of development of a strategy. In the early days, I would have gotten out a blank piece of paper and written down all my desires for the programme based on my experience to date and then looked at the responsibilities that I thought a museum should have. I have always had a general knowledge and a personal commitment and interest, in not just politics of art, but also in broader issues society has to address. I feel very strongly that the arts are one of those things that have been

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. This section also outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the financial aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the budget, including the projected income and expenses for the upcoming year. This section also discusses the various financial risks and how they are being managed to ensure the organization's financial stability.

3. The third part of the document addresses the operational aspects of the organization. It describes the various processes and procedures that are in place to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of services. This section also discusses the various challenges that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the human resources of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the current staff levels and the various roles and responsibilities of the different departments. This section also discusses the various training and development programs that are in place to ensure that the staff is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the legal and regulatory aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the various laws and regulations that the organization is subject to and how they are being complied with. This section also discusses the various legal risks and how they are being managed to ensure the organization's legal compliance.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the environmental and social aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the various environmental and social issues that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed. This section also discusses the various initiatives that are in place to promote sustainability and social responsibility.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the future of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the various strategic initiatives that are in place to ensure the organization's long-term success. This section also discusses the various challenges that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the conclusion of the document. It summarizes the key findings of the document and provides a final overview of the organization's current state and future prospects.

very badly neglected.

The twinning of Education and Community was significant. What I had experienced was the separation out of what is called the arts of education and community. Ideally, I wanted them to inhabit a space where they could all come together. I believe in a lot of ways we have achieved that. Some people think that what I do is Community Arts, other people think what I do is quite formal and educational and other people don't know what to call it. I prefer to think of my policies and practice of inhabiting some sort of new space that brings all those things together. I'm trying to develop, in the museum, ways of opening up and accessing the arts to different types of groups.

Now, I'm beginning to spend more time in contact with other museums of modern art and their education officers, who have very different roles. I think had I been governed by that initially, it would be a very different policy here. Whilst the museum itself is governed by the temporary exhibition programme and the development of the collection, I would say the exhibitions come and go, the artists on the AWP come and go, but the Education programme continues. Ideas start in tandem with an exhibition, like in May 1991, the exhibition was there, it went, but ideas developed on. As the programmes develop, each phase builds on a previous phase. ...The core staff that are here, myself, Ann Davern, assistant curator and Liz McMahon, responsible for the children's programmes have a triangular relationship. All three of us have very dedicated interest and I think it is the coming together that causes the dynamic. We have to ask ourselves *how can we keep going forward and still leave our programmes open enough - how do we get a first time teacher together with more experienced teachers, so that one can benefit the other?* We always try and keep set up principles with everything we do, but we always move forward. So we try to motivate rather than just putting out a plan, then we apply the experience of that. Plus we have the philosophy, that Declan would have, that the museum is very careful about not being just a holder of all the knowledge. In the Education & Community Programme, I am always saying what we try to do is build up a structure for exchanging experiences, so that I hope that people on the programmes benefit from this.

NAK: *That brings me on to the programmes with school children and teachers....To what extent, if any, would you consider programmes with children to be fulfilling a role perhaps lacking within the Department of Education's School Programme?*

HO'D: What I try to do is to create projects that will have a life span of their own. We aimed initially, to look at the life of a child in primary school, and a young person

in secondary school. We wanted to develop an art programme so that the child or young person would come in contact with the museum: we could build up a programme suggesting a way of working that would be linked to the curriculum, and include the museum. I'll start with second level: we developed a programme with three schools in the Dublin area, the very first year I came here. That programme lasted three years because what was most of them left and went into Youth Reach. So rather than say, 'they've left school, we can't do anything about that', we followed them and set up two parallel programmes. We decided to develop a pilot programme in one of the schools and we worked with cross range of curriculum, like teachers of humanities and history of art. Both of those programmes have grown and because of flexibility, have gone a different route than I thought they'd go. At this year's AGM of the Art Teachers Association, we sent a teachers plan, but rather than the museum designing a programme, I would prefer to design a programme in association with the teachers.

NAK: *So up to this point, for example in relation to the Incareer Development Courses, it really has been the museum's initiative to work with the schools...*

HO'D: I wrote to and telephoned and a representative for the Department of Education came here and had a meeting with Declan and myself. Arising out of that is a verbal agreement and support of everything I do. The Department of Education are supportive of what we do, they back us up. The Department of Education only had so much money to run their Incareer Development programmes for their teachers, so they franchised it out. So the courses were as many and varied as there are teachers. No money passes hands from the Department, the teachers pay for their own courses. The fee for that is controlled, in a subtle way by the Department because they run some of their own courses and only charge £35 per week. So the teachers pay the museum £35, I can't afford to charge less - if we charge £15 the teachers won't think its a good course! The whole thing is dictated by the status quo established. I've been building up a relationship with the department over the last few years. To date they have supported everything we've done, for example, no teacher has ever had to justify bringing the children to the museum, no teacher has to justify an artist in the classroom.

So, when you ask me are fulfilling a role lacking within the Department of Education's School Programme, yes and no. Yes, if you were to take the attitude that the Department should do everything. In a positive way what I would I feel is its very much a twinning of their ideas and our ideas and it being adopted by the Department. On another level, to go back to the earlier part of your question, the way we work is that we set up a particular model with the Department. They

are very much involved in that setting up of the relationship between teachers and children artists and artwork, and we evaluate everything, document it. We are hoping to bring out a book, by next summer which will document all our schools projects to date and also give a parallel approach to introducing the arts to the young child. So that we would have specific models and also, we would have a general programme for teachers who wanted to come to the museum. So, going back to the very first question, that I feel is how the museum is operating. It operates by demonstrating how different groups can have real engagement with art and artworks. Then the next phase is to record and publish the findings and then that will be involved in policy change in general.

NAK: *Is there an agenda for coordinating with art colleges?*

HO'D: In my first year here, we worked with the whole of the staff in the DIT and we brought two groups here, a painting group and a sculpture group, together with NCAD and they worked with Felim Egan. They worked for an academic term together. We had planned to develop that project on, but nothing developed out of that. Individual students have come, but it has to be institution to institution. At the moment Hughie O'Donoghue is on the AWP and we are working with the DIT. We send faxes of all our information about talks and lectures and don't seem to get students from NCAD up here. We get students from Dun Laoire, from DCU, from DIT... We had a Third Degree Programme, that was a programme that Declan, myself and Suiban Barry, who was curator of exhibitions at the time, devised because we all felt very strongly that students on leaving college were very very lost. And that we, as a museum, as a living organism rather than a dead one, perhaps could create some sort of an environment that students coming from college could come to. We ran it for two years, but it could go on longer, it depended on demand. It really has to come from the people who are static in the college, not the students who are transient...

NAK: *Moving on from there: The initiation of projects stemming from the Family Resource Centre, St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore has proven most rewarding with projects ongoing, five years later. What would you identify as the reasons for this success? Do you intend to expand this type of 'community partnership' to other localities in the near future?*

HO'D: Initially we felt because of the location of the museum, it was very important to take into account the people who lived nearby. I had worked here in this area and I had time before the museum opened to develop the partnership with The Family Resource Centre and the community in general. This was due to a large extent to the insightfulness of the community worker there, Ruth Ferguson and she is now

on the board of the museum (she was appointed eighteen months, which is a very significant statement and she was appointed directly by Michael D. Higgins). In terms of the community, (obviously it is much broader than the one that is geographically closer), on a very practical level, we could resource the local community. We had to find ways that they could come in here, that it would be comfortable for them to be here. A lot of the people who locally are, in terms of their social circumstances, people who are labeled disadvantaged, on social welfare, who are unemployed. One thing I never wanted was to be seen as a charitable institution, that our programmes would have a charitable status. A fundamental belief that we had was that an understanding of the arts comes sometimes more easily through practical experience. So even before we had the studios built, we were doing workshops in their space. Not to make artworks, but just to have the experience of communicating in a visual way.

I can't talk about the locality without talking about two specific projects. A project that has developed into the *Programme for Older People* and *Unspoken Truths* are two projects are significant in terms of how they developed, what are the outcomes and how they have affected the general policy of the museum. I think they are two quite seminal projects which reflect our policy, my personal policy and then our collective policy. *Unspoken Truths* started out as a result my already having built a link, on a community level, with the Family Resource Centre. Also, Declan and I had a number of meetings with artists and arising out of that was submission by Ailbhe Murphy. She was the artist who subsequently became part of this programme. I think what is important is that its starting point was from a number of points and it had a whole lot of agendas, and it was as much about women having an opportunity to explore their own lives as it was about the museum proving that it was a democratic place in terms of cultural access for society. *Unspoken Truths*, not alone has it been shown outside of the country, but the women have been represented at seminars and conferences at the Beijing Women's Summit. Now that's not solely because of the museum, there are a whole lot of forces happening at the same time. *Unspoken Truths* is going to be represented in two weeks time at an EU conference which is looking at access to the arts for people living in poverty.

The *Project for Older People* started in a very different way. It actually started with an exhibition. When we were preparing that opening show, one of the things that we had to do was represent our Community & Education Programme in the opening show. There was a great pressure on me to actually to come up with something to express our intention to be involved with people other than artists. There was a lot of talk, and a lot of deputations and one of the things everybody wanted was a Community Arts exhibition. We came to a decision to

show the work of a particular group and they were St Michael's Parish Inchicore Active Age Painting Group. That was the start of our longterm relationship with the Programme for Older People which has grown from a very particular group to a European network. Again we are using the idea of having the model and the ongoing model. There are people who come regularly to our programmes, but in the meantime out of those programmes has come a network, with the museum becoming involved in national organization called *Age and Opportunity*. We have been looking at the policies this country has on arts for older people and we have discovered that in fact, the Arts Council has no policy on arts for older people. So out of this on-going relationship, we devised each May a festival which would give an opportunity for older people from all around the country to explore the art and also for us to raise, each year, an avenue for a policy for arts for older people. The good news is that at this stage the Arts Council and the Department of Health, who are the funders of *Age and Opportunity*, are considering putting together a financial package which would support, in the short term a pilot consultation period where someone would look at the possibilities in relation to what can be done. Hopefully out of that will come a policy. On a European level, in 1993 there was European Year of Older People, and at that year we came to the notice of an organization called Euro Age, and at that point there was no one doing art with older people, and we were held up as a model. Now other countries are trying to adopt some of our programmes.

So, going back to my earlier point, I would see that as very different to the traditional role of the Education Officer of a museum, and the difference arises out of, not being unprepared or unplanned for circumstances, it came out of a core thinking when Declan put together the package for the staff of the museum. Because I was brought into the museum on a par with other curators, we were always considered as part of something bigger which therefore means that my word is as good as anyone else's. Therefore, externally, I can go to people, who are directors of organizations, with ideas on a par. I think that that is a point you can identify in terms of policy and that contributes to the effectiveness of our Department. I don't think we are seen as a pretty good education programme attached to a museum. I think we are seen as a museum that is effecting change externally and raising questions about how the arts are being perceived externally. There is another development which is relevant to this. The Government Poverty Agency have put significant funds into the development of arts at a community level and they now have a report - they did it over a four year period and came to me in that period. They are looking at the possibility of them, or an independent agency which they would have influence over, influencing how arts financing is channeled through to a community level. We weren't involved in that directly, but have had a relationship with the Government Poverty Agency

through *Unspoken Truths* . They funded the evaluation of *Unspoken Truths*, there is a summary document that has arisen out of that.

The projects that we have done here are certainly effecting change and influencing people to do things. We could work full-time in making sure the museum works on point of entry of the actual site and building, but I don't think the museum would have been effective if the Education & Community Programme had not taken a primary role. We had to be responsible in the wider sphere.

Whilst we have those locally based projects, we've also had a lot of projects around the country. That idea of partnership is in everybody's mind and we have had partners outside of Dublin. That's been ad hoc really because its been maybe a result of a touring exhibition, or linking to somebody else's agenda.

Also, we are coming to possibly the end of a very interesting time in the arts. When the museum opened the Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht hadn't started. Then the ministry was opened and we had a minister for culture for the first time, we'll always have one now. I don't know if we'll have as insightful or as inspired a minister... We also have a very interesting Arts Council. The museum opened at a time when the politics of art were also very relevant to this type of development. So, the general atmosphere for arts in Ireland has never been better.

NAK: *What is the relationship with the Arts Council?*

HO'D: Prior to the development of the Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, the Arts Council would have been the government's agency in terms of advice. The museum came in just as there was the introduction of the ministry. So the museum, because we had been formally set up by the Department of the Taoiseach, came under the new ministry. In the last three years there has been a re-structuring of all the national institutions and there has been a new Heritage Council set up and all the museums etc. are under that Heritage Council...There has never been such an energetic and active ministry and Arts Council and in general, receptiveness to the role of the arts, as there has in the last five years. That is why it was very important that the museum took an active role in that general atmosphere of change.

Interview with Philomena Byrne

Press and Public Relations Officer

IMMA, 14th November 1996

Niamh Ann Kelly:

Obviously, in an institution of this magnitude, the P.R. is of great significance; and as I understand it there are just two employed specifically for this area. How does the P.R. department operate? What is the budget for the year and how is it allocated?

Philomena Byrne:

The budget for publicizing the various exhibitions actually goes on the exhibition costs and under any other kind of an event; so that's not kept separately. Our specific budget consists of whatever is spent on advertising which is about £65,000 per year, about one third of which is spent on museum publications. Then there is the general running expenses; salaries and other general expenses, for example we have an annual press briefing every January. Taking all that into account, it's about £100,000 to £120,000 a year. But for separate exhibitions there are different costs, like for the Glen Dimplex, we do hardly any of the publicity because it's sponsored. That's how the budget works.

Initially, I ran the department entirely on my own, then Rowena started three years ago on a part time basis and is now working on a full-time basis. Her main area of expertise is advertising. To complicate things further, we also run from our department the classical music programme. I do the organizing of that and she does the publicizing. I do most of the other work in the advertising department, Irish and overseas: writing the press releases, researching the magazines for the press releases.

In this general department there is also the staff relations and switchboard. That's a new change of structure, because it was decided that the front of house would be better here than in the security department as there would be greater awareness of the public in this department. So now we organize that, which means scheduling rosters etc.. So, it isn't just purely a press and publicity department. We do other things as well then. We produce the programme of events, which is circulated very widely. We also make deputations to big organizations. We did a lot of that in the second and third year where we had in people from the tourist information offices, people from the travel trade, the heads of hotels and also had in the taxi companies' representatives and showed them around. We had tours

geared towards their interests. The main aim was to spread the word that the museum exists and what it does.

NAK: *Do you have any curatorial input into the exhibition programme?*

PB: Well, not as such, though there are programming meetings several times a year and they would map out the programme. Sometimes in our January press briefing we say we will show a certain selection from the collection and then for some reason they depart from that, so I have to say what we said we were going to do and that we will be measured against this. Also, I check our opening days don't clash with anything else; to check what are we saying about ourselves to our potential audience. We have had some research done which shows there is an element of confusion - confusion in the public mind.

NAK: *Before we deal with specifics, I'd like to ask you how you came to the working here?*

PB: I was here before the museum opened, when it was a general arts centre. I had been here three years before it was the Irish Museum of Modern Art. My background has been in press and publicity - I've never worked as a journalist. I started working in publishing and then I worked for a branch of the tourist industry, Regional Tourist Board. From there I worked in the Industry Development Authority where I worked for seven years in the Promotions Department, organizing conferences etc. I also worked with the overseas press. I was seven years in that job with the IDA. For the last three years, I was an assistant manager of the press office. Then I came on a career-break from the IDA to here, initially for two years, and then stayed.

I've always been interested in the arts, the arts in general. I've no particular interest in one area: I suppose when I was taken on here it was felt that someone who had a professional experience with the press was better than someone who had a professional involvement with the arts, in order to build the gap between the two. I think it has worked out well. I think I'm more inclined to put myself in the position of a visitor or the press person...

NAK: *The museum has a phenomenal presence in Dublin, it's difficult now to envisage a Dublin art scene before IMMA...*

PB: Yes, well it has been a success and I'd put it down to Declan McGonagle - he just works, works, works and a very productive worker. It was a big change for us who were here when he came along, but it all fell into place.

NAK: *You have been here since the founding of the museum. How would you chart the institution's rise in status over a mere five years?*

PB: There was a certain amount of skepticism and that worked in different ways. There were people like Gerald Davis, and people who just weren't happy. I think when they saw the opening and saw the building that dissipated to a large degree. After that, there was worry that, though a lot of work had been drawn in for the opening, it might not ever amount to anything substantial. I think *From Beyond The Pale* was a turning point, because it showed what this place could do what nowhere else could do. *From Beyond The Pale* consolidated people as it offered something to everyone. The success of the Glen Dimplex and they way it has stayed; it acts as an 'outside' confirmation of what we do. It has built up steadily and we do take a lot of trouble to look after the press, having the press in every January and keeping them informed. They realize too that we are serious about we are about. We deal with a wide range of press including *Cara*, *Image* magazine, *Evening Herald*, *The Irish Times*, *Circa* and international press as well. So, we spread the net very wide.

NAK: *The museum was launched amid a run of 'bad press' in 1991 and the years coming up to the opening. Could you define the reasons for this?*

PB: There was a genuine fear of what might be done to the building and that the structure might be unsuitable. There was quite a lively interesting programme here with concerts, and that was dropped initially. So, people felt we're giving up this and we're not quite sure what we're getting in return. But I think that changed once they saw the place. The press after the opening were different. The transformation of the building was very successful, by and large.

NAK: *The building work was commended in the press in Ireland and in England, but National Heritage Council were quiet and then about a year later publicly said they did not approve....*

PB: Yes, I think the heritage people wouldn't be pleased with any changes to the building.

NAK: *How would you define your relationship with the press, now?*

PB: I think we have a good working relationship. There are elements of the press that won't be pleased. Except for Gerald Davis and I suppose Kevin Myers, there hasn't been an onslaught on us.

NAK: *When did you start the briefings?*

PB: 1992.

NAK: *Gerald Davis, in an article in the Sunday Business Post, greeted the museum very positively - he then did a turn around...*

PB: Yes, I try to work against a too violent a reaction against people like that. There were letters flying back and forth...Gerald Davis and others felt they weren't getting a fair crack of the whip here...Someone like Patrick Gallagher was just giving an honest opinion.

NAK: *John Hutchinson did quite a turn-around: he was initially very skeptical and as soon as Declan McGonagle was appointed he talked of the museum 'coming alive'.*

PB: I think the reason for that was that if it was just going to carry on like it had been previous to Declan, at least now it has a strong character about it.

NAK: *By and large, the Irish Times has proved a strong ally from the beginning, publishing feature articles and interviews with Declan McGonagle. What, would you estimate, is the reason for this?*

PB: I suppose the Irish Times has the scope - it's only the Times who'll send someone to look into the Event Horizon in such depth. I must say, I've found Circa disappointing - I mean I never know who to contact.

NAK: *They seem to have a sort of 'moving staff'.*

PB: Yes, a changing editorial board which makes it hard to set anything up with them. I would just like to say that as well as the Irish Times, the Evening Herald has shown great interest. They're quite interested in everything that goes on here though I suppose hampered by the general editorial policy there.

NAK: *Arising from all that, how influential are the press on public opinion?*

PB: The thing about it is that the critics are writing on the arts pages, which aren't generally very well read. Someone like Kevin Myers or Gerald Davis can be damaging.

The thing about it is that the critics are waiting on the new paper, which will
naturally very well read. Sooner or later the critics will be in no
position to say anything.

Although I would like to see the book, I cannot say anything about it.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the

new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

I am a very young man, and I have not had time to read much of the
new great literature. I have read the new books, but I have not
read the new books.

NAK: *How damaging then would you consider public critics like Gerald Davis and Marie-Therese Farrell, if the public do read the letters pages?*

PB: That would be more influential. My responsibility is to ensure the replies don't take on any kind of a personal element...

NAK: *I have in front of me, Declan McGonagle's reply to Kevin Myers' Diary of December 1995. Would you agree that something positive came out of the criticism as it drew out of Declan McGonagle, a kind of manifesto, a statement of identity of IMMA, which doesn't seem to otherwise exist in the public sphere?*

PB: Yes, it does create opportunities to set out our manifesto, but not hopefully at the expense of some complicated debate that nobody will cop on to.

NAK: *The Glen Dimplex Awards of the last three years have brought with them much hype and publicity to the museum, now being a virtual 'phrase partner' to the Turner Prize. Without wishing to deter from the integrity of the awards, how do you avoid the general public perceiving the awards as a publicity stunt, as the Turner Prize is often ridiculed in England?*

PB: I don't think it has been at all as ridiculed as the Turner Prize, because I think the press are different here. When you look back on it, the press have taken it fairly seriously.

NAK: *Are there any plans for the Internet?*

PB: Yes: as part of our Corporate Identity Project research we're having done, we are re-assessing our relations with the public and access. We would put all our publications on the net and programme of events.

NAK: *How significant is the international standing of the museum? How comparable is it to its suggested equivalents abroad?*

PB: The word is out there, and we're not considered a 'poor relation' or anything like that.

NAK: *Are there any direct relationships with these equivalents?*

PB: We have done co-operatives, I don't think there's any twinning as such. We have

done quite a lot with the Tate in Liverpool.

NAK: *The Glen Dimplex Awards started as a three year programme, and how long will it continue for now?*

PB: It's going on a yearly basis.

NAK: *What do you estimate is the public standing of the museum today, in Ireland and internationally?*

PB: Internationally I suppose it's a question of scale - scale of our resources, the kind of publications we could do. In Ireland, I've never met anyone who said 'what a waste of money', or thought it a rip-off of the tax-payer or anything like that.

NAK: *Where is IMMA going?*

PB: I think its going to continue as it has. We're getting to a period of consolidation, as we have been working on a five year plan. We will change our approach to the collection, so something from the collection should be on show at all times. We had market research done in summer '95, and their main findings were that a lot of people were unsure of what we did, had difficulty finding the place and following the signs when they were here. This kind of research will help us create a more recognizable profile. There was other research we had done which found that people needed a level of reassurance; that when they came in here they didn't know what it was about, they needed a baseline. They were constantly being bombarded with new experiences and couldn't digest them, and found it unsettling. Whereas if there was a more constant presence of *something*, they would find it more reassuring.

NAK: *I suppose when one reads about the donations to the collection, it's disappointing not to find them on exhibit...*

PB: Exactly.

NAK: *I went to Government Publications Office looking for a Policy Document and discovered there was none. Will there be one drawn up as a result of these recent research projects?*

PB: We would like to. What we are working towards at this point is some core values for the museum. We haven't finalized a statement, but we are trying to define what it is about the museum that's different.

NAK: *To finish up, I'd like to ask you about the use of the Irish language in the museum. Sometimes there are translations and sometimes there aren't...*

PB: It is a priority with us: we went out and secured an Irish-speaking person as an Irish language guide. We have someone who does Irish language interviews. We liaise a lot with An Bord Gaeilge. We have all our programme of events in Irish.

Interview with Orla Dukes
Coordinator of the Artists Work Programme
IMMA, 18th November.

Niamh-Ann Kelly:

How was the programme set up and how does it operate?

Orla Dukes:

It started off with a few studios and has now developed into converting all the stables. It operates on the basis of an application or a proposal that come as a result of the information we send out. Some people tend to move in and react specifically to the surroundings which is not necessarily what we want, there are guidelines on application. The exhibitions and the building itself are very important, the meaning of the building has changed in the context of the people who use the building so many times. For example, the emphasis is no longer on architecture, it is now on the environment of the building. As a result, the panel has an emphasis on artists who are concerned with the issue of 'place', place in the society of Ireland, issues of location, cultural identity etc. Generally, the idea of place is relevant.

NAK: *Who is on that panel?*

OD: Whoever is on the programming panel - the curatorial staff from Exhibitions, Permanent Collection and Education & Community. There is always a representative from all the different departments. It operates on the basis that we would invite artists to apply, so everybody is treated the same on application, it's just that sometimes some might not have heard of the programme.

NAK: *How is it financed? - How many employed?*

OD: I have a pretty limited budget, and I have to pay my salary from it, as the post hasn't yet been sanctioned. The technical end is taken care of by the technical crew.

NAK: *What does the programme hope to achieve?*

OD: The idea of the programme, the main reasoning behind it is to take away some of the 'mystique' of the process of making art. The emphasis here is not on product. It has to made very clear to those on the programme that they know what it is about. Up until now, Mary McCarthy operated the programme so that

just when the big green outside door was open, anybody could go over and knock on the glass door inside to wander in to studios. From talking to the artists I don't think we can stay with that. It is a problem because a) they need to open the doors to get the optimum light in and b) people starting blocking their windows, so they didn't feel like animals in a zoo. So what we need is more a formalized structure. At the moment, there is an ongoing corporate identity project which is addressing the museum's identity as a whole, so I will work with that research. I can't organize an information board until that is worked through. It would help to sometime publish the plan, so people could see what artists are in and when they are available, rather than just walking over. It does take from the spontaneity, but it would be more realistic.

So what does the programme hopes to achieve is to basically to take away the mystique surrounding the process of art, to how it's done and why. People can talk to the artists. The other thing the artist has to do whilst on the programme is to have at least one formal contact with public, a presentation of their work in progress.

NAK: *How did you come to the position?*

OD: I applied. It was an internal trawl. I had applied for a Mediator position in 1991, and then years later they rang me up and said they had got a recommendation from the ministry of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht that they had to have an Irish-speaking member of staff, to give Irish tours. So, I started off here working as a Mediator. In April of last year, I applied for this post.

NAK: *How are the decisions made in relation to what artists are taken on the programme?*

OD: It is basically the curatorial panel, so I have the same say as anyone else as to who is taken on. If I think someone should be taken on, I can express that, but I don't actually have any power when it comes to choosing who is taken on. When someone hasn't their proposal in order or are really looking for exhibition space, they can be omitted straight away. That is the only place where I make decisions, so I bring about two thirds of what I get to the panel for discussion.

NAK: *Is there a national or international bias?*

OD: The artists get £400 per month if they are staying here and £100 per month if they just have studios. So, from a purely financial point of view, we tend to have about two thirds Irish and one third international because international costs more.

As the budget allows, I think we would like to have more international connections. We may be able to organize formal arrangements with other institutions, for 'swaps' or something similar. The duration of the residency is decided on the basis of the proposal.

NAK: *Outgoing AWP coordinator, Mary McCarthy, has referred to the AWP as operating under direct influence of the temporary exhibition programme - i.e. the artists are selected in accordance with their 'relevance' to projected shows. Do you consider this to be part of the selection process?*

OD: Yes, though it's not a major consideration but it is one of the criteria. Also, we consider the Education & Community programme with which we want to continue the interrelationship.

NAK: *Each artist writes a report of their residency; are these available to the public? Has the feedback from the artists on their experience here been constructive?*

OD: Those reports aren't available to the public at the moment. There are plans for them going to the library, but one or two of the artists have objected to their reports being available for various reasons.

NAK: *From the point of view of the artists applying for the programme though, they would be very helpful...*

OD: Yes, one of the things I want to do is to organize a booklet which would stay in the residency area for artists to write comments. Practically all of the reports have been positive.

One thing we don't have is technical facilities like bronze-casting or photography development. They have to go down town, we give them the money and can advise where to go, but it means they have to get out and get involved. That is part of our policy. Even though it is quite isolated up here, I think people see it as a kind of oasis, a tranquil, calm place where they can just get on with whatever they're doing. There is no question as to finishing a project, it is purely time-out. They can work if they want to or they can change direction or use it between shows or whatever.

NAK: *There is little by the way of formal interaction among the artists. Do you think that the programme would benefit if the artists had a formalized*

communal area - for discussions etc.?

OD: I'm going to buy two chairs to put in the communal area that I have designated. I bought a rug and a kettle and cups. That's in place, informally. Also, its quite hard to get all the artists together and one way of communicating is that they have this room and information is posted up.

NAK: *Do you think then, that would give rise to more active interaction among the artists?*

OD: It has happened. People have ended up with their work changing radically because of who's in the studio next door. There is an ongoing interaction to an extent. But yes, I do think that a communal area is crucial for that kind of process.

Interview with Catherine Marshall

Curator of the Permanent Collection

IMMA, 2nd December 1996

Niamh Ann Kelly:

How is it decided what is to be purchased for the collection and who decides?

Catherin Marshall:

An acquisition committee made up of members of the Board and the curatorial staff. Any one of the committee can make proposals to the committee. The work is purchased as a result of the majority vote. Some work, a small amount of work is bought at the discretion of Declan McGonagle, in other words out of our exhibition funds.

NAK: *Who nominates that committee?*

CM: That's something I'm not sure of. I think that it is decided on a voluntary basis - those who are interested.

NAK: *Who, apart from the curatorial staff, is on the committee?*

CM: The committee is made up of myself, and the Acquisition Subcommittee which includes Maurice Foley, Dorothy Walker, Mike Murphy, Brian O'Doherty among others.

NAK: *You were appointed eighteen months ago which coincides with the appointment of the new board...*

CM: The new board had just been appointed and it had one meeting before setting up this committee.

NAK: *What is the annual budget for purchasing?*

CM: We have an acquisition budget of £150,000 which sounds good but is not great, especially if buying international work, the acquisition budget covers the cost of bringing that work over.

NAK: *What does the collection represent - Irish or International art?*

CM: Both. There is no complete breakdown from year to year, but if I were to go back over the entire collection I think would be half-in-half, Irish and non-Irish.

NAK: *What is the policy basis of the collection? What does it hope to achieve?*

CM: We try to look for quality - of course, the whole definition of quality is up for discussion all the time, but we have been defining for ourselves what we collect. The National Gallery have a very good collection of early twentieth century Irish art and also international art. That brings us a long way into this century. We would like to have our collection working from after that time onwards. The war years were ones of leadership in the history of art in the twentieth century, partly because that's when European artists went to America, and American Abstract Expressionists and various people had a huge impact. But also, back in Ireland the war years represent a watershed because the war years were the years in which the first regular venues for alternatives to the tradition in Ireland were established. A number of international artists came to Ireland at this time because it was a neutral country and that too gave Irish art a boost. We are strongly convinced that our collection should begin around the years of the second world war.

NAK: *Was that decided upon five years ago or has it evolved over the five year period?*

CM: It wasn't written down five years ago. What is happening now is that we are going through an identity project and that will help us define ourselves. In practice, we own some work from before the second world war, Picasso prints from the '30s and early Jack Yeats; we are not going to get rid of those, but we have to think very carefully about all of that. An issue arising from this is the conditions of purchases versus donations. We buy work by living artists and that is something we put the policy five years ago and that will not change, but we accept donations of earlier work. We are going to state from here on in that we would concentrate our collection from the 1940s onwards.

NAK: *How would you assess your relationship with the National Gallery at the moment?*

CM: We're good friends. In practice we are very different. We haven't sat down and had a conversation about acquisitions policies. That is something I would certainly like to do, because it is only now that we are beginning to clarify our policy with our board.

NAK: *The Hugh Lane Gallery would consider itself a Museum of Modern Art. There is public contention as to whether IMMA or the Hugh Lane should be the Irish modern art museum. How do you react to that?*

CM: I think there will be contention, but it does lead to a lot of confusion in people's minds. I'm very clear about it: IMMA is a national collection, the Hugh Lane is a municipal collection. A lot of people wanted the Hugh Lane to be a great national collection of Modernism. It couldn't be a national collection; it only ever had municipal resources. It didn't have the encouragement of the State or the support of the State. Now we have the opportunity to be the national museum for modern art. I think it is our duty, our role, to try to be that collection. I think myself, the Hugh Lane have a wonderful collection which is a tremendous resource, unrivaled by any other in the country. So, I'd like to see that collection get a much more high profile showing. I think it might be useful for the Hugh Lane to clarify its own position, only so that it can make the maximum use of what it's got.

NAK: *You have already more or less answered my next question as to whether all donations are automatically accepted...?*

CM: Not necessarily. We have storage problem, same as every other art collection all over the world has. We do only buy the work of living artists, we accept donations of good art going back to the war years. I think we would also consider what it is we would show: our policy is to buy art that we would show, or to own art that we would show. If we are offered work that we can't show, then we might decide not to accept it because we are not interested in art we can't show.

NAK: *Is this reassessment of your policy coming out of this Corporate Identity Research?*

CM: Partly, the evaluation project is to get some 'evidence', if that's the right word, from outside... to see if the changes and clarifications we were thinking of making were the right ones. The findings of the Corporate Identity survey has been to give us the support for the collection.

NAK: *How soon do you anticipate that process to be finished?*

CM: Within the next twelve months. The policy should be well finished in the next couple of months. Implementing some of the decisions is going to take a long

time. One of the proposals is that we should have something on in the grounds - that we should use the grounds, gardens of the museum, we could have quite large scale projects. We want to really take possession of it.

NAK: *Given that the collection is the only stable/constant factor in the museum, what role does the collection have in relation to the museum as a whole?*

CM: I'd like to change that question, statement, around. The collection is constant in that we own it, but IMMA is as much interested in process and practice as in the resulting artifact. And the process and practice are permanent parts of the institution's procedure, so they are as permanent, though they're not as tangible, as the collection. So, what is the role of our collection then?...Well, we want to show it as much as possible, but not to show it in a permanent way and that is confusing for a lot of people. The collection is not the focal point of the museum; the procedures here are dictated by the temporary exhibition policy, and that goes back to the bigger museum policy which is not to show artwork in any context of constancy or permanency. So, we would prefer to show our own collection constantly changing.

Sometimes we show a lot of the collection, sometimes we show less of it. We've decided though, from here on, that we will regularly show work from the collection in the two ground floor galleries, starting from January. Indeed for the last year and a half, we have been using the west ground floor gallery exclusively for the collection anyway and we have always been showing the collection in a public exhibition in a gallery in the museum. Also some will be shown outdoors - there will be commissions for the courtyards and grounds. As well as that we plan to make the collection available to the country: it's their collection as well, or our collection collectively. We have had work from the collection going to Dundalk. We hope to have the collection, in totality or part of it, travel to four or five other places around the country. Since it went to Dundalk we have been approached by a number of people to borrow different kinds of work from the collection. Wherever it is wanted, and our budget allows it, we'd like it to be there.

NAK: *What exactly is the decision to choose from the 1940s onwards saying?*

CM: It's claiming that from the 1940s onwards there was a marked shift in the art produced. It is certainly not claiming that the post-1940's art was better in any way. I think there is a confusion around that the title *Irish Museum of Modern Art*. Someone said recently the words *Modern* and *Art* are not contentious, it's only *Museum* and *Irish* that are problematic. As I see it all of those words are

problematic - Should we be Irish or not Irish? Well, it is the *Irish Museum of Modern Art*, because what we show here is not everywhere. Should we be a *museum* or not? Again, we are not the old model of a museum, we can change and reshape the idea of what a museum should be... And what do we mean be *Modern*? Some people think the 'modern' means contemporary and other people are very academic about this and its origins in art history with a capital 'M' as the period from late Post-Impressionism up to Post-Modernism, Post Colonialism, Post Structuralism.... I think that we would like to provide a service to Irish artists and Irish art, that we can bring to them whatever is going on anywhere. So there is an opportunity in Ireland to see what's happening outside of Ireland - so it is available to the contemporary artists.

Contemporary art doesn't happen out of nowhere, there is a context. And with the collection, we hope to provide that context. You could go back for ever, you could jump back over the last two thousand years and jump into pre-history... Obviously we can't do all of that, but what we can do, with contemporary exhibitions, provide that context. For example we got early Irish Sheela-na-Gigs from places all over Ireland, into the museum, and bringing them together two years ago in an exhibition which also included work by contemporary artists and work by big names in twentieth century art. We will continue to do that. So, coming back to the 1940s as our cutting point; it is a vantage point that allows us to look back on Modernism, with a capital 'M'.

NAK: *How can the collection avoid seeming authoritarian in terms of its preferences?*

CM: I think the lack of permanence does that. We show work and provide background information on it that is relevant to that context, but then we might shift the context of that work for a different show. Or we show work from the permanent collection in an exhibition and channel that show by showing it with other exhibitions.

NAK: *So, as I understand it, the permanent collection is shown as a context for contemporary practice...*

CM: We don't show the collection just as a backdrop. We have work by contemporary artists in the collection, also. The permanent collection is about the present as much as it is about the past. The present reads from the past and the past can provide a context. It is unfixed.

NAK: *What is your input into the exhibition programme?*

CM: We have programming meetings on a regular basis, the curatorial team and Declan - we throw ideas or proposals into a general discussion and out of that collective decisions are made.

NAK: *How did you come to the post here?*

CM: I taught history of art in Trinity and at NCAD. Arising out of my teaching and lecturing, I was offered a job here. I was very impressed by what was going on here and especially by the work being done by the Education & Community Programme. When IMMA appointed an education officer right from the outset, creating public access, I wanted to be part of that. In particular I was more excited by one exhibition here, that had nothing to do with great art, than by any other art process I've encountered. That was *Unspoken Truths*, and it wasn't just the exhibition, but also the seminar that went along with it.

One of the things you haven't asked me, is a question for many people in Ireland which is why aren't we permanently showing Irish art? We have a lot of pressure on us to do that and I'm not sure how this debate will be resolved. At the moment, we are certainly still trying to format a scenario where Irish art is not ghettoized. We've built a strong argument that art doesn't happen in a vacuum anywhere. The best art is made by people who have a lot of communication with the art of the world. If you look at Irish art, Mainie Jellett and Eve Hone, for example; they were more important than anybody in the country at that time, but at the same time, to show them only in an international context, doesn't do justice to the problems they had bringing their international insights back home. Mainie Jellett actually went on air in the 1920s, to broadcast a programme on Modernism to an Irish audience who had never seen, and weren't sure of, what she was talking about. I think that is one of those areas of shifting ground where we have to look at what is happening, in an insular way, in Ireland and what is also happening for Irish artists who are both insular and international. We have to find a way to bring all of those things together.

NAK: *Would that be possible in connection with the National Gallery...I mean would it be more effective in collaboration?*

CM: I'm sure it would be possible to collaborate. We haven't had many discussions with them. We really need to work on that for ourselves firstly.

Interview with Gordon Lambert

Art Collector and Board Member

At His Home, 13th December 1996

Niamh-Ann Kelly:

Were you happy with the decision to house IMMA in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, as opposed to 'Stack A'?

Gordon Lambert:

Very much so. Charles Haughey set up a committee prior to the decision, to investigate where to locate the Museum of Modern Art. It emanated partly out of the fact that I said I would give my collection...Dorothy Walker was another person who was very strong in demanding a Museum of Modern Art for years. We had various meetings and I had several interviews with Charles Haughey. I came to the point where I had to go and see him to ask where he was deciding to locate the museum. He said he had decided on the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, and I said I had too: it was the only place that would do justice to my collection, in the long term. Stack A had yet to be built, the estimate was £20 million and I couldn't foresee it in my lifetime. A younger generation coming up mightn't be that involved in the actual financial services area, it would be more elite. That is the reason.

Another of the reasons was the fact that none of my family are very interested in art and they couldn't afford to accept it anyway. The inheritance tax is considerable and prevents anyone building up a collection from leaving it to family. At that time it was twenty years since I started collecting, and I was on the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and had been through all the main cities and galleries in the world. In 1988 Kilmainham was just open and Padraig O'hUigin, who was secretary at the Department of the Taoiseach, arranged for me to have a luncheon in Kilmainham with some of my pictures on exhibit and this accentuated my interest.

Another reason - the extent of the place - no matter what happens within that marvellous building, there was room for sculpture gardens, theatre performances and also pavilions if necessary. There was so much scope. Stack A would have been just a gallery, nothing else.

NAK:

The board appointed Declan McGonagle as director of the museum - the press coverage, at the time, suggested there was no other strong

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

1906

1907

1908

1909

contender. Was there any one else in the running?

GL: I don't regard him as having been the only one. Mind you, I would have head-hunted him if he hadn't applied because he was shortlisted for the Turner Prize. I was on the Northern Arts Council for several years and knew what he was doing in the Orchard Gallery and how he got the international reputation from a very minimal budget. But there were several others who are prominent but obviously, I can't name them.

NAK: *What were the terms of his office?*

GL: Five years.

NAK: *So we're there - five years on now?*

GL: Yes. If you knew his record, being an Irishman and a Northern Irishman, he was just ideal. I say it was fate!

NAK: *So his first term of office is up effectively now. Is the board going to reappoint him?*

GL: He has certainly done such a wonderful job and built such a great team around him, his term has been extended..

NAK: *Is that for another five years then that it would be extended or just annually?*

GL: I think it is for another five years. It's in process.

NAK: *I have noticed that it is often inferred in public discussion that the museum seems to act as a platform for Mr. McGonagle's own curatorial ideologies. What is your reaction to this kind of commentary?*

GL: It is a Museum of Modern Art and its ideology is, first of all, to exhibit outstanding exhibitions that wouldn't be seen here otherwise. Secondly, to buy work - contemporary work and from people like myself, work of the last twenty or thirty years. There is an acquisition committee, a financing committee and exhibition committee; three committees who do the hard work and report to the board.

NAK: *The Board then operates on the discussion of the reports from the three*

Q: I don't regard him as having been the only one. About year I would have been
thought him if he hadn't applied because he was identified for the 1994-1995
I was on the National Arts Council for several years and knew what he was
doing in the National Gallery and how he got the international reputation for a
very minimal budget. But there were several others who are prominent but
otherwise I can't name them.

Q: How many the names of his staff?

A: Five years.

Q: He was in there. Five years on staff?

Q: Yes. You know his record, being an historian and a thoughtful person, he
was just what I say I was like.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

Q: He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.
He was in there. He was in there. He was in there. He was in there.

committees?

GL: A phenomenal person is the Chair, Gillian Bowler. She gets opinions from all the board members and has a further discussion. She doesn't press her own views but she'll assess the discussion at the end of the day very astutely and she works tremendously well with Declan. When the new appointments came up for renewal, I was grateful that she was reappointed Chair. She keeps the meeting to order and time.

NAK: *That's the revised board appointed eighteen months ago?*

GL: Yes.

NAK: *What does the on-going 'Corporate Identity' project signify in relation to a view of IMMA's 'identity'?*

GL: It arose out of a controversy in the paper about the policies of exhibitions and also so many facets of access. Having been chairman of Jacobs and a marketing director before, I saw that though we had the finance and Public Relations and various other aspects, we hadn't really a marketing policy as such. My theory, in Jacobs, was that you had to have all these aspects staffed. Public relations, I said, was like a diamond -sales, advertising, product development, policy, and public relations was the setting of the diamond. So, it can only work to its best when all the others were doing their job.

NAK: *What exactly then, is the Corporate Identity Project? Is it a restructuring of the 'diamond'?*

GL: It will be bringing the diamond together, strengthening the whole communication between the staff and the policies of the objectives and getting that over to the public.

NAK: *Given that there appears to have been no policy documents drawn up in the initial stages of the museum (or indeed since), how did the board operate a strategy for the museum, five years ago? What were the specific terms of reference?*

GL: I find it difficult to define, and there again, is where Gillian Bowler comes into it. She got the views of all the board members and gradually a policy evolved. The old board were concerned with the financial situation...it's not just concerned with the visual arts.

NAK: *It just happened?*

GL: I suppose it's like any new organization; you find your feet first and then define the objective. That was to provide a museum that would show work of world interest and not only Irish art.

NAK: *In the course of my research on IMMA recurrent themes have been that of 'access' and 'process'. The implication seems to be that IMMA is a museum devoted to:*

a) emphasizing the 'process' of art rather than the 'product', and

b) actively broadening the 'accessibility' of art.

How defining would you consider these terms?

GL: That is true - the studios have been a great success as the artists will tell you themselves. The Education & Community Programme has done tremendous work in the community and has involved the community. In painting and having exhibitions there, Declan provides a space for them to show the work. The way we saw it the whole scene is spreading westwards, there's Temple Bar and now Collins' Barracks as a museum. IMMA, Kilmainham, Kilmainham Gaol and the War Memorial Park, in time, these will all figure in terms of access because there will be so much involved in that lengthened the city of Dublin. There's also the Guinness Hop Store in relation to that.

There's been tremendous cooperation with the Office of Public Works and they have to be convinced when they have invested in certain things in that area. One of the things that we've been pressing for is the Deputy Master's House which now they have been promised the money to develop and that will house the collection. Not a static collection. One of the things that I had to face up to in my own mind was my collection not being on permanent view. A lot of people thought that it would be, but I myself thought, having seen so many galleries around the world, you couldn't have one person's collection on permanent display. So, what the object of the Deputy Master's House is to show rotating shows of the best of Irish art and the best of international art. Also, possibly to house a library of archives because I intend to give all my catalogues and books and I think this is a point that hasn't been followed through yet. This is the picture as I see it that this will become the more permanent showhouse for Irish art and international art.

NAK: *In conversation with Catherine Marshall, last week, she mentioned that the collection was focussing from the forties onwards. That obviously*

ties in very much with your collection, making it the touchstone for the permanent collection. Five years later, are you happy that your intention regarding the donation has been fulfilled?

GL: I am, because it gives me pleasure to see it going out and being shown, not just as a collection but that the public see it as it fits into a theme event. I'm happy it's contributing to the image of IMMA, not just locally but also exhibitions abroad.

NAK: *We've touched on this already; how do you perceive the role of Mr. Charles J. Haughey in the establishment of the museum?*

GL: He was the motivating force and decision-maker. Tremendous credit is due to him, whatever one thinks of his policy. It wouldn't have happened only for him.

NAK: *Do you think the museum, as a whole, lives up to its name, as an Irish Museum of Modern Art?*

GL: I do in the sense that Declan has established the name of the Irish Museum of Modern Art amongst all the art galleries in the world. He had so many connections and he has been able to do this because they appreciate him, despite the fact that there are skeptics and critics at home. For me, he has communicated and brought in exhibitions. It is very highly thought of in the outer world. That brings to mind similar models abroad. When I was in Madrid, with the MoMA people, we were brought to see the Queen Sofia's Gallery which was developed out of an old hospital. And there's also an Italian one, Castello di Rivoli.

NAK: *Then you rank it with its nominal counterparts abroad?*

GL: Yes, definitely. It's such a fine building and so suitable - particularly for installation and for movements in contemporary art. The small rooms add to it. The Sean Scully exhibition was initiated here and it's going to other museums now. The gallery itself is kept in pristine condition. There is room for improving the entrance in the sense of making it a warmer. It's the actual reception - while it's very efficient, we want to try to get the entrance there more active. The other thing I'm pressing hard for is to try to get the entrance through the archway at Kilmainham at the Gaol. You can imagine the impression if you drove up that long driveway, parked your car and went in....There's also the War Memorial so few people know about. You have to see it to realize how appropriate it is.

NAK: *There are also plans for the restoration of the formal gardens?*

GL: There are plenty of plans. It is such a wonderful site and so capable of expansion.

NAK: *Obviously, the interest and motivation is there, on the part of the board. Is the money there?*

GL: That's it...The money has been agreed for the Deputy Master's house. That's the first step. The more successful we can make it, the more we'll attract money.

NAK: *How important for funding is the Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, under Michael D. Higgins for IMMA?*

GL: He has spoken very highly to me of the programme since he came into office. The Office of Public Works is also very much involved.

NAK: *Do you think it has fulfilled its brief as a site of both Irish and International art?*

GL: I believe it has and it's only the start.

NAK: *We have talked about its international status: in the context of Ireland, how would you define the role of IMMA?*

GL: It was a hard up struggle. There was only a small group of people who were really interested in contemporary art. Visual art was the 'Cinderella of the arts', even then. It was just through the continuous pressure and interest of a fairly small group of people... You couldn't believe how frustrating it was in the old days. The schools weren't encouraged; art was very low down.

NAK: *The museum is five years old and, as Helen O'Donoghue phrased it, "can no longer trade on its newness". How do you see the museum defining itself in the near future?*

GL: It comes back to the fact that it has established tremendous influence abroad in the contemporary art scene, and this needs to be projected. I have witnessed amazing strides in the last five years - a lot of credit must go to Declan's contacts abroad. If the exhibitions put on may not be that interesting to some older people, I'd say, 'bring your children and they'll teach you to appreciate it!'. I once said that I was happy living with my art: I'm happier now knowing it is in good hands.

Telephone Conversation with Charles J. Haughey

Former Taoiseach of the State and Founder of IMMA

14th January 1997

Niamh-Ann Kelly:

What was your motivation for instigating the founding of IMMA?

C.J. Haughey:

Why? We had the National Gallery, which was the home of the Irish collection - the traditional type of National Gallery. There was no national institution for Modern Art. One of the people interested was Gordon Lambert. He was pushing the concept and so were the Arts Council. The Royal Hospital at Kilmainham had been restored and was available.

NAK: *What about the alternative site at 'Stack A'?*

CJH: That was never a serious proposition. The Financial Service Centre was established and we were anxious to have a Cultural Centre there. The leases provide for an amount per square foot for cultural purposes. 'Stack A' was going to be used for a folk museum.

NAK: *Were you satisfied with the alterations made to the building for the museum? There was some public criticism at the time...*

CJH: I was very happy with the alterations. It was skilled and dedicated job. There will always be carping critics. If one set up a lamp-post there would surely be an 'anti lamp-post group' in the morning.

NAK: *The National Lottery funding was as a result of a directive from the Taoiseach's Office. Why did you source National Lottery funds?*

CJH: Why not? One of the areas stipulated for support by the National Lottery is culture. The important thing was that we appointed a very good board with people like Gillian Bowler and Louis le Brocquy. Their first decision was a superb appointment. The appointment of Declan McGonagle was hailed internationally.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific results of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific results of the work. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work in the field of agriculture, the second section deals with the results of the work in the field of industry, and the third section deals with the results of the work in the field of commerce.

3. The third part of the report deals with the conclusions of the work. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions of the work in the field of agriculture, and the second section deals with the conclusions of the work in the field of industry and commerce.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the recommendations of the work. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the recommendations of the work in the field of agriculture, and the second section deals with the recommendations of the work in the field of industry and commerce.

NAK: *Do you feel the museum has progressed as you would have anticipated?*

CJH: Absolutely. It is fulfilling its own agenda. When it was opened there was a tremendous favourable reaction around the world. It was filling a gap in Ireland. A possible criticism has been that it was out of the way for ordinary 'gallery-goers', but wherever it was, there would be criticism.

Interview with Declan McGonagle

Director of IMMA

IMMA, 14th January 1997

Niamh Ann Kelly:

You were appointed by the board as the first director of IMMA. What were your terms of office?

Declan McGonagle:

My contract is a five year contract. Everybody in the museum is on contract. We are not civil servants. We are set up as a limited company so the board is a board of directors, not of trustees. So, we are unlike the National Museum and the National Gallery in our structure to start with. We are, obviously, in the public service, but it's like a semi-state company such as the ESB. We're, in a structural sense, closer to them than to the National Gallery of the National Museum. The other interesting thing is that I am technically Chief Executive of the Company. Our whole board is non-executive which means they don't do the jobs, they don't do the work. It's a non-executive chairman, non-executive board and a chief executive. What that means is that they review what we do rather than preview it. It was a very important issue at the beginning, we talked about it a lot and how it would work and so forth, but it was understood by the board. In starting the museum from scratch, that what they had to do was to make sure they appointed the right person and then give that person the space to do the job, rather than them attempting to do the job, which was to direct the museum. When I talked to the board about all that, I emphasized that that was the only way that I could work. In a green field situation, administratively and conceptually, starting from scratch you really needed freedom to maneuver, needed to be very flexible. So, there wasn't a very tight brief at all, except the general remit to 'represent significant Irish and international contemporary and modern art' (modern meaning twentieth century as opposed to right now), through exhibition, collection and education & community programmes.

NAK: *So who would have proposed that remit?*

DMcG: All the board wrote that. We talked about what it would be, how it would work, what general remit we needed. (Recently, we have been reviewing the whole structure). Our concern could be the twentieth century, but the focus would be on contemporary activity. That wouldn't preclude us, as we did in *Beyond the Pale*, going deeper into history to draw out material that has some relevance to

Interview with Richard McCombie
for the book
MMA 14th January 1997

Richard McCombie

How was your experience of the book? Was it a bit of a
new experience for you?

Richard McCombie

It's a bit of a new experience. The book in the museum is a new
one for me. We are set up as a limited company, so the book is a new
of directors and of trustees. We are on the Museum's board and the
National Gallery is our structure to start with. We are also on the
board, but it's like a semi-state company such as the BSI. It's a new
one, closer to them than to the National Gallery of the Museum. The
other interesting thing is that I am technically a director of the Company.
Our work is not a new one which means they don't do the job, they don't
do the work. It's a new executive director, new executive board and a new
structure. What that means is that they review what we do rather than
it is a very important issue at the beginning. We talked about it a lot and how
would work and so forth, but it was understood by the board. In setting the
museum from scratch, that what they had to do was to make sure they appointed
the right person and they give that person the space to do the job, rather than
it's trying to do the job which was to direct the museum. When I talked to the
board about all that I emphasized that this was the only way that I would
be a great field situation, administratively and conceptually, and that
you really needed freedom to move, needed to be very flexible. So, I
was a very tight brief at all, except the general need to represent significant
high and international contemporary and modern art, modern museum in which
exhibitions appeared to right now, through exhibition, collection and education &
community programmes.

Richard McCombie

Richard: All the board were that. We talked about what it would be, how it would work,
what general things we needed. Recently, we have been on the board of the
structure. Our board could be the twentieth century, but the book would be
contemporary history. That wouldn't be the book, as we did in the book. It's
going deeper into history to draw out material that has some relevance to

contemporary practice.

NAK: *Your own contract then, is up - it's five years on.*

DMcG: Yes, and it was renewed last year.

NAK: *Is it another five year contract? Was it the board who that made the decision to renew it?*

DMcG: Yes. Yes.

NAK: *What is the role of the Ministry for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht?*

DMcG: We are completely under the Ministry for Culture. We used to be under the Department of the Taoiseach. The new government in 1993 set up the Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht and we were moved across to that, in terms of what is called the 'sponsoring department'. We know we now work entirely under the ministry of Culture, our grant and aid now come from the ministry of Culture, and we have a working day-to-day relationship with civil servants in that department. But the board is autonomous, while we report and all that, the policy is arm's length. The board is set up with a remit, and generally the department doesn't interfere with that at all.

NAK: *There appears to have been no policy document as such drawn up for the museum at its inauguration, you have spoken of a remit. As it was funded by the National Lottery, I had expected to find some publication at the Government Publications Office...*

DMcG: Yes, we weren't set up as a statutory body. I think some people would argue, including civil servants, that we should have been. But we haven't been set up as a statutory body and we have now been included in the new National Institutions Legislation, and that is essentially concerned with the National Museum's new structure, rather than IMMA, but we have been tagged on to that.

NAK: *As a company?*

DMcG: Oh yes, we are still a company because, interestingly, the structure that was applied to IMMA in 1990 is now being applied to the National Museum, in terms of its new structure. It has had an interim board appointed and its articles of association will be created to reflect the sort of arm's length relationship with government that we have. Now we internally didn't invent that - that was a

decision within government to do it this way rather than another way...We have a great deal of flexibility, we can raise our own income, and we keep it. All our employees are on contracts, which I think in a cultural context is very important because I think people should be able to get rid of me, for whatever legitimate reason. And, equally, other members of staff should come and go: I think an institution, particularly one that is dealing with the present tense which is what we deal with, should be capable of being re-energized regularly.

NAK: *From the point of view of the staff-member then, there is no pension set up, there is no security at all?*

DMcG: There is the security of the contract. There isn't a pension scheme. The mediator staff, who have been unionized in the last couple of years, have raised the issue of a pension plan. We're discussing that with the personnel department in the Ministry, who are discussing that with the Department of Finance. That wasn't brought in, and in my view it should have been because we're in the public service. It could be an non-contributory pension plan. We could set that up; it would be at a cost to us, but it could be set up.

NAK: *How influential would you consider the site of IMMA, both the building and the locality, in regards to IMMA's identity?*

DMcG: It's crucial, and I've said in some articles that's its a cue to the whole museum, the identity of the whole museum. Both in terms of its metaphorical identity, its invisible, historical identity and all the meanings and associations that go with that; but also on its architectural identity because, just to go off into the wider arguments. The museum model that has worked up to now in the world as it were, which comes out of a European nineteenth century model, was concerned, as I would argue it was, with fixing values, was proving that Europe owned the rest of the world. It was collecting and displaying and cataloging objects and classifying objects, both from within European cultures and outside it, in order to show that this value was fixed, that this meaning was fixed. It was owned by the nation state, or in a way the European network of states. If that was the function of nineteenth century museums to fix values, my argument is that the function of museums at the end of the twentieth century has to be to test and unfix values.

Therefore, what we should be doing is creating diversity of programming, diversity of experience, diversity of argument, opportunities for people to see that culture is multiple, and contest it, rather than consensual. The art historical approach, and certainly the teaching of art history, and art historians in general (there are individual exceptions of course), was a premise that you can arrive at a

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps involved in the accounting process, from the initial entry of data into the system to the final review and approval of the records.

3. The third part of the document addresses the issue of data security. It discusses the various risks associated with the loss or theft of financial data and provides recommendations for implementing robust security measures to protect the information.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of regular audits. It explains how audits can help to identify errors, detect fraud, and ensure that the financial records are accurate and reliable.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of transparency in financial reporting. It explains how providing clear and accessible information about financial performance can help to build trust and confidence among stakeholders.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of compliance with applicable laws and regulations. It explains how failing to comply with these requirements can result in severe penalties and damage to the organization's reputation.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the financial system. It explains how regular reviews can help to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the system remains effective and efficient.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of training and education for staff involved in financial management. It explains how providing ongoing training can help to ensure that staff are up-to-date on the latest best practices and technologies.

consensus. We agree with it and we take the consensus away. And that really has been the function of museums up to now, I would argue, the function of other things in society as well; the education could be said to function like that. I believe that all of those certainties have gone. I think social, political, cultural, economic certainties are breaking down. We are in a period of uncertainty. It would have been absurd therefore, in a society like Ireland's at the end of the twentieth century, to set up a museum of modern art that was pretending that it was being set up in 1920 or 1842. So what we had to say was that we are being set up now for the future. Therefore what we have to do is to understand that art, in particular is contested rather than consensual. Our job is to exhibit that contest. Sometimes we do that within exhibitions, with the Le Brocquy show for instance, it was a clear contest with his earlier work and his later work. Sometimes we do it between exhibitions like with the Le Brocquy, the Beverly Semmes and the Event Horizon. And sometimes we do between individual works like the collection show, different approaches to a theme. The idea is that is why we always have four or five shows running; a multiple experience rather than a singular experience; a contested experience rather than a consensual experience.

In the Royal Hospital we immediately have a contest between that past and the present, between the inherited set of political and cultural and social meaning that are associated with a building like this and any new ones that we can give to it or invest within it as a vessel. There is no better context, it seems to me, to set up a museum of modern art, with those things in mind. People will debate whether those are the questions, but from my perspective those are the questions and there is no better building than one that has a lot of separate spaces, that has a very problematic history, that has a very problematic architecture, and that is already deposited in people's mind in terms of the history of this state and of the relationship between England and Ireland. Bearing in mind that the major preoccupation of artists is the question of identity, then there is no more interesting place for that to be explored, through modern and contemporary visual arts, than in a building like this. That's why the building is crucial. The building is not simply a house, it's not a receptacle and we are not tenants at the museum of modern art. The building is the first exhibit in the museum. The first room in the museum is the courtyard, the building is then the exhibit and then you come into the other exhibitions.

NAK: *You talked of not consenting to one particular opinion or reading, but isn't there a close border between the fact of, for example, the Mainie Jellett show, which would imply that you endowing her work with quality and status. How does that fit in with what you have just said?*

DMcG: Our problem, which you have put your finger on, is as a museum, with that historical baggage of authority, how do we put things on the white walls and not make it look as if we are simply celebrating those pieces? The way we do that is we add a contest, either within the show or because of what other show you run alongside it. We programme the spaces to have an argument with each other, it's not an overt argument. What we do is create a programme that says this is one way to be an artist and this is another. The spectator, the viewer has to take both those options and make what they will out of it. It is my role to give people opportunities to re-read the past, experience the present and come to their own conclusions. I do believe there are ways of showing even historical material which asks questions of it rather than simply celebrates it.

The beauty of the architecture here is that, in the east wing where we showed that, we have eight rooms and then we have the long corridor. You can't impose a linear experience on that architecture. The Louis le Brocquy show is more or less chronologically laid out as was the Mainie Jellett show. For instance, you'd come along the corridor and you go into a room and you come out again, and we were able to bring works from the end of her life forward to any point in the corridor. I'm going into this sort of detail to try to explain how that experience, the idea of getting more out of her work than what had already been written. In that sense that is what I mean when I use the word 're-read'. We wanted to give people and opportunity to re-read Mainie Jellett, to discover, or maybe to realize they didn't know all there was to be known about Mainie Jellett. It's been like the Le Brocquy.

NAK: *Catherine Marshall has spoken of IMMA's Collection as 'taking up where the National Gallery has left off', how would you define IMMA's relationship to the National Gallery and the Hugh Lane in relation to how the museum is perceived? I mean that the public will compare the institutions and look for a permanent collection in a museum...*

DMcG: Yes, that's right. Well, I think that that is one of the questions we have to put back to people over the course of a period of work. That is 'what is this preoccupation with permanence?' Museum comes from the idea, 'museo' - I muse, I think, I consider, I reflect. Permanence isn't part of the original conception of museum, it just means you have access, you are in a context where you can reflect and think about certain things, and permanence may be part of that or it may not be part of that. Permanence is being questioned even in institutions like the V & A (Victoria and Albert), that seem to be the absolute models of permanence, the fixed displays, the fixed interpretations.

One of the things about the twentieth century if we are to represent it properly, is that it has been more about art process, than art product. What it emphasizes is how and why paintings are made, as much as what is actually made. I'm raising all those questions about permanence in terms of people's expectations. I think its one of our jobs to change people's expectations of what a museum is. But taking the current reality, first of all, with the National Gallery, two national collecting institutions, essentially controlled by central government, we have to compliment each other. There is an overlap at the moment and when the museum started twentieth century was given as a broad background. In fact the National Gallery comes into the twentieth century quite a lot and I think that was unplanned - no one else was dealing with that and people wanted to give work to the National Gallery because of the status of the institution. Now that IMMA does exist, I think we need to sit down, and we have talked informally about it, and actually have a working assumption that we are concerned with the post war period and we contextualize contemporary practice going back to the 1940s.

This is about ownership, we can exhibit anything. The National Gallery may or may not accept that. The one broad definition used to be that you had to be dead to be in the National Gallery. There is another view that says that copyright runs seventy years, what if the National Gallery had everything that was out of copy right and that IMMA was concerned with everything that was still in copyright. What that would mean is that as time went on we would hand our collection over to the National Gallery, and would be concerned with seventy years back and the present. That is a very interesting way to keep a dynamic going. I'm very open to what could work. We have to be very open and flexible for the twenty-first century. Otherwise we would become mausoleum!

NAK: *Do you think that the freedom of ideology that IMMA has as compared to the National Gallery has anything to do with IMMA being a Company as opposed to being more tied to government?*

DMcG: I think it has got more to do with the fact that we started from scratch, we didn't start with a history. We now have a bit of a history, a tiny history compared with the National Gallery. The National Gallery was set up in completely different circumstances, to do a completely different job. It has a completely different social, political, economic, cultural framework. The expectations of what an institution like that could mean even at that time were totally different from the debates that are raging now about how money should be spent and if these institutions are viable and all that. The greatest benefit we have is starting from scratch.

NAK: *So IMMA wasn't influenced by the already existing National Centre for Culture that was here previous to the opening of IMMA?*

DMcG: No. In the late seventies, the government decided to restore that RHK as a conference centre for as it was then the EEC. Half way through the restoration of the building they decided to restore Dublin Castle as a conference centre. When the restoration of this building was finished there was a debate as to what it would be used for. A number of things were raised - as an extension of the National Museum or the National Gallery - no decision was made. It was given an interim function of the National Centre for Culture and the Arts. It developed a very strong music programme, which we have retained some aspects of, but the National Centre for Culture and the Arts was a completely different set up from IMMA. Apart from the fact that we inherited some staff (and a deficit!), we were set up as a completely new company with different articles of association and different name. It didn't have any real programming effect on the museum.

NAK: *The terms 'access' and 'process' have recurred in my conversations with members of staff and in various interviews you have undertaken, as key ideological touchstones in IMMA's unwritten policy. How can you explain these terms to me?*

DMcG: In the end it's all about access because if you step back from whatever kind of a museum we are and think about what a museum is structurally. A museum is in the distribution business, to put it crudely. There is the production of art and the distribution of art. Galleries are simply the mechanisms invented in society to distribute. But as a social mechanism, museums and galleries are a distribution mechanism that also infers value. My argument is that we should distribute as widely as possible, we should be 'broadcasters' not 'narrowcasters' in distributing whatever ideas are contained within art. Communication cannot take place if people are not experiencing the work. So, the idea of access is absolutely critical.

There were those who commiserated with me that the museum was: a) in this building, b) in this neighbourhood and c) We didn't have £100 million pounds to create a museum like the Louvre! All of those three objections to the idea of the museum being here, I saw as major advantages....Because we were in a neighbourhood and not in a city centre, we couldn't avoid communicating with our neighbours, who are, as far as economic indicators tell us, not museum visitors. I remember being interviewed on radio and TV when I got the job and the question always was *but isn't the Royal Hospital far away?* My answer was *it wasn't far away from Kilmainham*. There is nothing god-given about it being

for one group of people and not for another, one group being disabled and being unable to read contemporary culture and another group being more able. If you start with the belief that that's not true then something else can be made to come true and that gives us our agenda. We are still working through it and we will never finish that agenda because no matter what we do our identity will change, the community's identity will change and the nature of access will have to change.

Access is crucially important to us, and where process comes into that is that I believe that people live their lives by process. They are making value judgments all the time. They have meanings in their lives. They have human disasters in their lives. The normal fabric of human emotions, that's process, to me. If one of the hallmarks of contemporary art or twentieth century art, particularly art of the last thirty years, has also been process, then there is the potential for those two lines to cross somewhere. It's our job to find the crossing point and bring people to it, or give them the tools to find it themselves. That's where the workshop process and the Education & Community Programme logic and philosophy comes from. So, process and access are very closely related in that sense.

NAK: *You mentioned the Education & Community Programme which was here from the beginning...*

DMcG: Yes, Helen (O'Donoghue) was the first person appointed.

NAK: *The Artists Work Programme evolved as a department over the subsequent years. How did it come about?*

DMcG: The Artists Work Programme was my idea. There is a chart that I did for the board, for the interview in 1990. It was family-tree of functions that must be present in a museum going into the twenty-first century, opening in Ireland for all the reasons I've said before. If they weren't present then something would be missing and the institution would not be delivering the service that it should be delivering to the public. Within that I had residencies because I believed first of all I believed the site because I believed the capacity here was fantastic to have artists present, that's that idea of process, on one hand I think one of our jobs was to present what artists do, on the other hand was to try and bring people to an understanding of how and why artists did what artists do. That's the how, as it were.

The crucial question is why is art made at all. In exploring that you can empower

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

people, you can give people a voice of their own. It doesn't mean that they become artists in any traditional sense, but it does mean that their experience, their potential reading of art or culture is then validated. Rather than the traditional model of the museum diminishing someone, it was about empowering - a sort of reversing of a traditional transaction that went on between the viewer and the institution. I think a crucially important part of that is the presence of artists. So from the beginning the idea was, and I think it quite important, that soon after we opened, I said to the board that we should have a development plan and the first thing in the plan should be more exhibition space. For what? For products? It should be for process. We then negotiated resources for the studios and the workshop space. Again it was a signal. The next stage is another type of gallery space, that compliments the spaces we have here. From the beginning there was a blueprint approximately that we are working through - its broadly mapped out in that chart I prepared in 1990.

NAK: *How can you rate the success of something like this with the public? Is the Corporate Identity research project doing this?*

DMcG: The research was done at the start of the Review I mentioned. Two thirds of our board were re-appointees in 1995, and in briefing the new members of the board I prepared a discussion paper, and then the issue arose about where do we want to be in the year 2000, which is the lifespan of that board. Everybody was expressing opinions and then we thought we'd better get scientific about this, *what do the public experience when they come here?* We undertook audience research, quantitative and qualitative. Then questions came out of that, so we said what are we going to do about those questions. It was like peeling an onion, the more we probed, the more we had to probe. It ended up taking just over a year to complete and we are only just completing it now, in terms of what we need to do, what money we need to raise ourselves, what arguments we need to make to government, what should inform our programming strategies, what should be the weight of acquisitions over the next few years, what's the internal management structure, what management structure would be needed, is this departmental structure the way to do it?

My own feeling, and I don't know is this possible or not institutionally, but I'll find out because we are bringing in outside consultants, that is what I would call a sort of vertical departmental structure. You have exhibitions, Education & Community, Collection, Artist work Programme: they interconnect quite a bit, there is a huge amount of connection between exhibitions and Education & Community, but I would rather think of the programme as being a horizontal box. It won't be just how the design looks, it will be the function of the material we

produce to tell people what we are about. We may not categorize it by departments, but it is woven together as the programme.

NAK: *Who conducted the research?*

DMcG: A company called Behaviour and Attitudes, one of the leading research companies in Ireland, for audience research.

NAK: *So out of it will come a statement of policy?*

DMcG: Yes. We have a sheaf of papers I have presented to the board over the period which add up to a composite and the 30th of January is the last board meeting where that will be on the agenda. A working group of staff and board members then will implement what we have discussed.

NAK: *One thing that came up in that Qualitative Research project was that some people sensed 'a lack of welcome' and that, obviously, is disappointing...*

DMcG: It was much stronger than that, they were actually confused in many cases. When we really got into it more deeply what we realized was going on was a number of things first of all. For instance we don't use our street address. The confusion starts there, how do you get here. In the new letter head, it is going to say Military Road, so we are saying this is where we are. That's a mechanical exercise we have to do. Our visitors have got to decide to come here. This is for first time visitors. Since quite a large portion of our audience happens to be first time visitors, it means that people are having a confusing experience.

The other thing that happens is that then they see the road-signs; they are brown heritage road-signs. They were the only type of road-signs we were allowed by the corporation to put up because they see us as a heritage building. So here is a museum of modern Art being advertised as if it is a heritage museum. There is a physical reading of the building which says to people historical, heritage, and it is such a strong identity that they don't believe it. They can also see the whole building, when they come in our main entrance and they can't get access to the fourth side, which adds to the confusion. We have known this virtually since as soon as it opened. Our foyer is very confusing because there are infinite possibilities. We try to compensate for this by putting up signs, but putting up more and more signs in the foyer means that the signs are confusing in themselves.

So all in all, I don't mean to suggest that we are in crisis. If you ask *what is the quality of experience that people are having?* A certain proportion of people who come are being confused, even before they get near the contest that we what to present in the art. What should be a positive experience of a debate becomes a confused and confusing experience of multiplicity of possibility. What we have to do now is we have to change people's expectations at the point where they make the decision to come to the museum. In our international advertising we have to make it very clear what sort of museum we are. I think the art world, internationally, knows what sort of museum we are, but a large element of the visiting public are not clear. They may enjoy particular aspects of what they experience here but the total experience is obviously not getting them. Now that's a serious mistake. Physically, what's crucial about here is to see two, three, ten things and have debate going on in your own mind. If that results in confusion rather than decision-making, then we are not actually succeeding in what we are supposed to be doing. That relates to what we call the casual and first-time visitor.

We have another whole constituency which weren't market-tested, what we call engaged visitors and those are people who come to regular workshops or visit the museum more than two, three time. There are two quite different things, but we still have to be concerned with the 'casual' visitor. It was very interesting to have that research done. On one level slightly off-putting, but we saw it as positive because a lot of the vague things we have been feeling uneasy about have suddenly crystallized. We have spent a year working out what can be done etc and it may be another year before all the changes are made. I still think we are only opening the museum. It has still got to be contributing to a society in a hundred years time. It has got to be dynamic and it has got to be able to be dynamic. This structuring period is like the skull of a child knitting together, we are knitting the thing together which is actually made up of a composite.

NAK: *Is there a problem then with the name?*

DMcG: When people say "you're in the wrong place, the wrong building, it's the wrong name," I believe in saying 'no, no, don't think of it like that, turn that energy around and make it a positive thing'. If we are about debates, if what is going on in the world is a debate about museums, then we should be a museum. What we want in the next period is, just as in the period up to now museum has meant certainty and authority, is museum to revert to the original meaning of the word which is 'to think, consider, reflect upon' and the end of that is a decision. We must present debates. I would like that ten years from now, people would at least understand that this museum is about debate and energy and questioning our

patrimony as well as creating new patrimony, rather than simply accepting it. I think it is possible to take the terms in our title *Irish, Museum and Modern Art*, and say *what are they?* On one level that's our job. We have to then present those questions to a whole range of publics. It is like a series of concentric circles running from the international art community through to the national, the regional, the city and then the local. We have to address those constituencies in language that is legible.

NAK: *As regards the international standing of IMMA, there are other museums of modern art that have quite different identities. How do you see IMMA's international role?*

DMcG: The first thing is that we will never be of any use to this context, if we are not part of an international situation and international arena - a family of museums beyond the Irish context. Being international isn't an end in itself. It's about making the best of the world available. (We can argue about which is the best, but it should be in the world). The other thing is that we just are 'in the world', we get our information from the world, we are not confined. It seems extraordinary to me that there is a constituency out there which argues regularly that we should be just a Museum of Irish Modern Art rather than an Irish Museum of Modern Art. We are a museum of modern art in Ireland and we represent what is going on.

Also, if we were just showing Irish art, it would suggest that Irish artists work in a vacuum. It would be extremely foolish of us to deny an international dimension to our responsibility. Once you accept that principle, you have to have a very good working relationship with other international museums, whether they are philosophically the same as you or not. We collaborate with them, we borrow works from them. The requirement is to be part of that international context, part of that conversation.

NAK: *If you go to London or Paris or Barcelona, or anywhere really, you know what you are going to see, there's a catalogue of what is permanently on show... Would you foresee that other museums of modern art would question their own approach comparatively?*

DMcG: Yes, well all of those places have histories, usually. Any museums being invented from scratch now is taking on board these issues about what sort of a museum it should be. The new director of the V&A gave a long interview in the Independent on Sunday, about a year ago, and he raised these questions. He said that the day of the 'treasure house' is over. It simply cannot be sustained as a

model. It is simply not possible to go on collecting material that you do not show. Any new museum that is developing and indeed when you get new directors taking over old museums, they are all creating this debate within their institutions. We are not unique in this sense.

And as regards curation, it has to be seen; production will happen and curation is the distributing of that production. What a museum creates is a conversation between the artist, the non-artist and the curation itself. I would hope that IMMA be of this place and this time: that we are in conversation with the world and in an Irish accent.

Interview with Brenda McParland

Head of Exhibitions

IMMA, 5th February 1997

Niamh Ann Kelly:

How does the exhibition programme operate? Who are the curators and how are decisions made relating to what exhibitions are shown?

Brenda McParland:

We have a series of programming meetings at least three times a week with the director and that includes all the heads of departments. So the Artists Work Programme would have a presence and the chief curators in Education & Community and myself. Sometimes my assistants come with me, sometimes they go instead of me. We discuss the whole programme as a whole, in terms of what we should be covering that year or the next two years, but ultimately the final exhibition selections are made by myself, often in collaboration with the Director. There's no one route to deciding an exhibition. I do a lot of travel, relevant to work and I take opportunities to meet new people and see new artists. I'm very keen, because of the generation I'm in, to look at artists my age and younger. That's a gap I'm going to address this year.

NAK: *So it works two years in advance?*

BMcP: We know for eighteen months ahead. We are also talking about setting up a 'project room', which would mean working two months in advance so that younger curators could do their own shows.

NAK: *Where do you take your cue from?*

BMcP: It's important to have an enthusiasm for it and also a balance in programming. We are the museum of modern art in Dublin, so what should we be showing? We should include people like Donald Judd and conceptual artists and we do those during the academic year, purposely. We try to programme for the academic year - historic and contemporary, established and non-established. It's not accidental. We look at what is possible on our budget and what's coming up, what artists we could work with and issues....it's very diverse. This year's programme is very varied and covers a lot of mixed media.

NAK: *You mentioned a budget - how much is it and how is it allocated?*

BMcP: Exhibitions gets about £200,000 a year.

NAK: *How important is the collection in your exhibition programme?*

BMcP: We have treated the collection like another resource for exhibitions. It's the only way we show it so it is part of our exhibition programme.

NAK: *There was no policy document published when the museum was founded, so how was an agenda constructed for the exhibition programme?*

BMcP: I wasn't here when the museum was set up - I've been here for four years. When I came to the job, I was very clear what the remit of the museum was. We want to show international art here, which includes Irish art. We are not trying to be exclusively Irish or exclusively International. We are trying to accommodate both, through that our role as a promoter of Irish artists. We have a lot of international visitors because of our programming and our profile which is international. It's truly on the international circuit in its profile. We have a totally international vision and approach. The policy would also include Education & Community so we are working from grass-roots level right up to international dealer, museum.

NAK: *Is there a fear then that the museum would become more involved in the 'international' arena than the Irish? How is there a balance?*

BMcP: I don't think so. Everyone who comes here wants to know what's happening with Irish artists. Like at the moment we have Louis Le Brocquy, one of our Retrospective shows who happens to be Irish, Alanna O'Kelly, Kathy Prendergast; there are presences all around the museum in different collection shows. A lot of people would argue we don't show enough Irish, but if you look at the balance and break it down we do show quite a lot. I think it's much more beneficial to younger and established artists in Ireland to be seen alongside their international counterparts, rather than being ghettoized as Irish.

NAK: *Are there significant links with the Artists Work Programme and the Education & Community Programme?*

BMcP: It's not linked very closely to the Artists Work Programme, we do not exhibit work from it. Last year there was an area of programming in photography and we deliberately sought photographers and programmed them in the Artists Work

Programme around that time. So there are links in terms of medium or interest in a particular show, Laura Gannon is on the programme because she specifically wanted to be around when Beverly Semmes had her show. When it works we link it in themes or content or concerns so that it can be interesting. The Education & Community Programme sometimes works with a show, like the Anthony Gormley or the Beverly Semmes. They would have a distinct body of work to show after the event, other times they work independently, perhaps triggered by ideas in the exhibition programme but secondary to it. They have curated their own shows. In terms of talks, we would liaise with them and suggest formats and ideas.

NAK: *The Mainie Jellett exhibition was a huge success and considerably elevated the artistic status of her life and work, in terms of the public mind. I have talked to Declan McGonagle about this and there is a very subtle line between 'presenting a contest', as he called it, or confirming a consensus. What are the criteria for the 'Retrospectives' organized in the museum?*

BMcP: I wasn't here for the Mainie Jellett show, but I know of its success and I think the same is true in a different way of the Patrick Swift show; he was an undiscovered, unsung hero. Le Brocquy is different, though not internationally well known, in Ireland he is a household name. The Le Brocquy show has always been in the programme. It was interesting to look back at his earlier work, which has been hugely educational. We were trying to track a different path through his work, to show he wasn't just doing 'heads'. I suppose that was more a celebratory type of retrospective. The next one we will probably do is William Scott. We would try to work out a path through his work that hasn't been done before, so we might look at his early erotic drawings. There is no point doing a show that has been done before.

NAK: *So it is a re-reading?*

BMcP: Yes.

NAK: *As I understand from various policy statements, the museum wants to present a debate. Isn't it difficult then to avoid the fact that presenting the artists in a retrospective elevates their status? Isn't that how people will read museums..?*

BMcP: Yes that happens all the time. Some will think to have show at IMMA is the reason they live! Having a museum show sometimes changes the market value

and people's perceptions. It does have an effect. We believe in doing that, we believe in the educational readings and re-writing history. We have a multi-faceted approach, which could end up looking very eclectic, but we have to be to be inclusive, as far as that is possible and coherent.

NAK: *Those larger shows have had a very strong Irish emphasis so far. Will that continue? Is it the most realistic option?*

BMcP: Not necessarily, but I think it's been a strand to get ourselves on the map. No one else is going to do those shows. But there is no reason why in five years time, we decide 'it's Josef Beuys this time'.

NAK: *How would you assess the success of the Glen Dimplex Awards? How significant is the Nissan Bursary for the museum's developing programme?*

BMcP: The Nissan Bursary came as result of the success of the Glen Dimplex because that sponsor came to us and said that they wanted to sponsor an artist's award. We shaped it with them, as we didn't want our programme taken over by gallery awards. We shaped it so it would be beyond the gallery and out in the public domain. The knock-on effect of being shortlisted for the Glen Dimplex is considerable. We publish a modest catalogue and international we post that to several hundred curators...It's gone from strength to strength, we have a different panel every year and that has kept it very alive. It is anticipated in the arts calender in Ireland.

NAK: *Who selects the panel for the Glen Dimplex?*

BMcP: Declan and I. We ask for ideas but we usually know the most people, internationally. We brainstorm for days and weeks and argue about it, but have a balance of interest. It's strategic.

NAK: *Glen Dimplex sponsor that show. Does that happen with any other shows?*

BMcP: I have looked for and received sponsorship for some shows, Patrick Swift was one. But largely not. We are going to get into that and seek more sponsors in future. We wouldn't ever want to become servant to a sponsor, but I think its possible not to.

NAK: *As a Limited Company there is the freedom to look for sponsorship..*

BMcP: Yes, though at the moment we are fully state-sponsored - the government money is what we spend. Having the Glen Dimplex awards is very good, but at the same time we put our own money towards that to make it happen. We've had funds from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to set up a new position which is the Regional Programmer, this year. They have given substantial funds to create a new job to do work in the regions, with the collection, education, exhibitions, whatever's needed. The person has to find what can be done and starts next week.

NAK: *I was just about to ask you about touring the shows...*

BMcP: We have toured a couple of shows every year to different places, from our exhibitions department. We have sent shows to small art centres, to the Ormeau Baths, to Crawford, to Limerick and Sligo.

NAK: *Do you need to send people with the work?*

BMcP: We send down our own technicians if it's something complicated and we would always represent ourselves by curators or assistant curators going to the openings and having a presence there. We would like to expand regional involvement and that we be done through the new post.

NAK: *How much was that donation?*

BMcP: I think it was £75,000.

NAK: *The exhibition programme has come under a lot of criticism from people like Gerald Davis. How would you respond to that kind of commentary?*

BMcP: I find it very hard to comprehend the press and the level of art criticism here - it doesn't often enter a useful debate that gets anywhere. It's so easy to make fun of contemporary art and I think we should be working on an international level and also showing experimental cutting-edge work here too. Why shouldn't we? I don't think we should be apologizing to anyone or doing a more Irish programme. It's insulting to the Irish people, who are sophisticated in every cultural way, they want to see as much new talent, ideas. They may not like every show, they are entitled to an opinion but the shows are all temporary, they all go away. When you work in the arts, you learn to be really open-minded and make up your own mind later. I think our audience are capable of that too.

NAK: *How do you assess the public and its reaction? The press is just one indicator..*

BMcP: Yes, the press is an indicator. Attendance figures are an indicator, in terms of sheer numbers, but you don't know how people react. We have a comment book and a suggestions box. A lot is word of mouth. It is difficult to know an audience reaction. Mediators on the floor are the point of contact with the public, but we could do more along that route. There is more training needed, there could be more interaction.

NAK: *What exactly do the mediators do?*

BMcP: They are timetabled to go on the floor, to supervise the exhibitions, to interact with the public and organize tours. They are the point of public contact. They are full-time employees on renewable contracts.

NAK: *As regards the Exhibitions department itself, how many are employed?*

BMcP: I have two assistant curators, Sarah Glenney and Stephen Fahy. Sarah works alongside me on exhibitions and with artists, whereas Stephen is more administrative. At the moment there is also a person working on awards, Irene Coyle.

NAK: *The Qualitative Survey found that the visiting public wanted a more Irish influence. Do you intend to address that?*

BMcP: We have been talking about that a lot. In a year or two, we might look at the collection and have that as a more stable presence in the museum. We are never going to collect only Irish art, though we do collect predominantly Irish. We didn't do the market research for nothing, we are going to take action. We are not going to be a slave to it; at the same time it's not on to confuse people for the next five years... We are young and we have to be secure, have to come from a strong point of confidence and go ahead. I accept the criticism that people can't see the collection. It is a problem.

NAK: *Declan McGonagle has spoken at length at various discussions that 'art doesn't have legs', and the need to identify the role of the curator, and accept that it is in a sense prejudicial, if needs be. How would you describe the role of a curator?*

BMcP: In the institution my position (whether it's occupied by me or not), is crucial

because it informs a lot of activity around it.. It gives the museum energy and vision. Personally, I would see myself as an artist-centred person, artists are the first thing and we deal with them first hand, not with their dealers. What I love about this job is that I have access to the artists. I'm a facilitator to make work with them. They make the work, I make the presentation. It's a dialogue. The success of a show is a collaboration between artist and curator.

Bibliography

Books

- BARTHES, Roland, Mythologies, London, Paladian Books, 1973.
- BENNETT, Tony, The Birth of the Museum, New York, Routledge, 1995.
- BERGER, Maurice, (Ed.), Modern Art and Society, New York, Harper Collins, 1994.
- BHABHA, Homi K., The Location of Culture, London, Routledge, 1994.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre, DARBEL, Alain, The Love of Art, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991.
- CRIMP, Douglas, On the Museum's Ruins, Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993.
- CRONIN, Anthony, Art for the People?, Dublin, Raven Arts Press, 1988.
- DUNCAN, Carol, Civilizing Rituals - Inside the Public Art Museum, London, Routledge, 1995.
- FISHER, Jean, (Ed.), Global Visions - Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts, London, Kala Press, 1994.
- FOSTER, R.F., Modern Ireland 1600 - 1980, London, The Penguin Press, 1988.
- GABLIK, Suzi, Has Modernism Failed?, London, Thames and Hudson, 1984.

- GABLIK, Suzi, The Re-enchantment of Art, London, Thames and Hudson, 1991.
- IMMA, Art and Artists at the Edge of Concensus, Dublin, IMMA, 1994.
- IMMA, Artists Work Programme, Dublin, IMMA, 1994.
- IMMA, Inheritance and Transformation, Dublin, IMMA, 1991.
- IMMA, Intersections - Testing A World View, Dublin, IMMA, 1996.
- JENCKS, Charles, What is Post-Modernism?, London, Academy Editions, 1996.
- JENKS, Chris, Culture, London, Routledge, 1993.
- KARP, Ivan, KREAMER, Christine, LAVINE, Steven, (Eds.), Museums and Communities - The Politics of Public Culture, Washington, Smithsonian Institute Press, 1992.
- KEARNEY, Richard, (Ed.), States of Mind, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995.
- KEARNEY, Richard, (Ed.), The Irish at Home and Abroad, Dublin, Wolfhound Press, 1990.
- KEARNEY, Richard, Transitions - Narratives in Modern Irish Culture, Dublin, Wolfhound Press, 1988.
- KELLY, Anne, Cultural Policy of Ireland, Kildare, The Irish Museums Trust, 1989.

- KENNEDY, Brian, Dreams and Resposibilites, Dublin, Criterion Press.
- KENNEDY, S. B., Irish Art and Modernism, Belfast, Institute of Irish Studies, 1991.
- KILMAINHAM GAOL, In A State, Dublin, Project Press, 1991.
- KRUGER, Barbara, MARIANI, Phil, (Eds.), Remaking History, Washington, Dia Art Foundation/Bay Press, 1989.
- LEE, J. J., Ireland 1912-1985, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- LIPPARD, Lucy, Mixed Blessings - New Art in a Multicultural America, New York, Pantheon Books, 1990.
- LUMLEY, R., The Museum Time Machine - Putting Cultures on Display, London, Routledge, 1988.
- McAVERA, Brian, Art, Politics and Ireland, Dublin, Open Air.
- O'DOHERTY, Brian, Inside the White Cube - the Ideology of the Gallery Space, San Francisco, The Lapis Press, 1986.
- OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, Oxford Dictionary, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969
- PEARCE, Susan, (Ed.), Art in Museums, London, The Athlone Press, 1995.
- PEILLON, Michel, Contemporary Irish Society - An Introduction, Dublin, Gill & MacMillan, 1982.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

London: Pinter, 1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

The Art Foundation Press, 1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

London: Pinter, 1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

London: Pinter, 1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

London: Pinter, 1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

1991.

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

ALAN, J. *British Colonialism and the Development of the British Empire* (London: Pinter, 1991).

1991.

PILISZKY, Janos, The Desert of Love, London, Anvil Press, 1989.

SEASON OF ARTS IN IRELAND, A Sense of Ireland, Dublin, 1980.

WITKIN, Robert W., Art and Social Structure, Cambridge, Polity Press,
1995

Articles, Press Releases and Archives

CATTO, Mike, "On Palimpsests - The Art of Curation", Circa, Vol. No.58,
July/August 1991, pp. 30-33.

DODD, Luke, "Sleeping With The Past - Collecting and Ireland", Circa, Vol.
No. 59, September/October 1991, pp. 28-31.

FITZGERALD, Peter, "Irish-Free State", Circa, Vol.77, Autumn 1996, 43-45.

FOWLER, Joan, "Inheritance and Transformation - Old Grounds, New
Contexts?", Circa, Vol. No. 59, September/October 1991, pp.32-35.

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, "Acquisition Papers, 1995" - IMMA

JORDAN, Peter, "The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery", Circa, Vol. No. 59,
September/October 1991, pp. 41-43.

McPARLAND, Edward, The Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin, The
Irish Architectural Archive, 1985.

TAYLOR, Brandon, "Displays of Power - with Foucault in the Museum,
Circa, Vol. No. 59, September/October 1991, pp.22-27.

TEMPLE BAR GALLERIES, Video of "Debate Session No.1 of Temple Bar Galleries &
Studios/DIT Debate Sessions", October 1996.

NCAD Archives - Files: IMMA 1987 - 1991

IMMA 1992

IMMA 1993

IMMA 1994

IMMA 1995

IMMA 1996

IMMA 1997

Interviews: in Chronological Order - Printed in Appendices

Helen O'Donoghue: Coordinator of Education & Community Programme - At
IMMA, 11th November 1996

Philomena Byrne: Head of Press & Public Relations - At IMMA, 14th November 1996

Orla Dukes: Coordinator of the Artists Work Programme - At IMMA, 18th
November 1996

Catherin Marshall: Curator for the Permanent Collection - At IMMA, 2nd
December 1996

Gordon Lambert: Art Collector and Board Member - At Mr. Lambert's Home,
13th December 1996

Charles J. Haughey: Founder - Telephone Interview, 14th January 1997

Declan McGonagle: Director - At IMMA, 14th January 1997

Brenda McParland: Head of Exhibitions - At IMMA, 5th February 1997