

Design 2015 Commission

‘Who do we think we are: Exploring Collective Identities’

**National Museum of Ireland (NMI) in partnership with the
Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) and Irish Design 2015**

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Project Summary

This project involves the commissioning of a designer to create new work/s on the theme of 'Collective Identity', which will be displayed in an exhibition in 2016. The exhibition will include the designer's own original work/s and also works created in collaboration with a group of adults, as part of a series of workshops. The combined work will be exhibited in Collins Barracks in 2016 to coincide with a conference on this theme.

Introduction

The National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts & History, in partnership with the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCol) is seeking expressions of interest from designers and makers interested in working within the context of marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising and the theme of collective identity. The aim is to create a new contemporary collaborative design work utilising the NMI's Decorative Arts & History Collections as a key resource.

For the duration of this briefing document the individual applying will be referred to as the designer. The National Museum of Ireland and Design & Crafts Council project will involve the commissioning of new work by a contemporary designer/s, an exhibition, and a public engagement programme. The NMI and DCCol are funding this commission through the *Ireland Inspires 2016* and *Irish Design 2015* programmes, which are part of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltachta and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Eligibility

This commission invites proposals from designers, makers, architects and studio design partnerships. This commission is open to all those on the island of Ireland.

Brief

We are seeking proposals from designer(s) with a track record of innovative, collaborative engagement practice within the field of design. The commissioner is seeking imaginative and transformative contemporary design responses.

The priority for the commission is twofold:

- The development of new design work reflecting the key project themes (listed below) through a collaborative engagement public programme.
- The project will consider the process of design and making in shaping identity and will utilise the NMI Decorative Arts & History collections throughout the process.

This brief invites proposals for original design(s) collaborations, which should be informed by the context in which the commission is taking place. Design(s) must be of the highest standard. It is preferable that the designer will have experience and track record of working collaboratively with a range of audiences.

Project Themes

The theme of this collaborative project is **Exploring Design, Craft and Collective Identity over the past century**, with subthemes including:

- What is collective identity now, a century on from 1916, and how is it expressed?
- What did collective identity mean in 1916 and what does it mean in 2016?
- How is collective identity reflected in the design of everyday objects from our clothes, jewellery or furniture to currency and postage stamps?
- Exploring how cultural diversity, global corporate culture and technology has affected collective identity
- How the story of 1916 can be traced through craft and design

Design work

A key aim of this project is to consider the theme of Irish identity in an inclusive society. It is expected that the process of collaboration would reflect this. Commissions must incorporate work, which explores the theme of collective identity and investigates the project themes outlined, to be achieved through collaborative engagement and/or interdisciplinary responses. As a central aspect of the commission, the proposed process must involve designers(s) leading the making of new work through a process of collaborative public engagement.

Documentation of the making process is crucial and is a key output of the development of the new work. This documentation of process through sketches, photographs, video etc. will also form a part of the final exhibition.

Location of Design work

Designers are asked to please keep in mind the possible locations available for the final showcasing of the project, which may impact on their proposals. The end resulting works may be situated in one or more of the following locations at Collins Barracks:

- Clarke Square (outdoors)
- Front entrance area (outdoors)
- Reception foyer (indoors)
- Throughout the Museum in the link buildings (indoors)
- Designated exhibition space (indoors)

Selection Process

Phase One

Professional designers are invited to submit their proposals for design works for consideration by the Selection Panel.

The Selection Panel will consist of:

- Representatives from the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland
- Representatives from the National Museum of Ireland
- An international independent designer
- Local Authority Arts Officer
- Director of ID2015

The Selection Panel will consider the submitted proposals and make a shortlist (up to three) of those deemed suitable to be developed further.

Phase Two

The relevant shortlisted designers will be contacted and invited to develop their proposals further and a contribution of 250 euro will be offered to those designers to assist in the development process.

The three shortlisted candidates will then be invited to make a presentation of their developed ideas to the selection panel. These presentations will take place at Collins Barracks, Dublin.

It is expected that at the presentations, each candidate will provide:

- 15 minute presentation
- Further developed developmental drawings
- 3D Prototype
- Expanded methodologies

Phase Three

The Selection Panel will consider the developed proposals and recommend those, which are deemed suitable for the final decision.

The Selection Panel may:

- Select one or more proposal; or
- Reject any or all proposals
- Invite an individual designer to submit or re-submit a proposal

The Selection Panel may decide to shorten the selection process if they consider it necessary to do so. It should also be noted that the Selection Panel might decide that no design work is to be selected.

Fees and Budget

- Designers selected for shortlist will be paid a fee of €250.
- The monetary budget allocated to the commission is €12000 inclusive of fees, materials and all production costs.

Please note that the total sum of €12000 must include the following:

- Designers time and fee
- Materials
- Workshop time and materials
- Installation time
- Meetings

Application Procedure

Applications must include:

- A statement (no longer than 2 A4 pages) including:
 - An outline of why you would like to take on this commission
 - Thoughts on approaches to the commission and the project themes
 - A description of how you propose to engage with the NMI Collections (please view Appendix A for details on the NMI Decorative Arts Collections)
 - A project title / suggested titles for your project to reflect the project themes
 - An outline of your approach on collaborative design projects and your experience of working collaboratively with different audiences
- Budget including designer's fees, materials, proposed research visit/s
- An up to date CV highlighting key relevant skills including social engagement and collaboration skills.

Please note that there can only be up to a maximum of 3 visits to view the NMI collection facilitated by the Curator for research purposes. Advance notice of up to three weeks is required. All of these visits must take place before December 4th 2015 as there is no access to the collections following that date.

Applications will be returned upon conclusion of selection if requested. While every care will be taken with designers' materials, the managers of the project will take no responsibility for items damaged or mislaid. Designer(s) are responsible for insuring their applications if they wish. Applicants are responsible for the cost of delivering applications.

Other Conditions

- The designer should be aware of the ethics of working in public engagement settings (please view the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland's Code of Practice for Public Engagement in Educational Contexts Policy available to view on www.learncraftdesign.ie under READ section
- The National Museum of Ireland's Child Protection Policy
- The commissioned design work will have to comply with NMI health and safety requirements
- The commissioning agencies [NMI & DCCoI] will nominate a point of contact to be available to discuss the progression of the project and any areas of concern throughout the process as appropriate

Submission Details

Closing date for submissions is **Monday 31st August 2015, 5pm.** late applications will not be accepted.

All submitted materials should be clearly marked with the designer's name, contact details and the title. Applications headed '**Who do we think we are: Exploring Collective Identities**' on envelope should be sent to:

Amanda Walsh
Design & Crafts Council of Ireland
Castle Yard,
Kilkenny

Queries

Applicants are welcome to make enquiries regarding the commission, please direct to:

Muireann Charleton, Tel (056) 7796142 or e-mail muireann@dccoi.ie

Or Helen Beaumont, Tel (01) 648 6405 or e-mail hbeaumont@museum.ie

5.1 ART AND INDUSTRIAL DIVISION ACQUISITIONS POLICY

The role of the Art and Industrial Division is to maintain Ireland's heritage in decorative arts as well as its political, military and social history. Its aim is to promote a wider understanding Ireland's decorative arts, culture and historical heritage as well as Ireland's contribution to European decorative arts and an understanding of international cultural heritage. The division's collections are estimated to number some 530,000 objects.

INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITION POLICIES

ARMS and ARMOUR – Collection

The collection consists of 800 swords, 300 pistols and 300 longarms, mainly of Irish and English weapons from the 16th to the 20th centuries and with some from Europe and the USA. There is also a sizeable number non-Western muskets and swords collected in the 19th century. The collection consists of pistols and long arms including flintlocks, percussion and semi-automatic weapons. There are also a number of cannons. The edged weapons consist of swords, daggers, bayonets, pole-arms, some crossbows and clubs.

ARMS AND ARMOUR – Acquisitions policy

To collect material of Irish manufacture, including accessories and documents, and to develop a representative collection of the work of Irish weapon makers since c.1600-c.1900. Criteria for collecting includes stylistic development and technical innovation and incorporates the work of Irish makers living and working abroad. It also aims to collect material of Irish significance, relating to individuals or events in Irish history or related to the activities of the Irish abroad. There is also a need to develop a policy in relation to post-1900 material.

TRANSPORT COLLECTIONS - Collection.

The collection consists of fifteen 18th and 19th century carriages as well as material (schedules, models, photographs, drawings) related to 19th century railways. The transport collection complements the carriages collected by the Folklife Division focusing on the carriages owned by the landed gentry.

TRANSPORT COLLECTIONS – Acquisitions policy

There is no active acquisitions programme for this collection at present.

MILITARY HISTORY - Collection

The collection consists of some 10,000 items, documents, books, personal papers, uniforms, medals and ephemera related to Irish soldiers in the British, American and Irish armies. The largest parts of the collection are the uniforms, which consist of 500 uniforms including headdress, the earliest dating from the 1780s.

Adopted 29th May 2008

MILITARY HISTORY - Acquisitions policy

To collect material relating to Irish soldiers who have fought in armies abroad from 1550 to the present day, material of Irish significance relating to individuals or specific events in Irish military history and material relating to the Irish soldier in the 20th century.

FLAGS - Collection

The collection consists of 50 flags from 1641 to the present day.

FLAGS - Acquisitions policy

To collect flags relating to Ireland's past, in particular military flags carried by Irish soldiers at home and abroad.

FURNITURE – Collection

This collection consists of some 4,500 pieces, covering a wide range of material from the late 17th to the early part of the 20th century. It is most representative of the 18th and 19th centuries and covers a wide number of makers and firms. It is comprised of Irish, English, European material. There is also material from the first half of the twentieth century and a modest collection of contemporary furniture. The division also hold a major collection of the work of the Irish designer Eileen gray.

FURNITURE – Acquisitions policy

The acquisitions policy is to collect material of Irish manufacture to develop a representative collection of furniture, wood work, decorative wood work and related material from c.1600 to the present day; pieces representing known makers, stylistic development, models, drawings and technical development. It is also the policy to collect material of Irish significance relating to individuals or events in Irish history, Irish houses and demesnes or related to the activities of the Irish abroad.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS – Collection

The collection consists of 600 pieces and includes British, French and Irish instruments. The harp collection is significant and it is well represented from the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The harpsichord collection tends to focus on the 18th century and includes some rare pieces. The piano collection is well represented from the later part of the 18th century, 19th and early 20th century and focuses on Irish makers. It also has a rare lychord, the only one ever made by the firm Broadwood. There is also a small body of stringed instruments. The musical instrument collection is weak on 20th century material.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS – Acquisitions policy

To collect instruments made by Irish makers for both their musical and historical/contextual value.

Adopted 29th May 2008

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS – Collection

The collection consists of 3,800 objects relating to surveying, navigation, weights and measures, measurement of time, astronomy, drawing and communications mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS – Acquisitions policy

The acquisitions policy is to collect instruments which illustrate the development of the scientific instrument trade in Ireland and the excellence of Irish makers and inventors.

EILEEN GRAY COLLECTION – Collection

The collection 2,225 objects and represents the various artistic forms of the designer and architect. It embraces the many different disciplines which interested Gray throughout her life: photography, graphic art, new media, lacquer work, architecture and design.

EILEEN GRAY COLLECTION – Acquisitions policy

The acquisitions policy is to acquire a representative collection of furniture, lacquer work, carpets, design work, architectural material and related material which explore Eileen Gray's stylistic and technical development and material relating to individuals or events which directly shaped Gray's career and her work.

CERAMICS – Collection

This collection consists of some 20,000 objects, originally collected to influence local ceramic industries and to illustrate the evolution of fine ceramics, e.g. Continental European, and British porcelain, Italian Maiolica, French faience, Dutch delftware,, Hispano-Moresque ware etc. The collections also includes Irish delftware, Belleek and Carrigaline, and a modest collection of high quality contemporary Irish/Irish-related works.

CERAMICS – Acquisitions policy

To collect historical and contemporary pieces of Irish manufacture or of an Irish significance which helps to document industrial and artistic developments relating of the medium.

GLASS – Collection

This collection consists of some 4,500 pieces of Irish, American and European glass from the 18th to the 20th century. Traditional collecting centred on the industrial manufacture of Belfast, Cork, Dublin and Waterford, late 18th to mid 19th century. There is also a modest collection of high quality Irish/Irish-related contemporary works.

Adopted 29th May 2008

GLASS – Acquisitions policy

To collect historical and contemporary works of an Irish manufacture or significance, to illustrate the industrial and artistic development of the medium.

ASIAN COLLECTIONS – Collection

This collection consists of around 7,000 objects and is incorporated within the existing areas of arms and armour, textiles, metalwork, glass, ceramics, musical instruments.

ASIAN COLLECTIONS – Acquisitions policy

There is no active policy to collect further examples of this material but in the event of material becoming available and where this material would fill gaps in the established collections the Museum would endeavour to acquire it.

EASTER WEEK - Collection

This collection consists of some 13,000 pieces and consists principally of material acquired following the 20th anniversary of the Rising, in 1936. The collection contains a number of key documents and manuscripts relating to the Rising and its leaders, for instance, three copies of the Proclamation of the Republic, and two copies of Pearse's order to surrender. The immediate aftermath of the Rising is also well covered, with items produced in the internment camps and prisons. The collection also covers the period up to the end of the Civil War, and incorporates commemorative material produced up to the present day.

EASTER WEEK - Acquisitions policy

To collect objects that illuminate the Independence period, while simultaneously avoiding undue replication of objects already represented in the collection and more specifically material produced in the camps and prisons between 1916 and 1924.

HISTORICAL - Collection

This collection consists of around 4,000 objects and is strong in material such as medals, documents and personal memorabilia relating to the Volunteer movement of the 1780s, the Repeal movement, and the Land War. The collection is weak in other important areas, such as the Plantations, the Famine, Ireland of the 1920s to the 1940s, and generally in objects that tell the social and economic story of the 'building of Ireland' in those decades.

HISTORICAL - Acquisitions policy

To collect material that tell the social, economic and political story of Ireland's history from the seventeenth century onwards. The aim is to broaden the Historical Collection to include items that tell of the 'quiet revolutions' in social and economic history, as well as those political events that traditionally demand the greatest attention in terms of research and acquisition.

PHILATELIC and POSTAL HISTORY - Collection

The 'Duke of Leinster' bequest of some 18,500 stamps and related material forms the core of Philatelic and Postal History collection. The collection spans British and Irish philately and postal history. It also includes covers and proofs. It includes a selection of Mulready caricatures and of particular note is a series of British Departmental stamps in unique mint blocks of four, and an example of the Western Australian 4d. blue of 1854 with the frame inverted in relation to the central swan. Of the remainder of the collection, the vast majority is made up of Irish and world stamps, sheets and first-day covers, issued by the Universal Postal Union, Berne, Switzerland. The overall collection (estimated to include some 400,000 stamps) is growing continuously with the regular acquisition of new stamps from around the world.

PHILATELIC and POSTAL HISTORY - Acquisitions policy

To continue to collect, through the Universal Postal Union, and to fill in the gaps in the existing collection of Irish material.

FINE AND GRAPHIC ART - Collection

This collection consists of some 200 watercolours and drawings by Irish and European artists, mainly compiled prior to the 1920s but it is not museum policy to collect further examples.

METALWORK - Collection

The collection consists of over 5,000 objects. The principal element of this collection is Irish silver, which ranges in date from c.1500 to the present and which contains over 2,800 pieces. There are also collections of pewter (over 100 pieces) as well as enamel, brass and ironwork which number about 1,500. The non-Irish elements of these collections are not active, except those collected for context.

METALWORK - Acquisitions policy

To collect Irish material, with an emphasis on style, maker and provenance and taking into account function, period, geographical provenance and extant examples in the collection. In the case of ironwork, as with scientific instruments, physically large objects are not normally because of storage difficulties.

NUMISMATICS - Collection

This consists of some 10,000 pieces, the main body being Irish coins from the Viking period to the present. This in turn is divided into two elements, a systematic chronological collection and a body of hoard material. Hoards (whether of Irish or foreign material) are always collected, except where composed of the very commonest pieces, where the decision may be to record rather than acquire.

Adopted 29th May 2008

The Irish chronological collection is augmented by denomination, style and provenance in the same manner as the silver collection

The numismatic collection also includes a considerable body of Roman, English, European and Asian coins, which may occasionally be used to provide contrast or comparison.

There is a large collection of Irish medals, 3,700 in all, covering such topics as history, politics, agriculture, sport and education as well as tokens, banknotes and associated numismatic material. The collection also includes a small group of around 100 seals.

NUMISMATICS – Acquisitions policy

To collect material of Irish origin and significance taking into account condition, provenance and extant examples in the collection.

TOYS , DOLLS and ACCESSORIES – Collection

This collection, approximately 7,00 items, consists of a large collection of Irish, English and European dolls, a small collection of dolls houses as well as fittings and toys, including board games, tin plate and clockwork toys.

TOYS , DOLLS and ACCESSORIES – Acquisitions policy

To collect pieces of Irish origin or significance and contemporary examples of Irish production and examples of popular/iconic toys available in the past in Ireland.

COSTUME – Collection

This collection consists of around 2,000 items, and is comprised mainly of Irish and English costume (mostly female) from the 18th century to the present. Twentieth century Irish designers are also represented. There also examples of religious vestments, court dress, legal and academic robes.

COSTUME – Acquisitions policy.

To collect costume of Irish manufacture and/or made of Irish fabrics or of Irish significance from 1700 to the present taking account of condition and extant examples in the collection; also to collect other material and ephemera relevant to the design, production, marketing and consumption of Irish designed/manufactured clothing.

COSTUME ACCESSORIES – Collection

This collection consists of around 1,600 items of costume accessories including hats, shoes, shoe-buckles, parasols and fans.

COSTUME ACCESSORIES – Acquisitions policy

To collect pieces of Irish manufacture or with an Irish connection from the 1600s to the present and contemporary pieces reflecting the quality and innovation of Irish design.

JEWELLERY – Collection

The collection consists of some 1,700 items ranging from the 18th to the 20th century. It consists mostly of good-quality costume jewellery. It also includes pieces of early 20th century arts and crafts, Celtic Revival and contemporary Irish jewellery. There is also a large collection of carved cameo and intaglio seal stones and Tassie paste copies.

JEWELLERY – Acquisitions policy

To collect pieces of Irish manufacture or with an Irish connection or pieces which reflect a particular fashion and contemporary pieces reflecting the quality and innovation of Irish design; to collect other relevant material and ephemera relating to the design, production, marketing and consumption of jewellery in Ireland.

LACE – Collection

The collection consists of 1,100 items of Irish and European lace accessories ranging from the 17th century to the early 20th century. The collection of Irish lace and lace designs is strong from the mid-19th to the mid 20th century, with specimens purchased directly by the National Museum from lace schools, co-operatives and Industrial Exhibitions across the country.

LACE – Acquisitions policy

To collect historic and contemporary pieces of quality design and production of Irish manufacture and other material relating to the design and production of Irish lace.

TEXTILES AND SOFT FURNISHINGS - Collection

This collection consists of around 2,500 items and contains carpets (mainly Irish-made), tapestries, curtains, embroideries, sampler quilts, fabric fragments and lengths, equipment, pattern designs, sample books relating to mainly Irish textile production. The Irish silk and poplin industries of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries are represented as well as Irish sprigging or whitework, and Mountmellick embroidery.

TEXTILES AND SOFT FURNISHINGS – Acquisitions policy

To collect examples of the textile manufacturing industries of Ireland, taking account of condition and the extant collection; to collect other material relevant to the design, production, marketing and consumption of Irish textiles..