

IDI • Creative Axis

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE OF DESIGNERS IN IRELAND | 8 MERRION SQUARE | DUBLIN 2 | idi@indigo.ie

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IDI Creative Axis

In a move to avoid potential confusion with Design Ireland, the collaborative body representing the IDI, RIAI, GDBA and ICAD, we have taken the initiative and changed our newsletter's name.

Any member who would like to undertake the task of designing a new masthead, or get involved with the newsletter in general, would be warmly welcomed at the publishing desk.

Northern Ireland Members Event

The first event organised by the members in the North is to take place at Tatu, Lisburn Road, Belfast on 1st November, 6.30 – 8.30pm. It is the first chance for members to see the best work from the awards and hear about local plans for the IDI. For more information contact smoore@designidir.com.

New IDI Website

The Institute has established a new website at www.idi-ireland.com. For the past couple of years, for a variety of frustrating reasons, we have experienced difficulties accessing the Institute's original site (www.designweek.ie) which was established for the purposes of promoting Design Week 1997.

Our new site has been put together in a very short period of time to fulfil a gaping need. It is, by necessity, utilitarian in style and content, and represents the first step in an important project. We appeal to any members who might be interested in contributing ideas and time to the development of the new website to contact us and get involved. Our Northern Ireland section will operate under www.idi-north.com. URLs for our developing provincial sections have been reserved: www.idi-south.com and www.idi-west.com.

Art Auction: October 3rd

We regret that the IDI Art Auction did not take place as planned in July. We are currently planning the event, now scheduled for October 3rd, with renewed fervour and will keep members posted on venue details.

3D+, Swedish Design on Stage

IDI Creative Axis asked Paul Hogan, rapporteur of the 1961 report Design in Ireland and Fellow of the Institute, to visit the exhibition currently running at the National Museum. This is his report.



Two of the exhibits at 3D+: left *Cykel Z*, bicycle and right *BD Relax*, lounge chair, both by Björn Dahlström

International design exhibitions in Dublin, once fairly commonplace, are now such a rarity that this one was eagerly anticipated. The fact that it was Swedish, and continued a relationship with Ireland spanning nearly fifty years, made it doubly special. Over twenty years ago, the last such exhibition, also of Swedish design, was held at the Bank of Ireland in Baggot Street.

Opening that exhibition, Sir Basil Goulding, then chairman of Kilkenny Design Workshops, spoke of the "conjunctions which Swedish design has had with the Irish, largely through the apostolic personality of Mr Åke Huldt." He was referring to the fact that Huldt had selected the items for the first (and to this day, only) exhibition of Irish design in 1956; had been one of the famous Scandinavian Design Group in 1961; was a member of the jury of Kilkenny Design Workshops from 1963; and was invariably helpful and supportive of

Irish students during his term as rector of the School of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design in Stockholm. Sir Basil would have been pleased at the latest "conjunction" which brought Mr Johan Huldt, Åke's son, to Dublin in June as managing director of Svensk Form for the opening of the current exhibition. His father had previously held the same position and during the 1950s and 60s had organized exhibitions of Swedish and Scandinavian design, pioneering a potent conjunction (that word again) between design and commerce which has never been surpassed.

So my hopes were high in approaching 3D+, Swedish Design on Stage and accompanied perhaps by some preconceptions. After my first visit, I let a decent interval elapse before returning for a second look – in the hope that my first impressions might be altered. In the event, they were if anything reinforced.

> *continued on page 2*

3D+, Swedish Design on Stage *continued*

The exhibition is housed in the former riding school of Collins Barracks (which I had never known was there and wish I had seen before its conversion) and approached by a politically correct ramp. However, someone should have told the designers that a ramp must always be flanked by steps, for the very good reason that while ramps facilitate the wheelchair user, they are difficult to negotiate for others with mobility problems and can be lethal on a wet August afternoon.

Once inside, the impression is one of gloom: the windows are blacked out and illumination is by spotlights on carbon-fibre rods. These also suspend the captions to the exhibits on what look like security tags, with print so small that they immediately disable most readers. The silence is broken by grunts and gurgles which are emitted from what I took to be air-conditioning ducts but which the attendant said were walkways. These are the work of Carl Michael von Hausswolff, a sound artist.

In the centre of the room, there are three stainless steel vats. These are lined with materials of various textures and if you are agile enough to stoop down and get inside them, a voice explains (I suppose) in Swedish what it's all about. This is the work of Karl Dunér, a freelance director, and the catalogue explains that he has deconstructed various objects from the exhibition.

The centre of the hall is also occupied by three booths that are the province of the third guest from the theatre, Kenneth Kvarnström. These present continuous video loops of dancers going through modern dance routines. To establish a link with the world of product design, a dress worn by one of the dancers, is suspended on a hanger in one of the booths.

A Husqvarna automatic lawnmower (the world's first) endlessly "mows" an artificial grass carpet and in its mindless futility was, I felt, some kind of metaphor for the exhibition as a whole.

The exhibited products, 83 of them, are ranged against the walls. When combined with the general lack of illumination, this layout conveys the unfortunate impression of a closing down sale in a failed department store. Lest anyone should think that this is due to deficiencies in local labour or understanding, the catalogue makes clear that this arrangement is precisely that intended by exhibition designer, Alexis Pontvik. He writes, "The result that meets the public may perplex but it can also expand our customary way of looking at design." Well, maybe.

The essentials of any exhibition are surely that the objects exhibited are displayed to the best advantage and in a rational sequence, are adequately lit – as far as possible by natural light, and have easily read captions accompanied by explanatory texts. 3D+, Swedish Design on Stage fails on all these grounds, a failure emphasized by the



At the opening of 3D+, above Áine Rooney of Design Ireland and Seán McNulty, Libby Carton and Sheila Robinson of the IDI enjoy the very generous refreshments. Below Opening speeches

excellence of the displays yards away in the National Museum, and this is a pity because there are some very interesting and well designed products on view; Björn Dahlström's reclining chair, screw-drivers and body-care products from Ergonomi Design Gruppen, and Tom Walldner's brilliant T28 mobile phone for Ericsson. These and others are lost, however, in the inadequacies of the display.

Interesting also is what is not in the exhibition. There is no fine cabinet making and virtually no wooden objects. There are no woven textiles and there are no precious metals. The chairs exhibited, cheap, gimmicky and almost perversely post-modern, are a travesty of the great tradition of Swedish chair-making.

I think I know what concept lay behind this exhibition: something like, "Let's do something different. We can't go on giving them those boring old Bruno Mathsson chairs, Sigurd Persson silver and Karin Björquist ceramics. We need new products and faces".

But we don't. We love these iconic products and can't get enough of them. And this is where this exhibition ultimately fails; in its abandonment of essential Swedish design values, one of which is certainly not the pursuit of novelty. Swedish design is characterised by a robust quality, born of a harsh climate, by respect for materials and tradition, and by simple and appropriate forms. There is also an underlying attitude of "people first", the product of years of social democracy. You would have to construe this exhibition very carefully to uncover these concepts, and this is another weakness, the absence of any narrative. An exhibition must tell a story and, particularly for an Irish audience, put the exhibits in context. Without it, a vacuum cleaner on the floor is, well, a vacuum cleaner on the floor.

This may be a harsh critique born of disappointment. But I can't help thinking of the Svensk Form 150th Anniversary exhibition which I visited in Stockholm six years ago. A magnificent presentation, this told the story of Swedish design in products, pictures and >

The Perfect Design Brief?

The Bostonian 'Design Management Institute' is coming coming to town.

I constantly find myself obsessing about the importance of what I like to call the 'bullet-proof brief'.... if you'll excuse my northern sensibilities. By spending more time at the front end of the process developing a thorough design brief, designer and client can progress on the same wavelength, narrow the margin for error, save time, money and more often than not, deliver an airtight, relevant design solution....so everyone's a winner....well that's what I keep telling clients anyway!

The design brief is one of those strange amorphous beasts that appears to be as varied and indeed creative as the business in which we work! I've always been of the opinion that we, as creative consultants, should strive to raise the importance and value of the brief as a fundamental element of the design process because.... well, it is. So, I was intrigued (and okay a little excited) to hear that the Bostonian 'Design Management Institute' were coming to town in the portly shape of Mr Peter Philips, a much published authority on design and brand and formerly Director of Creative Services for Gillette. The purpose of this June visit was to host a two day professional development seminar imaginatively titled 'creating the perfect design brief'.

The DMI is the one of the largest and most active industry representative bodies in existence today and claims to be the international authority, resource and advocate on 'design management'. Design what?.... I hear you ask. Well that's maybe a discussion for another day, but briefly, 'Design Management' refers simply to the organisation of the design process and the realisation of design as an essential strategic element to creating competitive advantage in business (now there's a revelation).

The DMI then, purports to represent 'senior design executives involved in the development of products, communications and environments' and 'strives to improve the general public's understanding of the nature, process and significance of design'.....music

to your ears no doubt! The quarterly Design Management Journal published by the Institute has established itself as the academic bible of all things design and brand and comprises a weighty tome of informative articles penned by some of the leading lights in the global design industry. The journal covers a wide range of topics such as innovation management, market trend analysis, human dimensions of design and that word we all love..... brand!

The seminar itself was engaging in its informality, yet highly interactive and extremely informative. The content followed a comprehensive outline of a benchmark design brief which invoked some interesting discussion and debate. And the conclusion? Well, I think I speak for all those in attendance that the most valuable part of the seminar was the knowledge-sharing and informal discussion about that thing we do..... Design. This simple ideal of design managers and senior creatives sociably conversing about the industry, trends and practices, experiences good and bad, permeates to the heart of what the Design Management Institute is about.... community. Similarly this active discussion and debate is of fundamental importance if our own IDI is to realise its crusade to create a consolidated, unified community of Irish designers.

So what was that about a conclusion? Well as Bob Hoskins said in his oft-quoted TV spots for British Telecom..... "its good to talk" so what are we waiting for?

Damian Cranney MCS D MI

The Design Management Institute will host its sixth European International Conference on Design Management in Dublin in March 2002.

Belfast Student from NCAD wins £5,000 Ariel Design Scholarship



Tory Irvine, an enthusiastic, creative fashion design student from the National College of Art & Design has been named one of Ireland's hottest new design talents after scooping £5,000 in a new scholarship initiative from Ariel Color and the Institute of Designers in Ireland. Beating off hopeful fashion designers from the leading fashion colleges/courses around the country, Tory has been selected by an esteemed panel of judges from the world of Irish fashion to receive this prestigious and sought after scholarship.

Tory met the judging panel in The Merrion Hotel, Dublin (on the 13th June 2001) which included well known Irish designers Cuan Hanly and Roisin Gartland (Hon Secretary, IDI), Lorraine Egan from Enterprise Ireland, Susan Keane, Irish Clothing and Textiles Association (IBEC), Gisele Scanlon, RTE Guide and RTE's Nationwide and Cathy Martin from the Irish Linen Guild.

Winning the scholarship will mean that Tory will be able to design, develop and produce her final year's collection without making any financial sacrifices, providing the best possible start to a career in the fashion industry. As well as helping with college fees, materials and expenses, Tory will be able to use the £5,000 scholarship to put on her all-important final year show.

Roisin Gartland, Hon. Secretary of the Institute of Designers in Ireland said: "The panel loved Tory's portfolio of designs so it was a treat to meet her and see the designs made up into real pieces. I'm sure Tory will have a great future in the fashion industry - winning the Ariel Color Fashion Design Scholarship certainly gives her a good start!"

Tory was delighted with her win: "I am absolutely over the moon that I have been awarded this Ariel Color Scholarship! It was great to meet such a distinguished panel of judges and of course winning £5,000 is a dream. The money will allow me to fully express my ideas which I am very excited about."

The Scholarship initiative is just one aspect of Ariel Color's involvement in the fashion industry. The washing powder brand has also been involved in fashion at a more visible level, most notably the sponsorship of Matthew Williamson at London Fashion Week earlier this year.

> texts, relating it always to social conditions and the lives of real people. It was educational in the best sense and hugely supported.

3D+, Swedish Design on Stage does not do justice, in my opinion, to Swedish design or designers. Both are better than what is presented at Collins Barracks. In his introduction to the exhibition, Johan Hultdt writes that the intention of the exhibition is to challenge our ideas about design. What it does I think is to challenge our ideas about design exhibitions and their function. We should consider that for all the efforts of Córas Tráchtála and KDW, we have never achieved the synergy between design, enterprise and

the export trade that the Scandinavian countries have to their great benefit. Forty years ago at the RDS, Johan Hultdt's father told an audience of enthusiastic industrialists that they should work towards a national design year, the centerpiece of which should be a major exhibition which would show Irish design to, first, the Irish people and later to the world. Now that would be a real challenge.

3D+, Swedish Design on Stage continues at the National Museum, Collins Barracks until 9 September. Admission is free.

Design Awards launched

IDI Design Awards 2001

Renowned Irish Designer Orla Kiely launched the Institute of Designers in Ireland (IDI) Design Awards 2001 with a preview of her first ever clothing collection. Orla, who is presenting the accessories award in the fashion category at the Design Awards this year, represents the epitome of success in design, with retail sales in excess of STG £3 million. She currently sells to over 200 stores world-wide with a further 50 stores planned next year resulting in a potential 40% growth in overall sales.

The closing date for entry to the Design Awards was Friday 31st August and the awards ceremony will take place on the 19th October 2001 at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. For further information on the Design Awards please contact Rina Whyte at idi@indigo.ie.

This is the second year that the IDI Design Awards 2001 are being organised jointly by the Institute of Designers in Ireland (Republic of Ireland) and the IRTU Design Directorate (Northern Ireland). The Design Awards are supported by Glen Dimplex and Inter Trade Ireland, the trade and business development body set up in 1999 under the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to exchange information and co-operate on business development opportunities, north and south.

The design industry employs around 6,500 people in manufacturing, service and consultancy in Ireland and the design consultancy sector alone is worth over £400 million. Design is increasingly being recognised by executives world-wide as the vital and direct link between the corporate creative resource and the marketplace. It is design and design management that makes for strong and consistent brand communication. So far, few Irish companies realise its real and full potential. With this in mind the objective of the Design Awards is to seek out the finest examples of design undertaken by designers in Ireland across a broad spectrum of skills and industries.



A girl's best friend – designer dog assists in launching the awards

This year there are 19 categories:

- **Consumer Product Design**
- **Industrial Product Design**
- **Domestic and Commercial Furniture Design**
- **Corporate and Brand Identity**
- **Brochures/Promotional Literature**
- **Annual Reports**
- **Packaging Design**
- **Exhibition Design**
- **Fashion Design**
- **Textile Design**
- **Accessories**
- **Commercial Interior**
- **Retail Interiors**
- **Public/Leisure Space**
- **Website Design**
- **CD Rom**
- **Digital Animation**
- **On-Screen Graphics for TV/Film**
- **Stage and Set Design for TV/Film/Stage**

In 2001 the IDI Design Awards will also award the SME companies for their use of good design, giving recognition to the beneficiary as well as the designers.

Speaking at the launch, Andrew Bradley, Co-Chairperson of the Design Awards, said, "We are delighted to work with the IRTU Design Directorate for the second year and together we are looking forward to hosting the awards in Belfast. There is a wealth of design talent in Ireland that is largely not recognised or valued. We feel the Design Awards are an opportunity for the Institute of Designers in Ireland to showcase and promote this creative talent to a commercial audience."

IRTU Design Directorate's Stephen Moore, Co-Chairperson of the Design Awards, also said, "We are committed not only to encouraging quality design here in Northern Ireland but aim to identify exemplary design applications which result in no less than business excellence. We are very excited about hosting both the judging and awards ceremony here in Belfast."

Professional Indemnity Insurance: Some Basic Questions Answered

Currently, as a benefit to members, we are investigating offering an Indemnity Insurance Scheme to members. Outlined are some of the issues on why Indemnity Insurance is more relevant than ever to the IDI.

Why do I need PII?

As a professional person providing advice, design, specifications, supervision etc. for a fee or gratuitously, you owe a duty of care to your client and purchasers/tenants and to the public at large. The duty of care owed to your client, if not otherwise defined in your contract, and to third parties is to exercise "reasonable skill and care". When you fail to exercise this duty (i.e. you are negligent) you may be liable for losses incurred by your client and/or third parties. Even proving innocence can be very costly.

Professional Indemnity Insurance generally provides an indemnity in respect of damages awarded following a breach of professional duty by way of neglect, error or omission. Additionally, an indemnity is provided in respect of the legal and other costs and expenses incurred in the defence of any claims.

What am I liable for?

In the event that an allegation of negligence is upheld you are likely to be liable for the losses incurred by the plaintiff which arise as a reasonably foreseeable consequence of your actions. The plaintiff's legal costs will also usually be awarded against you and these can be substantial. Often large sums are spent trying to recover fairly minor losses.

Liability for economic and consequential loss, in other words financial losses as opposed to the cost of rectifying a defect, is implicit under contract, unless it has been specifically excluded. The question of liability for economic and consequential loss at common law is more of a grey area although recent court judgements have made it possible to recover such losses. Where you are aware that a third party, such as a tenant or future owner, may incur losses as a result of your negligence, you may be liable for economic and consequential loss.

How long am I liable?

Actions can be brought under the common law tort of negligence for a period of up to 15 years from the date of negligent act occurred.

Under contract, actions can be brought for periods of either 6 or 12 years from the effective date of the contract.

The 6 year period applies in respect of contracts executed as simple agreements. The 12 year period applies in respect of contracts executed as deeds.

Remember even in instances where no formal contract documentation is signed, a contract is implied where you respond to verbal and/or written instructions and requests for advice etc.

As a general rule we suggest you consider that you can still be liable up to 18 years from practical completion.

How does liability attach?

Where you practice as a sole proprietor or partnership, liability attaches to you personally. In the case of a partnership it is also joint and several. These personal liabilities do not come to an end when you cease to practice but continue to attach for the liability periods referred to above.

Where you are a director of a limited company, legal opinion suggests that whilst all corporate liability ceases when the company no longer exists as a legal entity each director is liable for his own work. Therefore, the cessation of a limited company does not preclude legal proceedings being brought against the individual directors.

What cover should I carry?

Ultimately this decision must rest with you.

When considering what limit of indemnity to carry, you should look at both past and current work in an attempt to assess the likely damages which could flow from a negligent

act on your part, not only for property damage but also potential personal injury claims. The limit should also be set to include awards made in relation to the plaintiff's legal costs. Costs and expenses incurred in the defence of any claim are generally covered over and above the limit of indemnity.

Cover can be on one of the two bases:

- a) Each and every claim: here the limit of indemnity under the policy applies to each claim which may arise during the period of insurance. Remember that you have no control over when a client decides to pursue a claim against you.
- b) Aggregate: here the limit of indemnity applies to all claims notified during the insurance year.

All Professional Indemnity insurers insist that you pay a certain amount of each claim yourself - the excess.

Should I disclose details of cover to clients?

Experience shows that a simple letter disclosing details of your insurers, renewal date and, if necessary, the limit of indemnity will satisfy most clients. In due course the Institute will supply these for you. Additionally, certain clients may require their own Certificates to be completed confirming that you comply with their requirements. Again, the Institute will be in a position to supply such Certificates on your behalf.

All covered for work done by sub-consultants?

If you employ sub-consultants then you are fully responsible in the eyes of the law for their actions.

Most professional indemnity policies automatically provide cover for acts of sub-consultants although insurers do retain the right to claim against the sub-consultant who gives rise to a claim.



iF Awards

For the first time design students can apply for an iF award in the discipline concepts which will be organised as a new part of the well known iF design award 2002 - an excellent chance for the newcomer of the design scene to draw the attention of the public and companies on their work. Awarded entries are part of the iF yearbook and are presented in the yearly iF design exhibition with around 300,000 visitors on the Hanover fairground.

The discipline concepts is supported by Festo AG, Esslingen, with a prize money of 25,000 EURO. The participation at the awards as well as the presentation of the awards are free of costs for all students.

Design students at design faculties around the world are cordially invited to submit innovative entries. These can relate to the disciplines of Communication Design, Product Design, Packaging Design, Transportation Design and

Public Design with a special focus on the aspects of universal design and sustainability.

Registration deadline and submission of all entries by 30th September 2001.

*Contact iF International Forum Design:
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Irish Design Effectiveness Awards (IDEA 2001)

Our colleagues in the GDBA celebrated some excellent designs at their recent awards ceremony.



Overall Winners: Red Dog Design

The winners of the Irish Design Effectiveness Award (IDEA 2001) were announced on Thursday 28 June by An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Harney TD, at a ceremony in the POD, Harcourt Street, Dublin. The overall winner of the Perpetual Trophy is Dublin based graphic design company, Red Dog, for a promotional brochure for Giraffe Childcare Centres. IDEA 2001, which is now in its sixth year, is sponsored by Service Point and The Type Bureau. Awards were presented in four different categories: Corporate Identity, Marketing Literature, Packaging and Promotional Material/Point of Sale.

The Irish Design Effectiveness Awards are unique, as they are the only design competition in which the work is judged on its commercial effectiveness, as well as its

aesthetic merit. The objective of IDEA 2001 is to prove that good communications design can contribute significantly towards commercial success, and to publicly recognise the designers and clients who have made the most effective use of design in generating increased sales, profitability and productivity. IDEA 2001 is organised by the Graphic Design Business Association (GDBA). The association was established to represent, support and develop the business of graphic design in Ireland and to encourage and promote the highest professional standards in the Irish graphic design consultancy sector.

The judging panel selected Red Dog Design as the overall winner for the design of a new promotional brochure for the Giraffe Childcare Centres. Mary Doherty of Red Dog explained that the brochure and associated work has greatly assisted Giraffe who aim to have approximately 30 childcare centres up and running in the next five years.

“The brochure has proven how influential a well designed piece of communications material can be in delivering a message. Pre-bookings for places in upcoming facilities have already been made by parents as a direct result of seeing the brochure even though the company will not be aggressively targeting parents until the centres are near completion. The success of the brochure can also be illustrated by the fact that Giraffe have employed a Corporate Relations Manager on foot of the level of interest from the corporate sector as a direct

result of interest generated by the brochure itself. The Late Late Show have also agreed to run a competition this Autumn which will see them give away free childcare places at Giraffe facilities for three to four parents.”

Commenting on the high standard of entries for this year's awards, Ian Hyland, Chairperson of the judging panel stated, “The standard of entries was extremely high on all levels particularly in the area of measurement of the effectiveness of the strategies carried out. The process of choosing the overall winner went to the wire, however the choice of Red Dog was unanimous. The quality and standard of Red Dog's entry encompassed the reason for such an award – effective response to a client brief, effective design and communication strategy and most of all an effective return on the clients' investment which delivered tangible results.”

Announcing the winner of this year's awards the Tánaiste said “Design and its contribution to the new product development process are important to all sectors of industry. It is a dynamic process, which unlocks innovation and turns good ideas into reality. Design is an excellent deliverer of innovation, which when properly used can offer companies that elusive competitive advantage needed to survive in the modern business environment. Judging by the high standards of entrants for this year's awards I have no doubt that this sector can continue to prosper and grow in the future.”

Corporate Identity

For companies with a turnover of less than £2million:

- 1st Place:
BFK Design
Creation of corporate identity for Pigsback.com
- 2nd Place:
Kunnert Tierney
Re-branding of Cork University Press at 75 (CUP at 75)

For companies with a turnover of more than £2million:

- 1st Place:
Baseline Communications
Creation of identity programme for MV Technology
- 2nd Place:
The Identity Business
Creation of new corporate identity for Fineos

Literature

Corporate Literature:

- 1st Place:
Red Dog
Brochure design for Giraffes Childcare Centres
- 2nd Place:
Dowling and Dowling
Design for Dairygold Annual Report

Consumer Literature:

- 1st Place:
The Identity Business
Cert Prospectus
- 2nd Place:
Creative Inc.
Powerscourt Springs Health Farm

Public Service/Non-profit Organisation Literature:

- 1st Place:
Origin Design
Arts Council Awards & Opportunities Brochure
- 2nd Place:
Kunnert and Tierney
75th Anniversary Catalogue, Cork University Press

Packaging

- 1st Place:
Huguenot Design
Shaws
- 2nd Place:
Newworld Brand Ltd.
Relaunch of Deep River Rock

Promotional Material/Point of Sale

- 1st Place:
Fuse Graphic Design
Guinness Christmas Cracker Promotion
- 2nd Place:
Clarke Warner
Promotional material for retail dealers, Siemens Mobile Phone Company

Leaving Certificate Design Paper

Dermot Flynn considers the topical subject of design education and examinations at second-level schools.

Having spent the last several months working with Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their art exam, I have also been discussing the paper's design section (and design at second level) with a number of teachers and candidates, whose thoughts on both were less than glowing, to say the least. The general opinion is that of an examination process which is outdated, inconsistent and largely irrelevant to any student considering a career in art or design. Also, if the experiences of the people I talked with are common to the majority of second-level schools in Ireland, then there are also some serious issues in regard to the perception of design in pre-third level education.

Besides the difficulties in the structure of the design paper, which I will come to further on, there seem to be substantial problems as to how design itself is regarded in secondary level. Many students still consider art to be a 'doss' subject, and are often unaware of the broad range of design disciplines in which they could make a career for themselves. The general opinion was that third level art and design colleges need to be a lot more accessible and informative to the students, and that they need to forge greater relationships with second-level institutions. One student suggested that the colleges should begin promoting themselves to students at an earlier stage in second level.

A number of art teachers whom I talked to stated one major contributing factor to be the background of the teachers themselves. Apparently, a large proportion of second-level art teachers would have a craft or fine art-based background, which may result in their dissuading their students from choosing design as part of their Leaving Certificate. Often, when this is the case, the teacher may be ill-equipped to stress upon the students the fundamentals of good design (this is not to say that this is due to training or ability, or that every art teacher coming from a craft or fine art background is in this situation). Design is subsequently seen as being far more difficult than craft, and is thus actively discouraged. Students in these cases often opt for the Craft paper as opposed to the Design paper, where they are also given a descriptive passage, but are given five hours to construct a finished piece.

In addition, a teacher's background may affect their actual marking of the design section. Granted, an excellent piece of work can easily be recognised, but there may be problems when it comes to splitting hairs, as it were, i.e. differentiating between a B1 or a B2.

Another element which affects second-level design education is differentiation between the schools themselves. For instance, a student who attends a school with a well-funded art department already has more facilities and resources available to them, and subsequently has more options in the exam. And, when a

student who is interested in design and options on the design paper are unavailable to them in their school situation, he/she often opts to go to art classes outside of school. The students I talked to complained of tension and difficulties which had subsequently arisen between outside teachers and school art teachers, as a result of them taking exterior art classes.

So, what of the Leaving Certificate Design paper itself?

The examination is broken up into four sections – Art History, Imaginative Composition or Still Life, Life Drawing and Design or Craft. The Design Section represents 25% of the student's final mark and consists of a paper given to the student a week before the date of the exam. The paper contains a substantial descriptive passage from which the student must then choose a starting point to execute a piece of design for which there are a number of various options: embroidery, weaving, pottery, lettering/calligraphy, lino cutting/printmaking, fabric printing, puppetry, bookcraft, advertising design, modeling/carving, and stage set design. The process of giving the student the paper a week before the exam is to allow him/her time to research, plan and submit preparatory design sketches (if any) for the design discipline which they have chosen for the examination. Candidates are allowed to bring one A2 page with the aforementioned preparatory sketches into the examination as a 'memory aid'. This is not to be handed up. The sketches will then form the basis for a more developed preliminary sketch, which will then be submitted with the finished piece. The candidate is subsequently marked on both pieces of work: 20 marks for the preliminary sketch and 80 marks for the finished piece. The exam itself lasts two and a half hours. At the end of the exam the student must hand up the finished piece and the preliminary sketch. No marks are given for any of the work done in the week preceding the exam.

As a designer who is still able to dredge up memories of the Leaving Certificate from the dim recesses of my own mind, I would have to say that the design section of the paper allows the second-level student little scope for understanding or experience of the design process. Besides the pressure of the points system, the exam format, as it currently stands, encourages students to produce pieces of work whose strength of which is a slick professional finish, rather than a well thought out, sensitive solution. Also the Department of Education seems to be confused about what exactly design is; this is obvious from just looking at the options available to students on the paper – modeling, woodcarving, bookcraft etc. There is no mention of disciplines such as industrial design, product design, fashion design or interior design.

One student in particular expressed her frustration in regard to the design section. According to her (and others), the format of giving the paper to the student a week previous to the exam and then executing the finished piece in the allowed time on the actual exam day discourages the use of any thought process similar to that employed by professional designers. The student in question had put a lot of effort into research and idea generation in the week before the exam and was annoyed that she would not be given any credit in her final mark. Although it cannot be denied that time and time management is a vital concern in the design profession, and that tight deadlines come with the territory, the context in which this exam is placed (i.e. the points system and exam hall situation) result in a tendency to work out fully and 'practice' the design in the week preceding the exam so it can be repeated perfectly on the day of the exam. The paper mentions using the week to generate preparatory sketches and ideas, but in most cases these are done as an afterthought, 'putting the cart before the horse', as it were. Research and initial concept development are a vital component of any design project; this however is not substantiated by the breakdown of marks in the exam, where any work showing the student's method of thinking constitutes a paltry 20% of the Design section marks. With the pressure that is on the student to achieve the highest marks possible, it is understandable that he/she will concentrate on the part of the paper that will give them the most marks.

The old Intermediate Certificate was replaced in 1992 by the Junior Certificate, a particularly noticeable aspect of which was a totally restructured art exam with an emphasis on research, support studies and preparatory work, resulting in an examination which allowed students to fully demonstrate a thought process as well as a sufficient amount of time to develop their ideas. There has been discussions about replacing the Leaving Certificate Art Exam as it currently stands with a new exam of similar format. One can only hope that this will happen sooner rather than later. At present, the Leaving Cert Design section does not foster any kind of independent thought and relegates the creativity of its candidates to the coal-bunker.

Dermot Flynn BDes AIDI

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*The IDI Newsletter welcomes contributions
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*Whilst every effort is made to check the
accuracy of information contained in the
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*The views expressed by contributors are
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Lynn Ward

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CALENDAR

International Dates

Sappi World Design

Convergence:

Continental Shift 2001

IFI Congress & General

Assembly

11-14th September 2001

Sandton Convention Centre,

Gauteng, South Africa

T: +27 11 8372460

W: www.woza2001.co.za

The 4th Mitsubishi Motors International Design Competition

Theme is the next generation

of Mitsubishi Cross

Country Vehicles.

Eligibility: the competition is

open to all persons, amateur or

professional who are interested

in design and possess skills in

any type of graphic arts.

Deadline is November 20th 2001

The Grand Prize is 800,000 yen

F: +81 3 5488 1613

E: m-net@rivet.co.jp

W: [www.mitsubishi-](http://www.mitsubishi-motors.co.jp/DESIGN)

[motors.co.jp/DESIGN](http://www.mitsubishi-motors.co.jp/DESIGN)

iF Design Award 2002: Concepts

Registration deadline and

submission of all entries by

September 30th 2001.

T: +49 511 89 32400

F: +49 511 89 32401

W: www.ifdesign.de

E: heike.meier@ifdesign.de

Institute Dates

Design Awards

Book your seats as soon as

possible for the Awards Dinner

on Friday 19th October.

Places are limited to 150.

The cost is STG£50 or IRE£55.

This includes VAT.

E: idi@indigo.ie

Tour of W5

See inserted brochure

for details.

Friday October 19th, 3-5pm.

W: www.w5online.co.uk

IDI Charity Art Auction

This event happens on the

evening of the 3rd October. So

get painting, drawing, or what

ever! Works of art are to be no

bigger than 200x200 mm and

are to be framed. Wine and

munchies will be served.

The venue is to be announced.

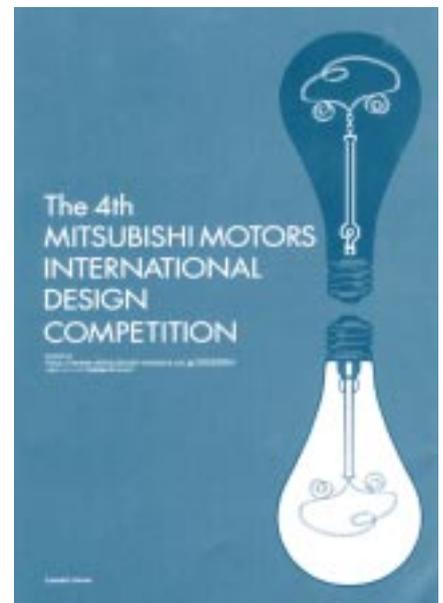
E: idi@indigo.ie

Council Meeting

This is scheduled for 5th

September at 6.30pm

at the RIAI.



**The deadline for the Mitsubishi design competition
is the 20th November 2001**

PUBLICATIONS

Design DK 2: 2001

The Design Centre Journal

E: design@ddc.dk

W: www.ddc.dk

In this issue of Design DK, one

of the themes is new and old

ways for designers to include

the users in the Design process.