

Kirk McCormack / President of the Institute of Designers in Ireland

Institute of Designers in Ireland: President's Address

The IDI, like many similar organisations, has been going through an existential crisis of sorts. It feels like this is a recent phenomenon but when we considered this more carefully, it has, in fact, been the case for 15 years possibly.

The symptoms of the crisis are the numerous questions both designers and professional representative bodies are faced with; why is the public more aware than ever of what good design is yet less willing to pay for it? Why, when you can buy and sell graphic design or market research on Fiverr.com, for a fiver, would a designer need accreditation or association with a third party organisation? Why would the consumer care what that organisation had to say? Why, when you can obtain an online design masterclass from someone like Frank Gehry, would you obtain a qualification from any institution, much less attend a conference or a weekend of continuing professional development (CPD) training? Why are we here and what is our purpose as an organisation? And ultimately, what value can we add for designers and the public? It is proving difficult to answer these questions in such an unpredictable context and, frankly, we don't yet have answers.

What we do have is a conviction to address the challenge and the kernel of an adjusted vision. What if the IDI was the focal point of design intelligence in Ireland? A barometer for understanding where the design industry is, and therefore where all its constituent industries are, at any moment in time. As a result of this, what if it could be a problem-solving brain trust and an early-warning system for both predefined hazards along with great opportunities? We think that such an organisation could collectively answer and address those existential questions and provide substantial value to its members and the consumers of design, well into the future.

So, how do we do that? Well, there are a number of issues we need to resolve to achieve this, but we think the vehicle for creating such a focal point is the IDI's Council. This is an elected group of 15 individuals that represent the core and emerging design disciplines in Ireland, from visual communications to TV and Film, along with certain perennial concerns in design such as education and research. The IDI Council marshals a series of member panels that carry out initiatives and maintain the standard of professional design practice and provide the tools and intelligence for achieving it. This new Council is the brain trust we seek and its structure is not in place. We need you, the designer reading this text, to help design and create it.

One of my main goals in the 12 months of my presidency is to forge this group and ensure its resilience over time. I have included my personal contact details below to allow you to be part of this process or to even challenge it. We look forward to hearing from you soon... you can contact me at president@idi-design.ie



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