

TWO MINDS



Initiated by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) in collaboration with Arts & Business, the Two Minds initiative is an ambitious art and architecture collaboration that has involved ten of the region's leading Architects' Practices who have teamed with ten individual artists from Ireland and abroad for a 6 month period.

The project was launched in PLACE in February. The projects that partners have selected to collaborate on are diverse. They range from the Maze Prison regeneration scheme to a Childcare Centre in Ardara, Co. Donegal, from a New School in Co. Leitrim to an Apartment development in Coleraine, and from an Irish Language Centre in Belfast to a Civic Centre in Gorey, Wexford. This is the first of a three part series of case studies that focuses on the Two Minds Initiative as it is developing. Three partnerships will be discussed in detail, namely, Lulu Quinn / Mackel & Doherty Architects, Gerry Murphy / Keys and Monaghan Architects and Lucy Turner / Hegarty Architects.

North Wiltshire based new media artist, Lulu Quinn is currently collaborating with Mackel and Doherty Architects on Phase 2 of Culturlann on the Falls Road in Belfast. Quinn trained extensively at Falmouth School of Art, Portsmouth Polytechnic, St Martins School of Art and the Slade School of Art. She has completed commissions in interactive sound and light for

Milton Keynes College, Storey Cultural Centre, Contact Theatre, Manchester and 'Rise and Fall' for Gateshead Riverside Sculpture Park. For Two Minds, Quinn has offered a number of possible sound and light interventions for the Culturlann development, two of which are discussed here.

These include potential for the foreground area of the building to have sound seats flanking either side of the entrance. The shape of these would echo the shape of the building. These could promote the Irish language and act as bilingual communicators. The glass sheltering the seats would act as screens for text to scroll, again a live-feed of radio broadcast. One could be reflecting live airplay and the other archived, fed from Radio Failte housed in Culturlann. These sound seats would open up the building to public participation and meet potential for the building to act as a broadcast vehicle. These sound seats could be seen as an artwork that illustrates the concept Two Minds and also represents two communities coming together, facing each other, past and present, looking to future, and providing a sense of welcome. Another possibility was for the interior of building to act as an innovative beacon. The whole building could be translated / transformed into a light box. White light, or gradations of tiered coloured light, reflecting the activity of the interior and staff within. For Quinn "The loading of cultural codes on colour is a good method of mixing it up and enables the ▶



▶challenging of perceptions." The architects and clients are currently exploring avenues of funding to further develop the viability for delivery of Quinn's concepts and will begin on one or more possibilities when this is finalised.

Keys and Monaghan have identified two education projects in the South of Ireland for Co. Down based photographic artist, Gerry Murphy to be involved in: a Primary School in Cavan and a Nursery School in Monaghan. These will act as sister initiatives and the arts offices in each county will be approached for further funding to ideally create permanent artwork(s) in each project. There is also potential to have an exhibition of childrens' photographic work produced under Murphy's guidance at the main local authority funded art venue in each county.

Murphy has met with the architects at their offices a number of times. He has also visited Cavan to conduct a site visit, take photographs and meet with the principal. He has conceived a



'project within a project,' and hopes to provide a disposable camera to each child attending the school so that they can take photographs based in the theme of springtime. This would also promote the sense of new growth of a building and a school. Murphy will workshop with each of the three classes. He would then select 10-12 images of children's work to be combined with his own and placed on permanent integrated display in the school, in an applied capacity as printed glass. Murphy demonstrated the potential for photography through sample artworks of three approaches to glass – sculptural boxes, printed glass shapes and layered glass panels that encapsulated a series of complimentary images.

Like Keys and Monaghan, Derry-based practice Hegarty Architects have selected a project in the Republic of Ireland for

the Two Minds Initiative. Bangor based printmaker Lucy Turner is currently artist in residence with the practice and is exploring potential ideas for a new school in Leitrim; Mohill Community College. According to Turner; "I work primarily with photographs; objects drawn through layers of colour and texture. I print and transfer these images onto reclaimed metal panels and found objects." For Two Minds, Hegarty and Turner are consulting extensively with the staff and students of the two existing schools that will merge to create the new school designed by Hegarty Architects.

Following presentation and workshops by Hegarty and Turner, the students are currently gathering objects on the theme of 'past, present and future of the schools.' These elements can be found objects, creative responses and important personal artefacts. They will ultimately be incorporated creatively into a composite artwork by Lucy Turner for the school. She has proposed three possible ideas for integrated artwork(s). These include a wall work, free standing piece or a pathway work to

link interior and exterior and this work may be finalised on the wall. Regardless of the final product, Hegarty and Turner will be producing a fully contextualised creative work in the new school that will have immediate relevance and leave a positive legacy in the new build. As collaborative partners they are taking advantage of knowing the end users (staff and students) of the school and involving them fully in the creative process.

After only two months all three partnerships are developing positive and innovative collaborative projects. Even in their infancy, these initiatives perfectly demonstrate the objectives of the RSUA Two Minds endeavour. ●

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