

Ireland at Venice is an initiative of Culture Ireland in partnership with the Arts Council. **Elizabeth Francis** has been appointed to act as Ireland's Commissioner for the Venice Biennale in 2012. Working on behalf of Culture Ireland and the Arts Council, the Commissioner and Curator will together deliver Ireland's national representation at the event.

### Commissioner

Born in Donegal, Elizabeth Francis Ireland studied architecture at University College Dublin and graduated with honours in 1993. She has studied and worked in Italy, France, Ireland and the UK. In 2010, she founded **atelier Francis** with the intention of cultivating cultural links between Ireland and Italy through architecture, art and research, the first important project being a collaborative sculpture exhibition of 14 Irish artists in Bologna. Prior to this she was partner in Mario Cucinella Architects (MCA) in Paris and was co-founder and Vice President of MCA in Bologna Italy.

### Background

Culture Ireland is committed to Irish participation in the Venice Architecture Biennale and is working closely with the Arts Council to increase opportunities and profile for Irish architects at this key international event. The Venice Architecture Biennale, as well as serving as a global showcase for architecture, offers the opportunity for Irish architects to engage with international audiences, influence future trends and explore their practice as an artform outside the constraints of the building industry. Ireland's previous participation in the Venice Architecture Biennale is listed below. It is now policy for the presentations to tour in Ireland.

### Curator

The role of the Curator is to originate, develop and implement the concept for the exhibition. The Curator must have the capacity to work with the Commissioner to deliver the concept to presentation stage. The Curator is the sole author of the idea and concept.

### Commissioner

The Commissioner will work closely with the Curator to support the delivery of the project and will lead on project management, management of budget (including fundraising), venue research, communications and press, liaison with the Biennale office as well as providing administrative support. The Commissioner will provide support on the creative process to deliver the project, as required by the Curator, and will be available to assist the Curator on the development of the idea to presentation stage.

### Theme and Venue

As the Director of the Biennale, David Chipperfield has only recently been appointed. A theme has not yet been set, the theme proposed by applicants should relate to general global issues of our time taking into account known interests of the Director as well as reflecting architectural thinking in Ireland. A venue has not yet been secured for the exhibition so the spatial specifications for the exhibition are not a condition of the curatorial concept sought at this stage.

## Budget

The key partners are likely to commit a budget of in the order of €220,000 (Culture Ireland's budget is yet to be confirmed and the Arts Council has awarded €70,000). While the 2010 budget of approx €300,000 may be used as a guideline, the funding climate may require that a lesser sum is available given the availability of funding from other public and private sources.

A financial management and reporting structure will be set up by the Commissioner in agreement with the selected Curator.

## Stages for Selection

There are 2 stages to the selection of a Curator:

Stage one: Open Submission as per attached Brief for Submission

Stage Two: Shortlist to be invited to interview by selection panel.

## Selection Panel

The selection panel will be comprised of a representative of Culture Ireland, the Arts Council, Elizabeth Francis, Commissioner and an external representative.

## BRIEF FOR SUBMISSION

### Stage One: Open Call

#### Definition of a Curator

The word "Curator" is used informally in this brief to designate the author(s) of the proposal. Proposals are invited from an individual, collective, or organisation with the knowledge and skill to develop a presentation proposal appropriate to the context of the Venice Biennale.

The Curator for the Irish presentation will be chosen on the strength of concept, organisational skills, ability work as part of a team and capacity to meet the requirements of the brief.

#### Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must have a proven record in the architectural and/or cultural sector and must fulfil the following criteria:

- Engaged with or representative of specific creative and curatorial practices.
- Detailed knowledge of current trends in architecture, nationally and internationally.
- Knowledge of and/or experience in exhibition making.
- Experience in project management and budget management and reporting.
- Organisational capacity and availability to meet time and travel commitments.
- Reporting and editorial skills for documentation and dissemination.
- Networking skills, international links desirable.

#### Submission Requirements stage 1

1) Applicants must submit no more than **2 x A4 pages** as a PDF that contain the following:

- An outline of the concept of the proposed presentation
- A description of the media through which your concept will be conveyed
- An outline of your approach to, and realisation of, the presentation
- A list of the proposed participants and projects
- An outline of how your concept will promote Irish architecture and culture within the platform of the Biennale and subsequent presentation in Ireland

This submission must be accompanied by all relevant biographies

Models or more elaborate proposals should not be submitted at this stage. You may send visuals but it is *not* essential.

2) The curatorial priorities must:

- Address current architectural thinking and issues relating to the built environment in Ireland
- Demonstrate an element of research and thought in your proposition.
- Address a theme that is both inspiring and analytical of our current culture in Ireland in the context of global circumstances.
- Ensure that your proposed presentation is stimulating, visually engaging and in a format suitable for an international and a home audience for the subsequent Irish tour.
- Take account of the need to engage the Irish architecture sector and broader audience with the Venice event.

### **Exhibition profile**

- Representations may be of a single practitioner, a practice or a group show.
- The practitioner/s to be represented must have been born in or be resident on the island of Ireland and should be generally of practitioners whose work has received recognition by peers in Ireland and/or abroad.
- The practitioners must not have had a solo exhibition at the Venice Biennale previously and traditional retrospectives and proposals for representational exhibitions will not be considered.

### **Terms and Conditions**

The Curator(s) may not be a participant in the exhibition.

The Curator must not have a commercial relationship with any participants in the proposed presentation.

No selection panel member may be a participant in the exhibition.

The selection panel's decision is final.

This call for submissions is open to Irish individuals, collective or organisations based in Ireland or abroad, or to those, of any nationality, resident in Ireland.

Submissions will not be returned.

No fees or expenses will be paid for either submission stage.

The receipt of all proposals will be acknowledged. Only the curators of short-listed proposals will be directly informed of the selection panel's decision.

There is no commitment to providing feedback on proposals that have not been short-listed by the selection panel.

### **Stage two: Interview**

From the information provided in stage one the selection panel will shortlist a number of potential curators who will be invited to present in person to the selection panel. This meeting is likely to be in late January.

The short-listed curators will be asked to submit a more detailed proposal and visual presentation based on the theme established in stage one. At this stage the curators must be in a position to:

- detail how they would deliver the exhibition
- demonstrate how it would engage in the Biennale context
- confirm the participants and projects involved
- address the practical considerations
- provide a budget breakdown based on funding available and fundraising suggestions.
- elaborate on the use of potential spaces, use of marketing and PR, and any proposed associated events during the Biennale.

### **Deadline for proposals**

5 pm on Wednesday 11 January 2012. Please email your pdf proposal to [christine.sisk@cultureireland.gov.ie](mailto:christine.sisk@cultureireland.gov.ie)