

IRISH MODERNISMS

**ARTISTS: JAMES ASHE, RACHAEL CAMPBELL-PALMER,
PHILLIP MCCRILLY, GRACE MCMURRAY, BEN WEIR
CURATORS: CATHERINE HEMELRYK & MATT RETALLICK**

SATURDAY 29 MAY—SATURDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2021



CCA DERRY~
LONDONDERRY

LIST OF WORKS

Gallery 1:

Ben Weir

Modern Convenience, 2021
Concrete blocks

Phillip McCrilly

*When I put my finger to the hole,
they've cut for a dimmer switch in a
wall of plaster stiffened with horsehair,
it seems I've scratched a two hundred
year-old itch*, 2021

Signature of saint, paint on wall

Death of the Banshee, 2021

Collected objects, ephemera, ferments

Gorse Wine (after John Oliver), 2021

Demijohns, 10 litres gorse wine

Gallery 2:

Clockwise

James Ashe

*Down Shoes, Banbridge, Abercorn
Service Station, Derry~Londonderry
Marlborough House, Craigavon, St.
Theresa's Church, Sion Mills*, 2021

Screen-print on paper

These prints are available as a CCA Edition,
ask at the CCA Office or shop online at

CCADLD.org/shop

Rachael Campbell-Palmer

Terra Firma, 2014–2021

Hand-cast concrete, weathered

Massives, 2021

Hand-cast concrete, plaster, polyester
resin

Gallery 3:

Clockwise

Rachael Campbell Palmer

Massives, 2021

Hand-cast concrete, plaster, polyester
resin

Grace McMurray

Inner Eye, 2020

Biro on satin ribbon, velvet ribbon,
frame

Nest, 2018

Headboard, satin ribbon, polycotton

Isometric Graphite Weave, 2020

Paper weave, pins

Portal, 2021

Glitter and velvet ribbon weave on
frame

Storage Space:

Phillip McCrilly

The Liberty Lad, 2021

Wood, Perspex, fluorescent light, cut
vinyl

Visit CCA's website for a sensory map of
the exhibition or ask at the CCA Office
CCADLD.org/exhibitions/irish-modernisms

IRISH MODERNISMS: LEGACIES OF MODERNISM IN THE NORTH

From architecture and infrastructure to everyday domestic design, the exhibition features the work of five artists from NI, who collectively highlight the complex and nuanced influence of Modernism in the north. From print and sculpture, textile and architecture, the artworks on display explore both the familiar and the obscure, offering a contemporary response to Irish Modernisms. At a time when many maligned Modernist buildings are demolished and swathes of architectural history are lost, there is a resurgence in the interest in the Modern and its influence amongst contemporary artists.

James Ashe's work frequently responds to architecture and the built environment. James fuses design, illustration and typography in this series of newly commissioned print editions of Modernist buildings spanning NI. The prints feature landmark Modernist buildings from James' home in the new-town of Craigavon as well as Banbridge, Sion Mills, and here in Derry~Londonderry. The buildings hint at the reach of Modernism in terms of building use: offices, a shoe factory, church and service station. The colour palette is inspired comes from James' research into Modernist design history including Sainsbury's own label branding from 1962-77 designed by Peter Dixon and posters from the Modernist magazine.

Rachael Campbell-Palmer's work addresses seriality and architecture with two bodies of work using concrete, plaster, and resin; materials that through their production and exhibition are situated between the industrial and the hand-crafted. The sculptures on display demonstrate an interest in the slippages of material surface, whether that is concrete quietly taken over by nature, or the dominant high polished finishes seen in our cityscapes. The interlocking lozenges of *Terra Firma* show the weathering that has set into the concrete across a seven-year period, contrasting with the pristine finish of *Massives*. This also acts as a nod to relics, archaeology and the decay of many Modernist building and the impact of time and care.

Grace McMurray also shares an interest in ideas of seriality, creating intricate textile works in hand-woven ribbon. Inspired by the geometry and patterns of Modernist art and design, the construction of her artworks may at first appear mechanical, but a closer inspection reveals the traces of the human hand. The tensions of the ribbons warp their stretched bases, creating conceptual and physical pulls between perfection and imperfection. Grace is interested in order and control, questioning gendered labour and its value. Her work refers to Irish textile traditions and takes inspiration from the architectural structures and patterns that surround her.

The objects exude order and purpose but it's a performative wellness to distract from a personal lack of control. Through this deeply personal work reflexive upon the spaces they occupy and exist in, Grace finds beauty in the underside, the exposed edges and the overlooked. As such, creating textile installations symbolizing the private sphere of the domestic. Such labour-intensive work unravels notions of social conditioning, gendered labour and its value.

Ben Weir has created a site-specific sculptural installation that transforms CCA's gallery into an abstracted domestic environment. Ben's practice encompasses architecture and his installations frequently reference his interest in the built-environment and the domestic. For Irish Modernisms Ben has used modular concrete blocks to build out from Gallery 1's hearth to create an extension of the counter top and host objects and archive materials selected by Phillip McCrilly.

Phillip McCrilly is interested in the tentative adoption of Irish Modernism, and how this has affected his own life. In the exhibition, he presents newly conceived artworks alongside examples of ongoing research, presented through ornaments, trinkets, and ephemera, and displayed on a sculptural installation by Ben Weir. The objects include images, badges, flyers and newspaper clippings about the 'new' motorways. Also present are foraged flowers from Shaw's Bridge, Belfast, known both as a cruising spot and for its 1960s modernist town plan. These are turned into Gorse Wine, left to ferment throughout the exhibition duration, and other flowers such as hawthorn and elder are made into vinegars.

There is also an imagined sign for the Carpenter Club, a queer social space in

Belfast, using modernist inspired typography. Phillip's research into Modernism includes the electrification of Ireland and the social politics that it entailed. Gallery 1 features a wall painting depicting the signature of St Eligius, Patron Saint of Electricians and CCA's gallery storage space is a temporary home for an illuminated sign. This work is inspired by a scandal of its time, when in 1957, furniture shop Hobson's of Moy, planned to erect Moy's first illuminated sign in the town but plans were rejected as it was deemed "too modern" for its time.

IRISH MODERNISMS PUBLIC PROGRAMME

Irish Modernisms Design Workshop with Laura Nelson

Thursday 15 July 2021, 6-8pm

Working alongside Laura in an online workshop, participants will learn how to create their own piece of type, a Clarendon 'M'. This typeface is used on the front of shops and high street businesses across Ireland and the UK, a stalwart of the Modernist era and central font for sign painters.

Booking required via [CCADLD.org/shop](https://ccadld.org/shop).

Irish Modernisms: Seminars

June–August 2021

Join artists, architects, curators and researchers for a series of conversation-based sessions exploring modernism in NI and global contexts. This seminar series has been made possible through a bursary award from the British Art Network.

Wednesday 23 June, 13.00–14:30, Session 1: Anna Liesching will talk on Mainie Jellett and Fiona Barber on Deborah Brown, looking at their legacies within Irish modernism.

Wednesday 14 July, 13:00 –14:30, Session 2: Irish Modernisms – a discussion with the artists of the CCA Derry-Londonderry exhibition Irish Modernisms.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS & CURATORS

James Ashe (b. 1993) lives and works in Craigavon. James is currently featured in the exhibition *Collecting the Past/Making the Future: Marking Centenaries 2021* at Ulster Museum, and his other exhibitions and projects include *Belfast Built Heritage* at Framework, Belfast (2020), and *Signboard* at The Black Box, Belfast (2020).

halfcut.net

@jamesashestudio

Rachael Campbell-Palmer (b. 1982) lives and works in Belfast. Her exhibitions include *TULCA 2016: The Headless City*, Galway, *Methods for Egress* at QSS Gallery, Belfast (2016), *Periodical Review #5* at NCAD Gallery, Dublin (2015), and *TERRA FIRMA* at PS Squared, Belfast (2014).

rachael-campbellpalmer.squarespace.com

@nothingconcrete

Grace McMurray (b. 1985) is based between Rathfriland and Belfast and is a member of the 2021 Turner Prize nominated Array Collective, Belfast. Her exhibitions include *Expanded*

Studio Project at Primary, Nottingham (2016), and *Woven Polyhedra* at University of Ulster, Belfast (2018).

gracemcmurray.com

@graciemcm

Ben Weir (b. 1991) is based in the Netherlands and NI. He is a Research Associate at CCA Derry~Londonderry, and his exhibitions include *Casa Vilaró: A Caress and a Blow* at Barcelona Pavilion, Barcelona (2020), *Artists in Architecture: Re-Activating Modern European Heritage* at BOZAR, Brussels (2019), and *Imagine!* Belfast's Festival of Ideas and Politics, Belfast (2018).

benweir.eu

@benweir.arch

Phillip McCrilly (b. 1988) was born in Moy and based in Belfast. Phillip is a member of FRUIT SHOP collective and participant in the Freelands Foundation Programme 2021–23. His exhibitions and projects include *Dance Food* (with Fiona Hallinan) at Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2017), and *Kombucha Bar* at Catalyst Arts, Belfast (2019).

f-r-u-i-t-s-h-o-p.com

@phillipmccrilly

Catherine Hemelryk (b. 1978) was born in Rugby and has been Director at the CCA Derry~Londonderry since 2018. She has previously been Curator at CAC Vilnius, Artistic Director at NN, Northampton. She is a guest lecturer, commissioner and has been guest curator and in residence across Europe including GeoAIR Tbilisi, Sea Foundation Tillburg and Wysing Arts Centre. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Matt Retallick (b. 1987) is a curator based in Liverpool. He is an Irish citizen, and runs the Instagram @modernist.ie, an archive of everyday Irish design modernism. He is an honorary lifetime member of The Modernist Society, and is studying for an art history PhD at Manchester School of Art. Matt is Associate Curator of PINK, Manchester.
@matt_retallick

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Cover image: Grace McMurray, *Nest* (2018), Headboard, Satin Ribbon weave, Polycotton



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