

**'Our Great National Temple of
ART AND INDUSTRY'
THE
1853**



**GREAT INDUSTRIAL
EXHIBITION
DUBLIN**



**A Joint Initiative of The Royal Irish Academy,
The Royal Dublin Society And The National Gallery Of Ireland**

**PROGRAMME
23RD–24TH November 2023**



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meia
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Thursday, 23RD November 2023

National Gallery of Ireland Plenary Session

17:45

Registration

18:00 – 19:00

PUBLIC LECTURE: Dr Tristram Hunt, Director, Victoria and Albert Museum.
‘Spectacular gestures’: Great Exhibitions and Great Museums in London and Dublin

Chair: Dr Caroline Campbell, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland

19:00 – 19:30

Q&A

Friday, 24TH November 2023

Royal Irish Academy Conference

08:30 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 09:30

FORMAL OPENING: Welcome from Imelda Maher, Senior Vice President of the Royal Irish Academy, and Hilary Hough, Vice President of the RDS

09:30 – 11:00

SESSION 1: Exhibition Organisation

Chair: Philip Cottrell, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College Dublin

09:30 – 09:50

Cora McDonagh, Project Researcher for the RDS Library and Archives and PhD candidate at Maynooth University.

‘Art & Industry: The role of the RDS in the organisation of the Dublin Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853.’

09:50 – 10:10

Andrew Tierney, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College Dublin. **‘The design and architecture of the exhibition pavilion.’**

10:10 – 10:30

Lynda Mulvin, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College Dublin. **‘Dublin Exhibition 1853: marketing souvenirs and ephemera.’**

10:30 – 10:50

Discussion

10:50 – 11:15

Tea and coffee break

11:15 – 13:00

SESSION 2: Industry

Chair: Cathal O’Donoghue, Professor of Public and Social Policy, University of Galway



11:30 – 12:15

Keynote 1

Liam Kennedy, Emeritus Professor of History, Queen's University Belfast. **'A Great Industrial Exhibition in the Shadow of a Great Famine.'**

12:15 – 12:35

Frank Barry, Professor of International Business & Economic Development, Trinity College Dublin. **'Manufacturing companies in Ireland in 1853.'**

12:35 – 12:55

Stephanie Rains, Maynooth University. **'The 1853 Exhibition and the rise of consumer culture in nineteenth-century Ireland.'**

12:55 – 13:15

Discussion

13:15 – 14:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15:45

SESSION 3: Empire, Art and Legacy I

Chair: Finola O'Kane-Crimmins, School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy, University College Dublin.

14:00 – 14:45

Keynote 2

Fintan Cullen, Professor Emeritus in the History of Art, University of Nottingham. **'The 1853 Exhibition: The Irish nation and the British empire, display and legacy.'**

14:45 – 15:05

Paula Murphy, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College Dublin. **'Sculpture at the 1853 Exhibition.'**

15:05 – 15:25

Philip McEvansoneya, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College, Dublin. **'1853 paintings by schools: the Corrs and other Belgians.'**

15:25 – 15:40

Discussion

15:40 – 16:05

Tea and coffee break

16:05 – 18:00

SESSION 4: Empire, Art and Legacy II

Chair: Lisa Godson, National College of Art and Design

16:05 – 16:50

Keynote 3

Elizabeth Crooke, Professor of Museum and Heritage Studies, Ulster University. **'Arising from her ashes': Ireland, Ambition and the Great Industrial Exhibition Dublin 1853.**

16:50 – 17:10

Orla Fitzpatrick, Ireland's Border Culture Research Fellow at the Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin. **'A truthfulness that completely defies competition': photography, collections and the Great Exhibition of 1853.**

17:10 – 17:30

Muireann Charleton, Design Lecturer, Atlantic Technological University Sligo. **'Great exhibitions in Ireland and their influence on Irish crafts and design.'**

17:30 – 17:40

Discussion

17:40 – 18:00

Closing Remarks – Raghnaill Ó Floinn, RIA Historical Studies Committee

18:00 – 19:30

Reception: Food and Drinks

Associated Events and Activities

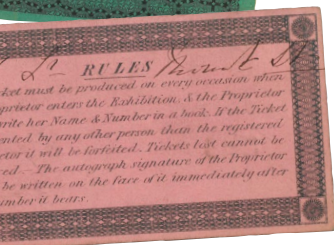
Art & Industry: The role of the RDS in the organisation of the Dublin 'Great Industrial Exhibition, 1853'

This exhibition explores the role of the RDS in the preparation and running of this great event. It highlights how previous experience in promoting art and industry aided the RDS in preparing for this exhibition. It looks at William Dargan's role in financing and planning the exhibition building and his interactions with the Committee of Manufactures as they also prepared for the opening of the exhibition. It examines the local and international exhibits of art and industry and the involvement of the RDS School of Design with local manufactures. The antiquities collection from the Royal Irish Academy is highlighted along with contributions

of ancient Indian and Chinese artefacts from private collectors. The exhibition concludes with the role of the RDS in establishment of the National Gallery of Ireland, which was seen as one of the greatest legacies from the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853.

The exhibition is open to the public in the RDS Library & Archives from Friday 3 November 2023 to Friday 15 December 2023 during opening hours (10.00am to 5.00 pm), and at the RIA Library from Wednesday, 8th November until Thursday, 21st December.

The exhibition is not open on Saturdays and Sundays.



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

SESSION I EXHIBITION ORGANISATION

Cora McDonagh, Project Researcher for the RDS Library and Archives and PhD candidate at Maynooth University

Title: Art & Industry: The role of the RDS in the organisation of the Dublin Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853

Abstract:

This paper will explore the role of the RDS in the organisation of the 1853 Great Industrial Exhibition. Through an examination of the Committee of Manufactures records from June 1852, it will highlight how quickly plans were in motion for designing the building and securing exhibits of art and industry. It will trace negotiations between the sole financier of the exhibition, William Dargan, and the various RDS committees as they prepared for the opening of the exhibition. Finally, it will examine the lectures and demonstrations held during the exhibition by the RDS, as they supported the promotion of Irish industry

Andrew Tierney, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College Dublin

Title: The design and architecture of the exhibition pavilion

Abstract:

Its central hall hailed as ‘the finest apartment ever erected’, the Dublin exhibition building was one of the great spectacles of its time. Constructed with remarkable speed and efficiency, John Benson’s laminated timber ribs created a soaring roof of round arches, projecting into magnificent bows at each end, which astonished visitors to the exhibition. This paper examines the surviving sources for the building’s architecture and attempts to visualize some of its key features, while also discussing the technical challenges inherent in its design. Raised under the glare of press scrutiny, the building’s execution was itself a spectacle, involving an extensive workforce and the rapid fabrication of great quantities of wood, iron, and glass.

Lynda Mulvin, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College Dublin.

Title: ‘Dublin Exhibition 1853: marketing souvenirs and ephemera.’

Abstract:

The Great Industrial Exhibition was situated in Leinster House, Dublin, 12 May-31 October 1853. Organised to promote industrial collaboration and expand trade connections from Ireland at the crossroads of art and design. The Expositor newspaper, published weekly onsite, campaigned and advertised events for the Exhibition. Souvenir makers perfected the art of serial production to supply Great Exhibitions, London 1851 & Dublin 1853, as sources for expanding markets. A black papier mâché box by Jennens & Betteridge, Makers to the Queen, is

at the centre of this contribution, which examines commemorative medals, souvenirs and ephemera advocating the Irish Industrial Exhibition 1853 and commodity culture.

SESSION 2 INDUSTRY

KEYNOTE 1: Liam Kennedy, Emeritus Professor of History, Queen's University Belfast

Title: A Great Industrial Exhibition in the Shadow of a Great Famine.

Abstract:

There is something of a shock value to the timing of the 1853 Great Industrial Exhibition in Dublin. The famine of the later 1840s had resulted in the abnormal death of about one million women, men and children, while emigration had denuded Ireland of another one million inhabitants. Some parts of the country, particularly in the West of Ireland, had barely begun to recover from the ravages of that catastrophe.

So why an industrial exhibition, great or otherwise, against this backdrop? Might one think of the venture as a giant folly, in the sense of structures, temples, towers and other decorative creations that adorned landed estates in England and Ireland in the period? Or, more constructively, might the holding of the exhibition be seen as a defiant cry against the forces of nature and poverty, with the longer-term vision of creating a more prosperous future for Ireland and its peoples?

Modelled on the Great Exhibition in London two years earlier, the Dublin Exhibition sought to showcase examples of Irish industry and arts, while also securing exhibits from other countries. The comparison is not a favourable one, yet the thrust of this paper is that the Dublin Exhibition tells us much about Irish society at the time, its class nature, its anxieties and its aspirations.

Frank Barry, Professor of International Business & Economic Development, Trinity College Dublin.

Title: Manufacturing companies in Ireland in 1853.

Abstract:

The Industrial Revolution was associated with the rise and spread of the factory system, the decline of cottage industries and the emergence of new types of firms, with certain industries affected more rapidly and more dramatically than others. The consequences for much of Ulster and the rest of Ireland proved very different. The present paper seeks to identify the largest manufacturing firms of recent and earlier vintages in the three southern provinces at the time of the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853.

Stephanie Rains, Department of Media Studies, Maynooth University

Title: The 1853 Exhibition and the rise of consumer culture in nineteenth century Ireland.

Abstract:

This paper will discuss the ways in which the 1853 Exhibition influenced and was influenced by the newly established department stores in Dublin. It will argue that although one of the central aims of the Exhibition was to stimulate industrial production in Ireland, it was actually more influential in encouraging consumption. In this sense, the 1853 Exhibition – held in the same year that the city’s first purpose-built department store opened on Sackville Street – contributed to the development of consumer culture in Ireland, by providing remarkably similar architectural and cultural spaces in which the middle-classes could admire mass-produced goods.

SESSION 3 EMPIRE, ART AND LEGACY I

KEYNOTE 2: Fintan Cullen, Professor Emeritus in the History of Art, University of Nottingham

Title: The Irish nation and the British Empire: display at the 1853 Exhibition

Abstract:

The central theme of this paper is an examination of the tensions between a growing Irish nationalism and seeing the 1853 Exhibition as a celebration of Ireland’s place in the British Empire. Beginning with a description of what one saw on visiting the Exhibition on Leinster Lawn: from the abundance of flags, banners, statuary, portraiture and music, the talk will go on to explore the juxtapositions of portraits of Irish personalities such as Daniel O’Connell and innumerable images of royalty. The positive hopes and expectations placed on the Exhibition will be compared with the imperial legacy of the whole affair.

Paula Murphy, School of Art History and Cultural Policy, University College Dublin

Title: Sculpture at the 1853 Exhibition

Abstract:

Sculpture was a feature of the Dublin Exhibition of 1853. Included in the Fine Art Court along with painting, it was also distributed throughout the exhibition building, where the whiteness of the marble or plaster made the sculptures especially visible. A contemporary art journal noted that, while work by the most renowned artists in Europe was included in the exhibition, ‘the leading and most meritorious of the sculptors are Irishmen’. As might be expected, an essay on Sculpture in the Exhibition catalogue came to the same conclusion. Highlighting Belfast sculptor Patrick MacDowell’s Eve, which had a place of honour in the Exhibition Hall, and contrasting it with the more widely famous Greek Slave by American sculptor Hiram Powers (shown in copy at the exhibition), the essay gave lengthy consideration to questioning the propriety of the nude

figure in modern art. This paper will explore the range of sculpture at the exhibition and what, if any, was its impact.

Bio: Paula Murphy is an Emeritus Professor in UCD Art History and Cultural Policy. She has published widely on Irish sculpture. Her book publications include *Nineteenth-Century Irish Sculpture, Native Genius Reaffirmed* (Yale, 2010) and *Sculpture 1600-2000, vol. 3 Art and Architecture of Ireland* (RIA & Yale, 2014). She was awarded an RHA Gold Medal in 2015. She held a Terra Foundation Senior Fellowship at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2016/17 and a Senior Fellowship at the Capitol Historical Society in 2017.

Philip McEvansoneya, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College,

Dublin

Title: Corrs, Geefs and Other Belgians

Abstract:

It is well known that the inclusion of a large section devoted to a loan exhibition of paintings in the 1853 exhibition was an influential innovation in international industrial exhibitions. The painting exhibition had a great effect on the movement to found a national gallery in Ireland. I would like to consider some of the content of the exhibition, with particular reference to Belgium, from which country a significant contribution came at exactly the time that the modern Belgian school of painting was coming into its own.

The artistic connections between Ireland and Belgium, especially Antwerp, in the late nineteenth century have long been recognized. My aim is to sketch the artistic links between Ireland and Belgium before that later phase, and to argue that familiarity with contemporary Belgian art as exhibited in Ireland in and around 1853 was a fundamentally important factor in establishing those links. The possibility is raised that (in)direct personal influence from people of Irish descent and expatriates in Belgium may have been a persuasive factor.

SESSION 4 EMPIRE, ART AND LEGACY II

KEYNOTE 3: Elizabeth Crooke, Professor of Museum and Heritage Studies, University of Ulster

Title: “Arising from her ashes”: Ireland, Ambition and the Great Industrial Exhibition Dublin 1853

Abstract:

In June 1853 Thomas Connolly, Bishop of St Johns New Brunswick wrote enthusiastically about the Art and Industrial exhibition in Dublin. He described a vision of Ireland ‘arising from her ashes’, a moment when the visitor could imagine a new Ireland. This paper explores exhibitions and museums as places of reinvention: reimagining the nation and elevating its people. Using Irish newspaper sources, I will explore how the Art and Industrial exhibition was framed as a place to forge a new Ireland after the devastation of the famine and reflect upon how we continue to see museums as places of transformation.

Orla Fitzpatrick, Ireland’s Border Culture Research Fellow at the Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin

Title: 'A truthfulness that completely defies competition,': photography, collections and the Great Exhibition of 1853

Abstract:

This paper will examine the role played by photography in recording the 1853 Great Industrial exhibition, tracing its subsequent use by Irish museums. Photography was heralded by W.K. Sullivan in John Sproule’s guide to the exhibition as ‘a boon to the antiquary,’ noting that ‘everything may be copied with a truthfulness that completely defies competition.’* The showcasing of the medium, which as only fourteen years’ old, undoubtedly paved the way for its subsequent adoption by institutions. Less than a year later, in March 1854, at a meeting of the Academy, Rev. Charles Graves displayed calotype photographs of Irish antiquities by Edward King Tension (an exhibitor in 1853) and also announced that the Academy had purchased a camera with the intention of creating illustrated catalogues.

*W.K. Sullivan, ‘Photography’ in *The Industrial Exhibition of 1853: A Detailed Catalogue*, Dublin: James McGlashan, 1854, p. 234.

Muireann Charleton, Design Lecturer, Atlantic University, Sligo

Title: Great exhibitions in Ireland and their influence on Irish crafts and design.

Abstract:

Exhibitions of Irish design are central to our understanding of the history of Irish design. Notions of improving taste and generating design awareness among the Irish offers a continuity in the period since the *Great Industrial Exhibition* of 1853. Through design exhibitions there was a desire to foster value in the economic opportunity of Irish made goods and to utilise traditional materials and processes. This paper explores a tension between displaying existing traditional forms of hand-crafted making and the push for industrial progress in exhibitions of Irish industry from the 1853 *Great Industrial Exhibition* to the present day.