

THE Long Room HUB

The Discourse of Irish Architecture, 1945 – 1990. A Social and Cultural History of the Role and Reception of Architecture in Post-War Ireland.

PhD research conducted through the Department of History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College Dublin

Making theoretical and practical sense of the world is best accomplished by combining historical, social and spatial perspectives
Edward W. Soja; ThirdSpace

What:

- In the first instance this thesis broadly examines and situates the world of architectural production in Ireland during the period from post-World War II to the early 1990's.
- It then seeks to interpret both the role and reception of architecture in Irish society at this time.

Why:

- A hermeneutic reading of Irish architecture during the post "Emergency" period has been heretofore avoided by academic research.

How:

- The research is primarily guided by examples of architectural excellence by the leading practices during the said period; such examples are paradigmatic and useful in understanding the Irish situation in terms of stylistic, technological and theoretical trends internationally.
- However, this thesis seeks to unpick and then present the less defined image of post-War Irish architecture so it equally draws upon research gained through interviews with key figures from the architectural schools and from practice (1945 - present-day), and from other representative aspects of the profession such as contemporary journals and award schemes.
- Alongside isolating critical moments in the history of recent architecture in Ireland, the thesis' underlying objective is to explore architecture as a medium, as a discourse, in Irish culture. How is architecture talked about, how is architecture used?
- The thesis adopts both a thematic and a typological framework. It is divided into three categories so as to interpret both role and reception within society: (1) 'professional', (the Institute (RIAI), the Association (AAI), the OPW, the schools (UCD + Bolton Street), the practices); (2) 'client', (the church, the government, the corporate world); (3) 'amateur', (the user - the woman on the street, the letter-to-the-editor-writer).

Notes:

While there has not been a comprehensive history of contemporary architecture in Ireland from 1950 – present-day, this writer acknowledges the small assortment of excellent anthologies of essays combined with catalogues of selected twentieth century buildings, namely: Becker, Annette, Olley, John et al, Twentieth Century Architecture. Ireland, (Prestel: Munich, 1997); O'Laoire, Sean et al., Building on the Edge of Europe: A Survey of Contemporary Architecture in Ireland Embracing History, Town and Country, (R.I.A.I., 1996); Graby, John (ed.), 150 Years of Architecture in Ireland, (R.I.A.I., 1989) The Irish Builder; RIAI Year-Book; Plan; The Builder; Architectural Survey; Building Survey; Green Book. Annual award schemes such as the RIAI Gold Medal and the AAI New Irish Architecture awards (1986 – ongoing).



Exploring The Discourse of Irish Architecture, 1945 - 1990

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Exploring the Human Condition