

Irish Design 2015: A Catalyst for Innovation

2015 has seen Irish design in almost every form being showcased in Ireland and around the world. The idea of designating a year to celebrating and promoting Irish design emerged from the Global Irish Economic Forum in 2013. The Government backed this proposal, supporting a comprehensive programme of national and international events and activities throughout 2015. The aims of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) are to promote Ireland's dynamic design sector, make Irish businesses more competitive in foreign markets and create jobs at home. ID2015 is being convened by the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI), in collaboration with partner organisations, on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Enterprise Ireland.



Alex Milton

The impacts of the initiative in promoting Irish design capability nationally and internationally and in bringing visibility to Ireland's dynamic design businesses are already being seen.

As we enter the final quarter of the year, the ID2015 programme has showcased over 2000 designers, studios and companies nationally at core exhibitions and other promotional events and over 260 at exhibitions and trade fairs internationally, generating leads with significant potential for exports and job creation. Over 6300 designers and 1600 business professionals have received training, with an expected national audience of over 400,000 and international audience of over 1,000,000 for our exhibitions and events. Furthermore, 40 Irish companies have been supported through ID2015's International Trade Fund, in association with Enterprise Ireland and other agencies, to participate in 50 other international trade events, generating new market penetration and export opportunities and over €6.4 million in sales to date.

Reflecting ID2015's reach in engaging the public, the design community and businesses, it is very positive to see that a total of 200 design-focused promotions, across multiple design disciplines, have been approved for funding through ID2015's Design Innovation Fund and 15 new Design Networks have been established, bringing designers, design organisations and design users to work together. Additionally, 30 Irish embassies around the world are engaging

with the ID2015 programme by hosting exhibitions and other events promoting Ireland's design sector, and through a partnership with DAA over 23 million travellers will pass through Dublin Airport and view the Design Island photographic exhibition. The press coverage at home and abroad has been extensive, and the initiative has generated over €10million in PR value.

At home we have been particularly focused on raising awareness of the importance of design to commercial success and economic growth, highlighting how it adds value to a product and drives innovation - European research demonstrates that every €1 invested in design by a business generates over €20 in increased revenues and a €4 increase in net operating profit. Our aim is to cause a shift in business culture nationwide that will see companies on the island of Ireland embracing design principles as a cornerstone of their organisations.

At the same time, building on the international reputation of Irish designers through an extensive programme of international exhibitions and trade missions has helped grow sales and export opportunities abroad. In particular, the business model of showcasing Irish design through a group exhibition is proving successful in developing international trade and establishing strategic partnerships. We are seeing real commercial opportunities emerging following our presence at key international events such as Milan Design Week, London Fashion Week, London Festival

of Architecture, Maison et Objet, Chicago Architecture Biennale and NYCxDesign. Collaboration with over 80 public and private partners, both here in Ireland and abroad, has been central to the planning and delivery of our programme in order to ensure a legacy from this year. I would like to express sincere thanks to all our stakeholders and partner organisations for their unwavering support to date and look forward to continued collaboration for the remainder of year and into the future. Cultural partnerships have been established with leading international design agencies and institutions including the Design Museum London, Chicago Design Museum, Vitra Design Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum, leading to high profile installations such as The Ogham Wall landmark installation by Grafton Architects and Graphic Relief at the V&A as part of the London Design Festival.

Looking beyond our extensive programme of events and activities, we need to put the foundations in place for the ongoing development of the design sector in Ireland. Pilot projects such as the Design 4 Growth design voucher scheme are helping promote the use of design in SME's and laying the foundation for a design led future. With continued support and investment in design and working with our partners, particularly Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office network, ID2015 has the potential to act as a catalyst for significant change in Ireland's competitiveness in the global marketplace and in creating employment opportunities over the years to come.

Design is for everyone. It influences how we interact with each other and improves our lives through intuitive products, sustainable solutions to environmental challenges, user-friendly and efficient public services, better home and work environments, optimised cities, and much more. Irish Design 2015 is about harnessing the power of design and working to support the island of Ireland in making design matter.

The ID2015 programme embraces the full range of design disciplines, building upon our rich craft tradition and technological expertise to showcase a fusion of the old and new. During this year, ID2015 is working with businesses, schools and universities to bring design thinking into the office, factory, classroom and lecture hall with a series of initiatives that will create a significant and lasting legacy.

Through ID2015, we are fostering innovation in business and public services, and encouraging debate into what design was, is and can be. We are creating toolkits, writing case studies and piloting projects that aim to provide people with the advice, practical tools and knowledge to achieve positive changes in business, government and local communities through design.

Most importantly, we are getting tangible results. This year Irish designers are clearly demonstrating that design can make a real difference, by developing products, spaces and services as useful, impactful and meaningful as they are beautiful.

ID2015 marks a pivotal chapter in Irish design, helping to inspire, inform and develop Ireland's design capacity and culture. The initiative has the power to create a future where designers make opportunities, and businesses have the opportunity to make it.


 The logo for ID 2015, featuring the letters 'ID' in a large, bold, blue font, with the year '2015' below it in a similar blue font. The '2' and '0' are stylized, with the '0' having a small square at the top right corner.