

Report on the Kevin Street Library Per Cent for Art Commission

1. Introduction

This public art commission was initiated in response to the allocation of funding by the Department of the Environment under the Per Cent for Art Scheme as part of the refurbishment of the historic public library on Kevin's Street, Dublin 2. The Public Art Manager was asked by City Libraries and Archives to manage the process.

2. Artform

Site visits were undertaken with the architects from Dublin City Council overseeing the refurbishment of the building and also staff from the Library Service. Having discussed various approaches to the public art commission, the Library Service requested that the commission would be for a permanent visual artwork which would be created as a response to the context of the library.

3. Working Group

A working group to liaise with issues relating to the commission was formed and included the Public Art Manager, Librarian and Architects working on the Library.

4. Selection Process

In view of the fact that the budget for the commission was €17,400 it was considered and agreed that an open call was not the most effective way of identifying an artist for the commission and a limited competition was proposed. In order to get a more open perspective on potential artists, two independent curators Mary Cremin and Aoife Tunney were invited to nominate artists in addition to artists suggested within the arts office. The curators were given a site visit to the Library conducted by the architect as well as the draft brief for artists.

5. The Long-List

The long-list of artist was; Maud Cotter, Aleana Egan, Caoimhe Kilfeather, Barbara Knezevic, Katherine Lambe, Ruth E. Lyons, Niamh McCann, Maria McKinney, Janet Mullarney, Isabel Nolan, Alan Phelan, Walker and Walker.

6. The Short-List

A selection panel was appointed to short-list five artists from the long-list and to nominate two artists as reserves in case one of the short-listed artists declined the invitation. The selection panel was Sheena Barrett (Assistant Arts Officer) Paul Fusco, (DCC Librarian) Dervilla Masterson (DCC Architect) Ruairí Ó Cuív (Public Art Manager) and Aoife Ruane (Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda). The short-listed artists were: Caoimhe Kilfeather, Ruth E. Lyons, Janet Mullarney, Isabel Nolan and Alan Phelan with Maud Cotter and Maria McKinney as reserves. Each artist was offered a fee of €500 for making a proposal.

7. Final Selection

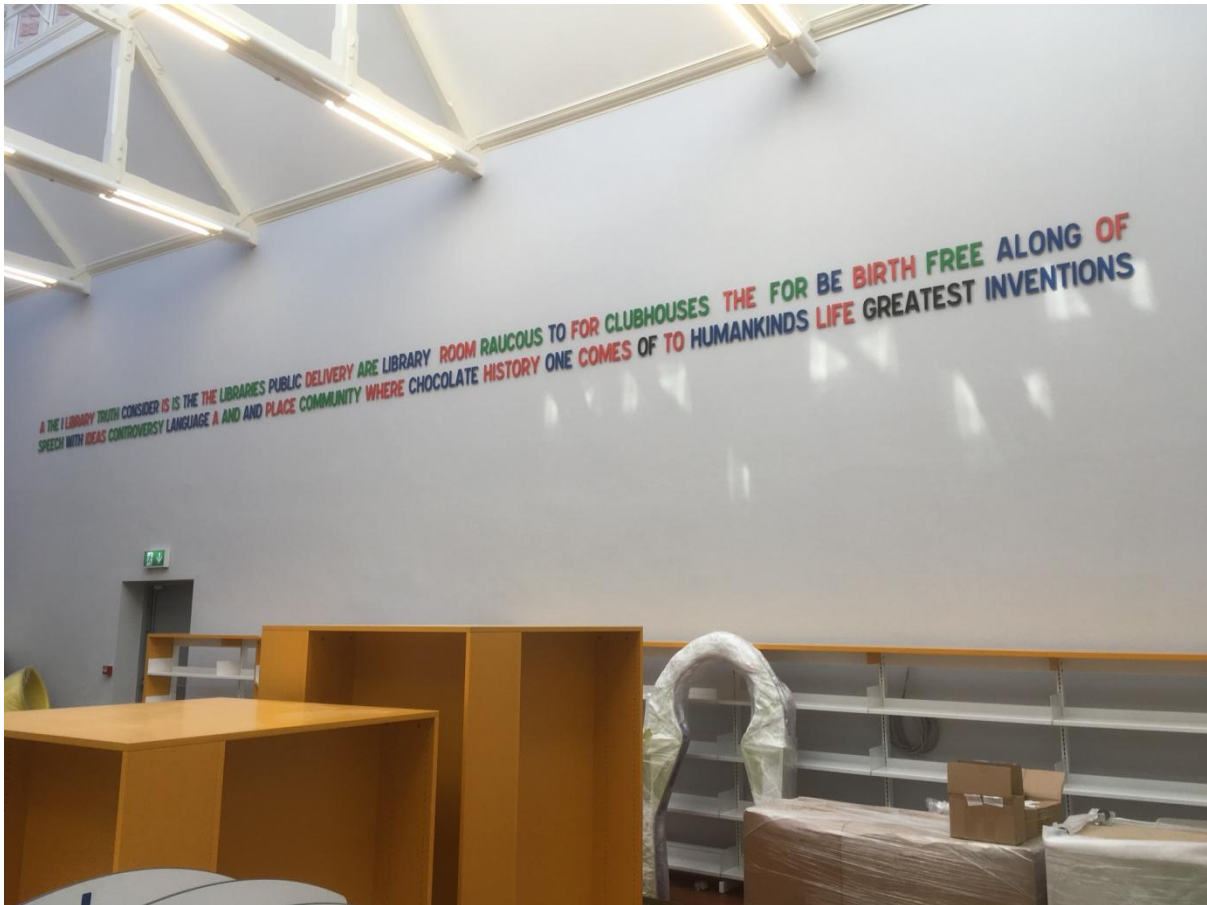
The final selection panel was Ruth Carroll (Curator in the RHA) Liz Coman (Assistant Arts Officer) Paul Fusco, (DCC Librarian) Dervilla Masterson (DCC Architect) Ruairí Ó Cuív (Public Art Manager). After detailed consideration of the proposals, Alan Phelan's proposal was selected for the excellence of the artwork, its direct connection to the library and an interest in working with library staff in the final development of the artwork. His proposal was for a text based sculpture using powdered coated aluminium letters. The piece uses quotes about libraries jumbled up in colour sequences. The results are lines of seemingly random words which can actually be read by following the same colours to form short quotations about libraries. Staff from the Library Service were invited to suggest some of the quotations.

8. Fabrication and Installation

Fabrication of the artwork took place in 2017 and the installation in the library was undertaken in January 2018. The fit-out of the library is currently underway and the artwork will be formally launched at the time of the official re-opening of the Library.

9. Image

Below is an image of the artwork in the rear room of the Library. A professional photographer will be engaged to fully document the artwork when the fit out of the library is complete.



Ruairí Ó Cuív
Public Art Manager
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