

**To the Chairman and Members of
the South East Area Committee**

SCULPTURE DUBLIN
Update Report for South East Area Committee Meeting
March 2021

1. ABOUT SCULPTURE DUBLIN

Sculpture Dublin aims to raise awareness of the Dublin's sculptural heritage and to create a series of ambitious new sculptures in parks and public spaces city-wide. It is a Dublin City Council initiative developed by Parks and Landscape Services and the Arts Office and supported by the Hugh Lane Gallery. Permanent sculptures are being commissioned in Ballyfermot, Finglas, Raheny, Terenure and Smithfield Square Lower and a temporary artwork is being commissioned for the O'Connell Plinth at City Hall.

2. BUSHY PARK COMMISSION

Bushy Park is a large suburban park situated between the mature residential suburbs of Terenure, Templeogue and Rathfarnham. Through a two-stage commissioning process, artists were asked to explore Bushy Park, its assorted terrains and contemporary uses, and identify a space within the park that resonates and provokes a sensitive and considered aesthetic response. Full details of the commissioning process are included in the [Commission Brief](#).

The Selection Panel for Bushy Park included:

- Councillor Anne Feeney (South East Area public representative)
- Anne Talbot (Terenure/Templeogue/Rathfarnham local community representative)
- Michael Noonan (representative of DCC Parks and Landscape Services)
- Liz Coman (representative of the City Arts Office)
- Noel Kelly (representative of Sculpture Dublin Steering Group)
- Paula Murphy (external art expert in place of Hugh Lane Gallery representative)
- Eilís O'Connell (external art expert)

Non-voting Chair: Ruairí Ó Cuív (DCC Public Art Officer)

The Selection Panel was convened on 7 October 2020 to assess Stage One submissions and it agreed to short-list proposals by the following artists: David Beattie, Rachel Joynt, Corban Walker and Tanad Williams. Following submission of Stage Two proposals, the panel was convened again on 8 December 2020 and it agreed Corban Walker's proposal as the preferred submission pending resolution of a number of technical queries (discussions with the artist are ongoing).

3. THE O'CONNELL PLINTH COMMISSION

The O'Connell Plinth was originally constructed to support the monumental statue of Daniel O'Connell by John Hogan, that is now located in the Rotunda in City Hall. The plinth is located at street level in a paved area leading to the main entrance of City Hall. This commission invited artists to respond to a historical plinth that has stood empty in the centre of Dublin city for over 150 years. Commissioning a new artwork for the O'Connell Plinth is an opportunity to restore to it its original function: the public display of sculpture.

Artists were invited through a two-stage open competition to imagine a new, temporary sculpture for the O'Connell Plinth. Full details of the commissioning process are included in the [Commission Brief](#).

The Selection Panel for the O'Connell Plinth included:

- Councillor Donna Cooney (City Councillor)
- Councillor Mannix Flynn (City Councillor)
- Charles Duggan (DCC Heritage Officer)
- Gráinne Kelly (representative of DCC Culture Recreation and Economic Services)
- Sheena Barrett (representative of the City Arts Office)
- Paula Murphy (representative of Sculpture Dublin Steering Group)
- Barbara Dawson (representative of the Hugh Lane Gallery)
- Grace Weir (external art expert)

Non-voting Chair (Stage 1): Ruairí Ó Cuív (DCC Public Art Officer)

Non-voting Chair (Stage 2): Karen Downey (Sculpture Dublin Programme Director)

The Selection Panel was convened on 1 October 2020 to assess Stage One submissions and it agreed to short-list proposals by the following artists: Mark Clare, Nathan Coley, Doireann Ní Ghrioghair, Alan Phelan and Paul Regan. Following submission of Stage Two proposals, the panel was convened again on 25 November 2020 and it agreed to award the commission to **Alan Phelan**.

Alan Phelan has proposed a flamboyant red, green and blue work that brings together a wealth of references: to the ornate stucco plasterwork that graces many of Dublin's iconic Georgian buildings, the ideals of the Enlightenment (of which O'Connell was a vocal supporter), commemorative objects, lost histories, counter-narratives, and the 1884 Dublin Castle Scandal. Standing over 5 metres high, the sculpture will celebrate emancipation in all its forms and offer itself to the city as a symbol of hope.

'I am thrilled and honoured to have won this very special inaugural commission for the O'Connell Plinth at City Hall. Sculpture Dublin is an important initiative in bringing contemporary sculpture into public awareness in some really exciting new ways. I look forward to working with the Sculpture Dublin team in delivering the proposed artwork and being part of the great tradition of public art in Dublin city. Engaging with multiple histories is an important part of what I do as an artist, so I hope to be able to create a rich conversation between art, the city and its people with this sculpture.'

For more information about the artist and the commission: <https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/city-hall-o-connell-plinth/>

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

All of the new commissions will benefit from local engagement programmes designed to raise awareness, provoke conversations about sculpture and involve people in discussing how public art can enhance their neighbourhood. Local engagement will take the form of online surveys, public meetings, artists' cafes and culture clubs, as well as opportunities to participate in the creation of some of the new commissions and get involved in local art projects through schools and community organisations. <https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/sculpture-in-your-area/>

Sculpture Dublin is working with the city's cultural institutions to draw attention to sculpture in their collections and temporary exhibition programmes. Through a city-wide programme of talks and workshops, online presentations and publications, and a number of exciting new initiatives, including International Sculpture Day (24 April) and the Experiment! Sculpture Award (developed in partnership with The LAB Gallery and Fire Station Artists' Studios), Sculpture Dublin will encourage people to rediscover their city through sculpture – imagining new possibilities for art in the public realm and engaging in shared processes of learning and making. <https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/sculpture-in-the-city/>

For information on upcoming events: <https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/news-events/>