

**The Chairman and Members of  
North West Area Committee.**

**Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Item No: 4**

**1. 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 and Visual Artists Ireland. 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. KILDONAN PARK COMMISSION**

The commission for Kildonan Park is a two-stage, open competition. For Stage One, artists were invited to demonstrate experience of creating public art through consultation and engagement-based processes.

For Stage Two, three short-listed artists were invited to propose a concept for the artwork, based on their consultations to date, and an approach to further engagement with members of the local community to develop the final sculpture. The proposals were reviewed by the Stage Two Selection Panel which included:

- Councillor Keith Connolly (North West Area public representative)
- Mary McDermott (Finglas local community representative)
- John Fox (Finglas local community representative)
- Eddie O'Gara (representative of DCC Parks and Landscape Services)
- Sinead Connolly (representative of the City Arts Office)
- Ray Yeates (representative of the Sculpture Dublin Steering Group)
- Ceara Conway (external art expert)
- Sean Taylor (external art expert)

The Selection Panel agreed to award the commission to **Sara Cunningham-Bell**. Sara responded to the Stage Two Commission Brief with initial plans for a dynamic, large-scale, high-impact sculpture that will act as an inclusive landmark for Kildonan Park. Inspired by ideas of movement, energy and growth, the artwork aims to represent a wide range of local voices and interests and speak to the hopes and dreams of the people of West Finglas.

*"I am delighted and deeply honoured to be selected to create a sculpture for Kildonan Park. The idea for the artwork has been informed by listening to, and learning from the people of Finglas. It is driven by a desire to produce a significant sculptural form; that can be interacted with, and enjoyed as a feature of the park, which represents a positive and uplifting presence in the locality."*

Sara Cunningham-Bell studied at Edinburgh College of Art, where she received the Andrew Grant Award. Sara has undertaken many public art commissions, including for the Ulster

University, Kingspan Stadium, DECAL, IRFU, The Mater Hospital, Victoria College Belfast, European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, Bass Ireland, and the Centre of Theology and Philosophy. She represented Ireland at the Salon Grands et Jeunes D’Aujourd’Hui in Paris, Luxembourg and Japan, and a recent work, ‘Towards Tomorrow’ was short listed for the Irish Sculpture Concrete Award. Sara is represented by The Hamilton Gallery and her work is held in various public and private collections.

For more information: <https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/kildonan-park/>

### **3. LOCAL CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY**

#### **Public Consultation and Engagement (Phase 1)**

Dublin City Council Culture Company (DCCCC) partnered with Sculpture Dublin on the first phase of creative engagement around the Kildonan Park commission in Finglas.

DCCCC organised 55 conversation sessions with the residents around Kildonan to develop local interest, and 17 creative workshops with 40 participants, facilitated by the 3 shortlisted artists.

A local awareness-raising campaign included:

- Press releases to local press and media describing the commissioning process and local engagement activity in the area to date, and encouraging people to complete our online survey;
- Advert in the Local News North edition;
- Sculpture Dublin Programme Director interviewed on Near FM 90.3 Community Radio on 20 January
- Leaflet distribution to 3,000 houses in the vicinity of the park;
- Posters on park railings;
- Social media campaign.

Local people were invited to complete an online survey and/or email Sculpture Dublin Public Engagement Curator, [julia@sculpturedublin.ie](mailto:julia@sculpturedublin.ie) with ideas, expressions of interest and/or questions about the commission. Sculpture Dublin received 60 responses to the online survey and a number of emails from members of the local community.

#### **Community Feedback**

Key points arising from the creative engagement workshops facilitated by DCCCC, the Sculpture Dublin online survey and emails received, are as follows:

- The absence of female representation in public art and sculpture came up repeatedly, and the need to acknowledge or celebrate women’s contribution to life in the area and the city.
- A strong interest in the artwork being a ‘landmark’ – large in scale and made of durable materials; dynamic, joyful, positive and uplifting.
- To create a feeling of ownership and pride – that the artwork reflects and celebrates the local culture and helps create a sense of shared identity.

## **Public Consultation (Phase 2)**

Consultation with the local community will continue over the months ahead to further inform and focus Sara's ideas for the artwork. The process will include:

- A questionnaire (to help the artist gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of local culture)
- Public meetings (in-person and online)

Sculpture Dublin will work with the North West Local Area Office to ensure a wide range of voices are heard. The questionnaire will be shared through Local Area Office networks, online and on printed leaflets distributed to approximately 3,000 houses locally.

Events planned for May include:

- 25 May – Visual Artists Ireland will host an online café bringing together local arts and community voices around the Kildonan Park commission.
- 27 May – Public meeting in a local community centre: Working in adherence to COVID guidelines, Sculpture Dublin will work with local stakeholders to create an opportunity for Sara to meet in-person with local people.

## **City-wide Engagement**

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 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/>

<https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/sculpture-in-the-city/>

<https://www.sculpturedublin.ie/international-sculpture-day/>

**Karen Downey**  
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**Sculpture Dublin**