

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: MUSEUMS & GALLERIES IN A TIME OF CHANGE SPEAKERS & ABSTRACTS — SATURDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2012



Peadar Kirby is Professor of International Politics and Public Policy in the Department of Politics and Public Administration and acting director of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge in Society (ISKS), both at the University of Limerick. He had previously worked at Dublin City University since 1995, firstly in the School of Communications and, on its foundation in 2002, in the School of Law and Government. Before becoming an academic, he worked as a journalist in *The Irish Times* and, between 1984 and 1986, was associate editor of *Noticias Aliadas* in Lima, Peru.

A Time of Change: Rising to What Challenges?

Few would dispute that we live in a time of major change, yet what exactly characterises that change and what challenges does it present for museums? This opening talk seeks to identify the principal dimensions of the period of change through which Irish society is currently passing. This it does through examining the dimensions of the crisis from the financial collapse through the economic recession to the crisis of politics and institutions that can be seen as a major factor in causing the crisis. From these immediate elements of the crisis, the talk then moves to wider dimensions, including the crisis of identity linked to the collapse of the authority of the Catholic Church and the urgent crises of climate change and peak oil that face humanity. The second part of the talk will outline some of the challenges that arise from these crises: challenges of economic and financial recovery, challenges of state-building and political reforms, challenges of nation-building and fashioning new, inclusive identities to foster a sense of national belonging, and the crisis of adapting society to live in a new balance with the ecosystem. The talk will end by emphasising the central role that museums need to play in this time of foundational change.



Julien Anfruns is the Director General of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), international organization of museums and museum professionals, and President of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS).

Julien was educated at the Institute of Political Sciences of Paris, the French National School of Administration (ENA) and the Edhec Business School. From 2002 to 2005, Julien Anfruns was in charge of Economic and Financial Affairs at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. He then became Director of Administration, Financial and Legal Affairs at the Louvre Museum (2005-2008). He also occupied several diplomatic posts at the United Nations in New York, as well as in Finland and Estonia. Concurrently, Julien Anfruns has been Associated Professor since 2002 at the Institute of Political Sciences of Paris, where he teaches *Cultural Economy*.

The museums changing the world or the world changing the museums: a challenged frontier of missions

The concept and network of museums has taken centuries to reach its modern standards of a democratic view of culture by making collections accessible to everyone. The traditional profile of museums has encountered many challenges in recent years. Some countries have faced budget cuts. Others have made massive investments in Culture and are creating many new centres to facilitate and promote cultural exchanges. In parallel, the economics of museums has come to recognise new paradigms with some institutions dealing with an international outreach giving new cultural opportunities of not just dialogues between cultures but also generating new types of revenues, while some of their traditional subvention supports are compromised in many parts of

the western world. Globalization has had an unprecedented impact, while the role of museums has changed to incorporate ever expanding missions: social, new public, educational, diversity orientation giving contemporary museum leaders a much more comprehensive role in their social responsibilities than their predecessors. At a time when everything moves rapidly, museums are required to capture and promote for posterity issues as diverse as human rights, immigration history, globalization, etc. This requires a degree of flexibility and imagination. Are museums capable facing up to these challenges.



Chris Bailey has been Director of the Northern Ireland Museums Council since 2001. Before joining the Council he worked in various local authorities, and managed a range of venues and galleries. He has a wide range of experience of cultural activity at home and abroad and serves on the Boards of various museum and arts bodies, including the ICOM-UK Committee.

That was then, this is now

After more than a decade of unprecedented investment in Northern Ireland's museums, the economic downturn is beginning to bite. In the coming years it will have a direct bearing on the structure and governance of Northern Ireland's local museums and it will require them to muster new arguments and develop new approaches to secure funding. This paper will outline the imminent changes and look at what might be done to consolidate and strengthen our sector in recessionary times.



Michael Starrett is the Chief Executive of The Heritage Council of Ireland. A graduate ecologist and biologist, he holds a Masters in Management Practice from Trinity College, Dublin, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Protected Landscape Management from the University of Wales.

Michael has 30 years experience in the areas of heritage management, conservation and policy development. In addition to being first Irishman to be elected as President of the Federation of National and Nature Parks of Europe, he also holds membership of the Landscape Institute ALI (UK) and the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas.

Staying Relevant in Spite of it all

No one working in, or part of, the Museum sector needs to be reminded of its significance. This short paper, in focusing on the Heritage Council's Strategic Plan 2012 -2016, seeks to point the way to help us all to communicate to others that significance and to encourage them to value it to the same extent as the audience at the annual conference. It also seeks to make the point that the museums and galleries need to rise to the challenge and remain relevant all the time and not just in a time of change.

As one of the 'non-collecting' Cultural Institutions the Heritage Council has had the advantage of working with those primarily Dublin based entities whilst at the same time reaching out to the museum community throughout Ireland. Council's development of the Museums Standards Programme, establishment of formally recognised training for the sector in Ireland, maintenance of the cross border Museums Award, providing support for Irish based conservation internships and of course its general grant's programme represent some of the best known landmarks. This infrastructure and support has all been predicated on helping the sector to develop a quality and standard within the sector of which Ireland can be proud.

At a time when Council itself is under 'critical review' with the objective of determining how best to abolish it or merge it in to the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht much of what has been achieved risks being "abandoned and the rest politicised". Notwithstanding this critical review the Council has published its new Strategic Plan 2012 -2016 which details 16 Key Objectives for 2016. These focus on the themes most relevant to the contribution the sector can make to our national economic and social recovery in terms of supporting employment, education and awareness and of course the quality of our heritage tourism. New research detailing the value of our historic environment will be presented.



Elizabeth Crooke is Senior Lecturer in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Ulster and Course Director of MA Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies and MA Museum Practice and Management, an online distance learning programme.

She is member of the AHRC Peer Review College. Elizabeth served as Board Member of Northern Ireland Museums Council and on the Museums and Archives Committee of Heritage Council (Ireland), is currently part of the Museum Standards Programme Ireland Advisory Group. She has published *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (Routledge 2007) and *Politics, Archaeology and the creation of a national museum in Ireland* (Irish Academic Press, 2000) as well as numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

Challenging museums and challenging purposes

This paper will consider the 'museum challenge' in the context of purpose. The role and function of museums varies amongst stakeholders with those working in museums having to juggle those agendas to defend their existence, enhance sustainability and to remain true to professional integrities. This paper will draw upon the instrumentalisation debate in relation to cultural policy in the UK, as well as local accusation of political interference in Northern Ireland museums, in order to consider the multiple approaches to museums and their relevance. With the changing economic climate, and budget cuts both north and south of the border, how should museums relate to these issues and guarantee their futures?



Tania Banotti is Chief Executive, of Theatre Forum, Ireland, the representative association for the professional performing arts since 2003. From 1998- 2002 Tania was Chief Executive of Screen Producers Ireland, the national trade association for film and TV production companies. For a number of years she worked in public affairs in Brussels representing companies including ITV, the Association of European Commercial Television and the Motion Picture Association of America. She has also worked for the United Nations in the Gaza Strip, Palestine for 3 years.

The National Campaign for the Arts – rising to the challenge

A brief history of the campaign and how the some in the Irish arts community seized the opportunity of the funding crisis to rethink how we make the case for investment in the arts at both national and local level. How might the Irish museums sector engage with the campaign? The challenge and question for those working in the museum question is why is the sector not more proactive in making its case? What tools do you need?



Aidan Pender is Director of Strategic Development at Fáilte Ireland (The National Tourism Development Authority). In this role, he works with teams of colleagues in four distinct areas – Destination Development, Product Investment & Development, Research & Policy, and Tourism Education & Standards. As a part of this portfolio, Aidan also works with a range of stakeholders in examining how Ireland's heritage and culture can be positioned more prominently within the tourism experience, and so be made more accessible to the international visitor.

Before joining Fáilte Ireland in December 2003, Aidan worked for twenty years as a management consultant with PA Consulting Group (London), Management Centre Europe (Brussels) and the Institute of Public Administration (Dublin).

He is a graduate of UCD and holds Bachelor of Arts, Master of Public Administration, and Master of Economic Science degrees.

Ireland's Heritage & Culture – A Principal driver of Tourism growth?

This presentation will attempt to set out the potential for Ireland's heritage and culture to make a greater contribution to the tourism industry and so in turn play a notable part in Ireland's economic recovery. It will be

argued that the potential of this contribution has to date been somewhat obscured by a focus within the tourism industry on two competing strands of activity. The first of these is the core tourism strand of hospitality – accommodation, food and drink. The second arises from a tendency to remain close to the familiar portfolio of tourism “products” – golf, angling, hill-walking etc.

A distinction will be made between primary and secondary demand for tourism, where primary demand relates to the important set of “things to do and see” in Ireland, and secondary demand relates to the hospitality strand referenced above which arises as a function of the prior decision to visit Ireland in the first place.

Consequently, a focus needs to be retained on the primary drivers of tourism demand (things to do and see) and the contribution of heritage and culture needs to be re-examined as a contributor within this context. As significant elements of Ireland’s heritage are primarily intangible (language, history, literature, folklore) particular attention needs to be paid to how these implicit assets can be more effectively explicated and brought to the attention of the consumer.

Using economic terminology it may be argued that Ireland has a set of powerful heritage and cultural “brands”, but that some of these brands have not yet been fully developed as saleable “products” with the potential to generate revenue streams and sustain employment. The paper will attempt to examine the significance of this challenge.



Niall Crowley is an independent equality and diversity expert. He was chief executive of the Equality Authority for ten years from its establishment in 1999. Prior to that he worked in the community sector with the Pavee Point Travellers Rights Centre and the Community Workers Cooperative. He is author of ‘An Ambition for Equality’ published in 2006 by Irish Academic Press and ‘Empty Promises – Bringing the Equality Authority to Heel’ published in 2010 by A&A Farmar.

Public Spaces for Equality and Diversity

The Irish museum sector is a valuable resource for local communities and the nation as a whole. It is a broad ranging sector but many of its components are under-resourced. It has an important contribution to make to the diversity of people that make up Irish society and to advancing a better and more equal Ireland.

The current context is one of economic crisis and austerity policies. This creates a difficult situation for museums to operate within and to make their contribution to equality and diversity. The nature of Irish society is changing due to this crisis and due to the manner in which it is being dealt with. The museum sector needs to renew and re-imagine its contribution to a better and more equal Ireland within this context of substantial change.

Museums large and small are challenged to be relevant to a changing context and to further develop their contribution to equality at a time when inequality is deepening in Irish society. How can museums further develop their ability and capacity to contribute to equality and respond to diversity? How can museums more effectively benefit and resource those who experience inequality? How can the public space offered by the museum make a relevant contribution to equality in this context of economic crisis?



Mark O'Neill has worked in Glasgow since 1985, when he was employed by a local trust to establish a museum in Springburn. In 1990 he was appointed Keeper of Social History in Glasgow City Council's museum service. He originated the concept for, and established, the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, the only inter-faith museum in the UK. He led the team which refurbished the People's Palace during 1995 to 1998. His main project since the mid 1990s was the Heritage Lottery funded £30 million redisplay of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, which received 3.2 million visits in its first year after reopening in 2006. He was Head of Museums from 1998 to 2005 and Head of Arts and Museums from 2005 until January 2010, when he was appointed to his current role as Director of Policy & Research at Glasgow Life.

Towards Democratic Museums

Museums are expert organisations which carry out important tasks of preservation, research and display. They are given the authority to carry out these tasks by society, based on their expertise, in order to provide a public service. This delegation means that museums need to retain not only expert and but also democratic legitimacy and, like all public services, ensure fairness in how they serve society. Democratic legitimacy requires that museums transcend the false dichotomies of excellence versus equity and intrinsic versus instrumental value by moving from a passive to an active definition of access. Museums need to be as rigorous in researching their audiences as their collections and courageous in learning to respond to audiences as they really are. Courage is required to resist peer pressure to provide services only for those who share the background and culture of staff and to address the interests and needs of the widest possible audiences. A democratic museum, based on the principles of justice, embeds access at its core through a dialogue between audiences and experts.



Pat Cooke was curator of the Pearse Museum and Kilmainham Gaol and Museum for over twenty years. He was chairman of the Irish Museums Association, 2002-06. He has been director of the MA in Cultural Policy and Arts Management at UCD since 2006.

Do Irish museums have a great future behind them?

The decade up to the Moment of Truth in September 2008 was a period of great development for Irish museums. Most of them saw unprecedented levels of capital investment, enhanced staffing levels, and a professionalization of standards and operations that could only have been dreamt of as late as the 1980s. In 2007 the future for museums looked brighter than it ever had. Now, that future has been superseded by crisis and retrenchment, a fate museums share with most aspects of Irish life. They say that art and artists come into their own in times of crisis. But do museums? What do museums need to do to be part of the spirit of the age, to be responsive and involved in Ireland's unfolding efforts to recover from the moral and cultural bankruptcy precipitated by the Celtic Tiger years? How will we cope with 2016?