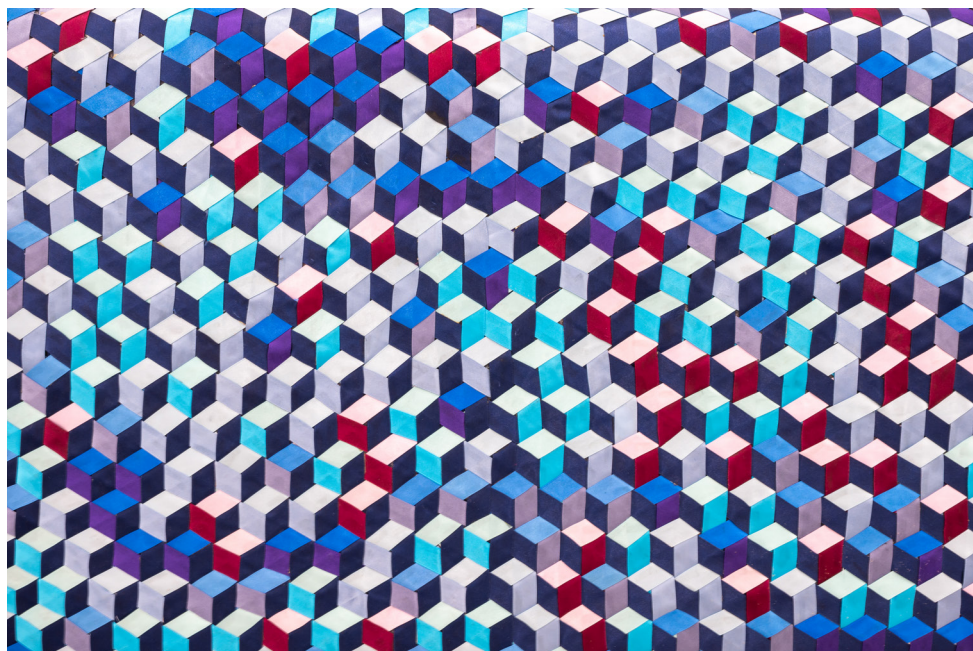


# IRISH MODERNISMS: SEMINAR 1 | IRELAND

**SPEAKERS: ANNA LIESCHING, DR FIONNA BARBER**

**DISCUSSION MODERATER: DR KATHRYN MILLIGAN**

**WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021, 1PM**



**CCA** DERRY~  
LONDONDERRY

# IRISH MODERNISMS

## SEMINAR 1

12:45pm

Waiting room opens

1pm

Introduction from Irish Modernisms  
Co-curators Catherine Hemelryk &  
Matt Retallick

1:05pm

Anna Liesching:  
Mainie Jellett and Irish Modernism;  
Looking out whilst looking in?

1:25pm

Dr Fiona Barber:  
Deborah Brown's Modernity and the  
Bonds of Female Affinity

1:45pm

Screen break

1:55pm

Discussion facilitated by  
Dr Kathryn Milligan

2:30pm

Close

# WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for our series of seminars exploring Irish Modernisms and their Global Contexts.

This seminar season is on the occasion of Irish Modernisms, an exhibition by five artists from NI who are inspired by, respond to and collectively highlight the complex and nuanced influence of (the often maligned) Modernism in the north. The artists are James Ashe, Rachael Campbell-Palmer, Phillip McCrilly, Grace McMurray and Ben Weir and you can find out more at [CCADLD.org](http://CCADLD.org).

Each lunchtime seminar pairs speakers with a passion about an aspect of Modernism to give a glimpse into the wealth of research and sheer breadth of the influence Modernism has had across the globe.

This first seminar invites Anna Liesching and Dr Fiona Barber to talk about two key artists from Modernist art history from the island of Ireland: Mainie Jellett and Deborah Brown.

Whilst this seminar looks back to our art history, others in the series look to contemporary practitioners and we look forward to welcoming you to future seminars and exploring and celebrating Modernisms.

Catherine & Matt  
Irish Modernisms Curators

# IRISH MODERNISMS | IRELAND

**Anna Liesching | Mainie Jellett and Irish Modernism: Looking out whilst looking in?**

Mainie Jellett has often been credited as the force behind the introduction of abstract and modernist art to Ireland. Thought of as the person who 'brought' modernism to Ireland in the early 1920s, a time when the country was looking inward to form a new aesthetic identity Jellett was looking out, or was she? This talk will explore how we can place Jellett in the history of Irish modernism and the barriers she faced in her short but incredibly prolific career. It will also reflect on her impact and legacy which allowed women artists to be at the centre of Irish modernism, creating a foundation for creative exchange that continued north and south. Though the aesthetics of modernism are central to this discussion, modernism as a practice will also be considered through the lens of Jellett's activity beyond her own artistic production, creating links with the Irish Modernisms exhibition at CCA Derry-Londonderry.

**Dr Fiona Barber | Deborah Brown's Modernity and the Bonds of Female Affinity**

During the 1960s the Northern Irish artist Deborah Brown produced a remarkable series of works in fibreglass. Unprecedented not only within the development of modernism in Ireland, these can be more readily situated in relation to international sculptural trends exploring new industrial materials as signifiers of contemporaneity and modernity. Through a focus primarily on one of Brown's sculptural reliefs, *Glass Fibre Form on Black* (1967), included in the artist's retrospective at the Gordon Gallery in Derry in 2011, this short presentation opens up questions about the significance of modernity in 1960s Northern Ireland both in contemporary terms and retrospectively. It also attempts to situate Brown not just within modernist histories but within further affinities with a community of creative women including the Austrian artist Alice Berger Hammerschlag and the writer and curator Anne Crookshank. However it is the more speculative connections with, for example, Mainie Jellett's utopianism or the sensuous materiality of the German-American sculptor Eva Hesse that also reveal further imaginative possibilities for the placing of Brown's work within a history of women's artistic innovation.

# ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

**Anna Liesching** is Curator of Art at the Ulster Museum, National Museums NI. She is primarily responsible for the national collection of works of art on paper, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Gifted Collection and Troubles Art Archive. Her two main areas of research focus on redressing the underrepresentation of women artists from 1750 to present and the essential role of artists as activists, recognising art as a facet of the material culture of social history. She is co-convenor of the Northern Irish Art Network, a Tate and Paul Mellon funded Research Group.

**Dr Fiona Barber** is Reader in Art History in the Manchester School of Art and Research Degrees Co-ordinator for Art / Visual Culture. Her research interests are contemporary and twentieth century Irish visual culture, feminist art history, contemporary women's painting and a range of issues in twentieth century modernism including nation, memory and identity and gender performativity and embodiment. Most recently she curated the exhibition 'Elliptical Affinities: Irish Women's Art and the Politics of the Female Body 1984-present', Highlanes Gallery,

Drogheda (2019-2020) and Limerick City Gallery of Art (2020)  
[www.art.mmu.ac.uk/profile/fbarber](http://www.art.mmu.ac.uk/profile/fbarber)

**Dr Katy Milligan** is an art historian specialising in nineteenth and twentieth century Irish art. Following her PhD studies Katy was the inaugural ESB Fellow at the ESB Centre for the Study of Irish Art at the National Gallery of Ireland, and an Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Art History and Cultural Policy, UCD. Her first monograph, *Painting Dublin, 1886 - 1949: Visualising a changing city*, was published by Manchester University Press in 2020.  
[katymilligan.com](http://katymilligan.com)

**Catherine Hemelryk** FRSA was born in Rugby and has been Director at the CCA Derry~Londonderry since 2018. She has previously been Curator at CAC Vilnius, Artistic Director at NN, Northampton. Catherine studied Fine Art at Newcastle University and MA Curating Contemporary Art at Royal College of Art, London. She is a guest lecturer, commissioner and has been guest curator and in residence across Europe including GeoAIR Tbilisi, Sea Foundation Tillburg and Wysing Arts Centre. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

**Matt Retallick** is a curator based in Liverpool. He is an Irish citizen, and runs the Instagram @modernist.ie, an archive of everyday Irish design modernism. He is an honorary lifetime member of The Modernist Society, and is studying for an art history PhD at Manchester School of Art. Matt is Associate Curator of PINK, Manchester. @matt\_retallick

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Irish Modernisms Seminars series has been made possible via a bursary award from the British Art Network (BAN). BAN is a Subject Specialist Network supported by Tate and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, with additional public funding provided by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. The Network promotes curatorial research, practice and theory in

the field of British Art. Its members include curators, academics, artist-researchers, conservators, producers and programmers at all stages of their professional lives. Contact [britishartnetwork@tate.org.uk](mailto:britishartnetwork@tate.org.uk) for details on how to join.

Irish Modernisms is supported by Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Art Fund and Freelands Foundation. Catherine & Matt would like to thank the artists and speakers as well as Jessica Juckes, Martin Myrone, Danielle Goulé, Laura McCafferty, Fiona Allan and Mel Bradley.

**CCA Derry~Londonderry**  
10-12 Artillery Street  
Derry~Londonderry, BT48 6RG

[CCDL.org](http://CCDL.org) @CCADLD  
[info@CCDL.org](mailto:info@CCDL.org)  
+44(0)2871373538

