

2001

Overall Winner & Building Category Award | Fingal County Hall



Fingal County Hall, the administrative center of the new county and the seat of its democratic council is, in its literal and metaphorical transparency, a symbol of the clients desire for openness in local government, clear in its relationship to the particularities of its site and providing a quality environment, on low energy principles, for both occupants and visitors.

The curved atrium space, embracing the immediate landscape, and acting as a collector for its various functions, is formed by a five story glazed wall and a parallel structure of high quality

concrete soffits and columns. The three rectangular open plan office bars to the east, with landscaped spaces between, provide an office environment of real quality, through their shallow plan depth, use of natural and reflected light and environmental management.

This, in particular, is achieved through the integrated design, construction and detailing of the structural elements - the flat soffit central spine beam with upstands being accommodated in the depth of the raised floor above, and the curved slab and rib beam assembly providing an elegant modulated surface distributing light across the offices.

The resultant building demonstrates critical design and construction co-ordination, the integration of services within the concrete structure and a clear commitment by its authors to achieve a singular building.

Infrastructural Category Winner | Blackglen Bridge, Dublin



The Blackglen Bridge was one of a number of bridges on the M50 Southern Cross Motorway shortlisted by the jury, testifying to the importance of bridge design as a contribution to the new landscape of the M50.

As the motorway cuts east - west through the rock face below Ticknock and begins, in an easterly direction to open up to Dublin Bay, the Blackglen Bridge oversails, carrying Blackglen Road at a significant skew and curve, creating a dramatic undercroft and a memorable event on the circular motorway route.

While it may be argued that the flared central pier is slightly effete compared to the elemental strength of the bridge deck, the relationship of the abutments to the adjoining rock face and the line of the curve exhibits a clarity of form, engineering and construction.

The detail design of the bridge deck to achieve a slim cross section profile and the use of exposed aggregate in the angled facing panels is particularly noteworthy.

As the national programme to overcome our infrastructure deficits progresses the Blackglen Bridge demonstrates the positive contribution that carefully designed and constructed infrastructural projects can make to our environment.

Elemental Category Winner | Atrium Wall, Model Arts & Niland Gallery, Sligo

The Model Arts and Niland Gallery is a successful and dramatic transformation of a 19th century Model school to an arts center, housing the towns Jack B. Yeats collection, various exhibitions and providing performance, workshop and study facilities.

The in-situ reinforced concrete west wall of the atrium is a critical element in the articulation of the relationship between the existing building fabric and the new interventions forming, with it's companion cedar clad timber wall a modern, minimal foil to the diagonally opposing faces to the original building.

In the spiraling circulation sequence from the entrance to the first floor Niland gallery it forms a linking planar element against which vertical movement occurs.

Constructed using 100mm shuttering boards, with careful alignment of openings and pour joints and control of cut out soffit surfaces it provides an exemplary concrete element contributing to a project of real quality.



Sculpture Award: Jean Greene



We have selected a figurative work entitled "Bathse'ba" by Jean Greene as this year's winner. The piece, a female figure formed using black aggregate, moulded, honed and polished with wax is a superb example of the carefully considered 'mix' informing the process of the creation of the FORM of the piece.

Jean Greene's work shows her competence, her facility with her material, and her techniques. The work is highly finished and well executed. It is an accomplished piece of work. It has a lovely grace about it. A delicate, refined daintiness.

When we think of concrete we envisage bulk,

substantial structure, massive foundations. But here we have gentleness, the diminutive, a synthesis. By using concrete for this work the artist sets up a contradiction which suggests the control of process and a manipulation of the material for her own ends.

This is an empathic image - it elicits an emotional response. The work gives us a warm comfortable feeling - its essence is one of repose. It is quiet, relaxed and yet it has a very sturdy, assured presence.

It is this assuredness, this empathy and daintiness that gives the work its authenticity. That gives it its solidity and strength. Of course these qualities essentially deny the contradiction and make the choice of concrete the most appropriate material for this work.

It is because of that contradiction and the way Jean handles it that I have chosen her work for this year's award.

Student Award | 'The Dundrum Luas Bridge' - Aidan O'Connell & David Moran of UCD

The winning paper showed a good understanding of the subject but also presented the reader with an interesting & unambiguous assessment of :

The reasoning behind the project,
The methods used to research & test the subject,
and the conclusions from the work carried out.

The judges were impressed with the research programme which was very well thought out and extremely thorough in its application and they felt that the paper gave a good analysis of the subject