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*Marginal  
Irish  
Modernisms*



*An AHRC  
Research Network  
organised by  
Liverpool John  
Moores University,  
St Mary's  
University, and  
Trinity College,  
Dublin.*

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Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



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**MARGINAL IRISH MODERNISMS**

**A Two-Day International Conference**

**Liverpool John Moores University  
8-9 September 2016**

**Call for Papers**

Convenors: **Dr Gerry Smyth (LJMU)**  
**Dr Deaglán O Donghaile (LJMU)**

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Keynotes: **Professor Joe Bristow (UCLA)**  
**Dr Tina O'Toole (University of Limerick)**

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Committee: **Matthew Frost (Manchester UP)**  
**Dr Keith Hopper (Oxford / SMUC)**  
**Prof. Maria Luddy (University of Warwick)**  
**Prof. Eve Patten (Trinity College, Dublin)**  
**Prof. Lance Pettitt (St Mary's UC)**  
**Prof. Shaun Richards (St Mary's UC)**  
**Dr Tom Walker (Trinity College, Dublin)**



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The continuing centrality of modernism to debates about Irish cultural history was signalled by two recent (2014) publications: *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*, edited by Joseph Cleary; and a special Irish edition of the American journal *Modernism / Modernity*, edited by Joseph Bristow. As these interventions demonstrate, Irish modernism is generally understood as a unique response to the onset of large-scale systemic international modernisation at the end of the nineteenth century. In the literary sphere, its peculiar condition was determined by Ireland's historical role as a peripheral colony, and its principal agents were a roll-call of male writers (Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, O'Brien, etc.) whose work could be understood as a response to that condition.

Irish modernism also overlapped with, and was influenced by, developments in the political sphere – in particular, the nationalist / republican revolution. There were, however, a range of other socio-political discourses abroad during this period whose relation to modernism remains largely under-studied: socialism, feminism, syndicalism, environmentalism, vegetarianism, animal rights, etc. Likewise, a host of 'minor' figures contributed to the social and political landscape of Ireland during the modernist era, yet their work has been largely excised from the official narrative of the country's modern development.

Despite the subsequent domination of literary discourse, modernism was in fact a pan-disciplinary phenomenon which extended into a range of fields and practices engaging with different aspects of modern Irish life: music, fine art, science, architecture, design, planning, film and popular culture, etc. The domination of a particular model and a particular trajectory of Irish modernism has militated against a fuller appreciation of its impact across a wide spectrum of Irish life from the late nineteenth century to the present.

This conference proposes a new, more nuanced and more accurate understanding of Ireland's political, social and cultural evolution during a key period within the nation's modern history. This will in turn facilitate a re-orientation of the political and cultural narratives within which the developing nation remains caught. Rethinking modernism necessitates rethinking Irish history and the forms of identity that have emerged as agents within that history.

Issues for consideration might include:

- How has the relationship between modernity, modernisation and modernism traditionally been conceptualised, and how may we begin to re-theorise it within an Irish political / cultural framework?
- How was the modernism / nationalism relationship organised during the period in question, and how has it been managed in subsequent critical debates?
- How did contemporary aesthetic discourses engage with other key components of cultural identity – in particular, class and gender?
- How is modernism negotiated and configured in a range of marginal Irish social / cultural practices – e.g. genre fiction, photography, children's writing, spiritualism, sexuality, psychoanalysis, advertising, library provision, publishing?
- Outside the mainstream arts, what were contemporary people's experience of modernism and how were these expressed?

**Please send proposals of no longer than 300 words by 31 March 2016 to:**

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