2005

Overall Winner & Building Category Award | Athlone Library and Civic Centre

The regeneration of the Town Centre of Athlone is well advanced. The focal point of this task has already been provided, by the completion of the new library and Civic Centre – a building of great quality and civic presence.

As with all buildings of this calibre, the Civic Centre works at many levels. It reaches out of the town with an appropriate civic space, at whose northern end sit the major public rooms of the project. These rooms have a generous space, combined with a human, welcoming quality – their presence, and priority, is enriched by the exploitation of different qualities of light, which also makes them legible, in the bold, simple plan. The minor spaces are unobtrusive, but well located to serve the main spaces, with their own scale and quality.

The other force that shapes the built form is the decision to exploit the qualities of concrete, to make a strong statement, appropriate to the nature of the project. What emerges is a vocabulary of elements, of various scales, carried out in precast and in-situ concrete.

Project Details:	Client:	Athlone Town Council
	Engineer:	ARUP Consulting Engineers
	Architect:	Keith Williams Architects
	Contractor:	John Sisk & Son
	Major Supplier:	Techrete Ltd.

Infastructural Category Award | University Bridge, Limerick

The form of the New Bridge over the Shannon, for the University of Limerick, is "driven" by two concepts:
To facilitate the expansion of the Campus onto the North Side of the River.

To form a distinctive Gateway to the Campus. The Bridge is 150m long, and has five spans, in post-tensioned concrete. It is made "distinctive" by the introduction of a longitudinal "split" in the deck, which separates the car, from the pedestrian. The split also generates a play of "solid" and "light" in the complex interior geometry of the bridge section that it reveals.

This happens in a variety of ways, as one "experiences" the bridge in distant/close-views.

As well as the engagement with the play of "natural light", artificial light is also an integral part of the bridge design.

The "built-form", with such complex three dimensional shapes, in both in-situ and precast concrete, staged post-tensioning, and the like, presented many challenges to the Contractor and the Designers, who have responded, by building a bridge with high quality forms and finishes.

Project Details:	Client:	University of Limerick
	Architect:	Murray O'Laoire Architects
	Engineer:	ARUP Consulting Engineers
	Contractor:	John Mowlem Construction
	Major Supplier:	Readymix Plc.

Elemental Category Winner | Roches Stores, Henry Street – Façade

The façade of the new extension to Roches Stores, Henry Street, Dublin, offers a bold modern addition to the Dublin streetscape.

The main elements of the façade consist of, largely unbroken wall surfaces, 4 storeys high, of precast white concrete panels with polished aggregate. The panels are hung off the main structural frame of the building.

The south facing (Henry Street) façade, is particularly successful, with a dramatically cantilevered part of the restaurant section of the store (in glass and concrete) 'punching through this façade, 'inhabited' by some of the customers

This move returns the 'human scale' to the façade, and in so doing, raises the work to a higher level of order. This is a confident, mature use of concrete, in a sensitive location, which enriches the 'urban context'. The façade 'gleams' in the sunshine, due to the immaculate way which they are crafted and weathered, and reflect light into the street below. The combination of light, shadow, sky and the time of day are further 'ornaments' to the work.

Project Details:	Client:	Roches Stores
	Architect:	Newenham Mulligan & Associates
	Engineer:	Barrett Mahony
	Contractor:	G&T Crampton
	Major Supplier:	Techrete Ltd.

Highly Commended: Elemental Category | Additions to House, Arran Road, Drumcondra

It is difficult to invest a kitchen / dining room extension, at the rear of a traditional house, with some quality. Considerable skill and commitment is required to do so, by all concerned.

In this instance, the decision to use fairface concrete as the main material in the work, seems to have given the project a 'direction' and concept, that informed all the other parts.

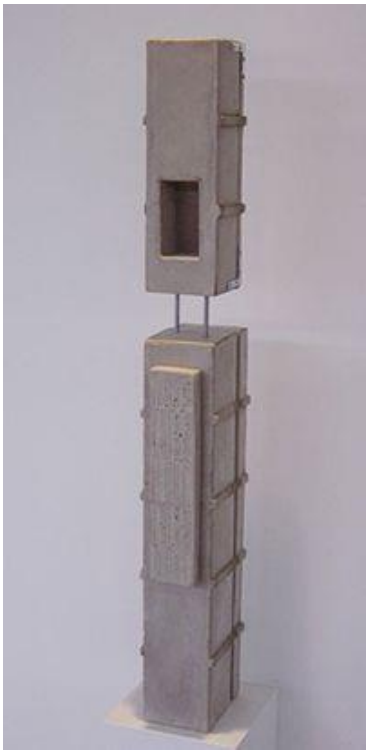
Concrete is chosen for its versatility and tactile qualities, walls and beams being made in structural in-situ concrete, with a sand blasted exposed aggregate finish, on both faces. The floors and kitchen fittings are in a 'highly polished' concrete finish.

The concrete has also enabled the Architects to 'detail down' the elements, so that the forms are 'clear, strong and beautiful'. This rigour has also been applied to the other elements (timber / light).

The end result is a rich series of spaces, of a high order, inviting ‘habitation’, without the need for any further ‘confection’.

Project Details:	Client:	Private Client
	Architect:	Donaghy Diamond Architects
	Engineer:	Downes Associates
	Contractor:	McQuillan & Haverty
	Major Supplier:	Vincent Fitzpatrick

Sculpture Award | Standing Tall and Fragility Exposed by Niki MacPherson



Artists have used various materials since earliest times to make art. It is a creative initiative by the Irish Concrete Society to make an annual award for sculpture made from concrete which is a mixture of sand, cement and water. I am very pleased to have been asked to judge the submissions this year with artist and former award winner on a number of occasions; Ms. Jean Greene.

The Irish Concrete Society aims for excellence in the use of its material and, the response this year was most varied and interesting as we hope you will agree from perusal of the photographs of the entries displayed here tonight. There were very different approaches to art, using the specified material and the results were both surprising and, we hope you will agree, ingenious.

All works were highly praised and the jury was justly impressed with the standard achieved by all artists however there can be only one winner and on this occasion Standing Tall and Fragility Exposed by Niki MacPherson were chosen as the overall winner.

Sean de Courcy Award | An Analysis of a Chinese Permeability Test, Trinity College Dublin

This year saw entries from all the major Engineering colleges in Ireland. The jury found it most difficult to choose an overall winner with the standards of projects being so high and eventually awarded the Sean de’Courcy Student Award to Jonathan Heney from Trinity College Dublin for his project entitled ‘An Analysis of a Chinese Permeability Test’. The jury would like to thank all students for their entries and to encourage more participation from the various colleges in this category in the future.