



# Architects' manuscripts as 'magnificent' as those produced by medieval monks



**FRANK  
MCDONALD**

Environment Editor

**MINISTER FOR Culture** Mary Hanafin yesterday proclaimed an 18th-century oratory as "a little piece of Ireland in Venice", at least for the duration of this year's international architecture biennale.

The oratory of San Gallo, which commemorates the early medieval Irish saint St Gall, is on a small *campo* near the Piazza San Marco. The building is now filled with stacks of paper illustrating the work of multiple-award-winning architects de Blacam and Meagher.

Commissioned by the **Irish Architecture Foundation** and curated by a team of young architects led by Tom de Paor, the

exhibition, called *Of de Blacam and Meagher*, was hailed by the Minister as a brilliant realisation of this year's biennale theme, *People Meet in Architecture*.

As a champagne cork popped and flew into the air, Ms Hanafin said that de Blacam and Meagher – just like the medieval monks – had produced "magnificent manuscripts", which visitors to the exhibition could look at and then take away.

Unlike other countries with national pavilions, Ireland was being celebrated through its architects in a space that seemed almost tailor-made for the purpose, showing de Blacam and Meagher's "love of stone and brick and glass and wood".

Some of the company's best-known buildings include Cork Institute of Technology, the Chapel of Reconciliation in Knock, the Wooden Building in Dublin's Temple Bar and the Samuel Beckett Theatre and restored Dining Hall and Atrium in Trinity College.

Ireland's ambassador to Italy, Patrick Hennessy, who hosted yesterday's official opening, said

Shane de Blacam and John Meagher, who set up practice in 1976, had provided "inspirational leadership" in Irish architecture over the past three decades.

De Paor Architects, headed by Tom de Paor, have also become the first Irish practice to be included in the biennale's international pavilion, where they are showing a folly in pleated linen and lavendered softwood, with the intriguing title *4am*.

TAKA Architects – Alice Casey and Cian Deegan – who collaborated with Tom de Paor and Peter Maybury on the de Blacam and Meagher show, are featured in a book being launched in Venice profiling 45 of the world's most exciting architects under 40.

The 12th International Architecture Biennale runs from Monday next until November 21st and is expected to attract more than 130,000 architects and other informed visitors from around the world.

[labiennale.org](http://labiennale.org)

Publication: Irish Times

Date: Saturday, August 28, 2010

Page: 7

Extract: 2 of 2

Circulation: 106.926

Author: FRANK MCDONALD

Headline: Architects' manuscripts as 'magnificent' as those produced by medieval monks



Nathalie Weadick of the **Irish Architecture Foundation**, Culture Ireland director Eugene Downes, Minister for Culture Mary Hanafin and Arts Council chairwoman Pat Moylan at the Irish pavilion of this year's Venice Architecture Biennale, entitled *Of de Blacam and Meagher*. Photograph: Alice Clancy/Photocall Ireland