

# O'DONNELL & TUOMEY AWARDED 2015 ROYAL GOLD MEDAL

The renowned Irish architects Sheila O'Donnell and John Tuomey have received the 2015 Royal Gold Medal, the world's most prestigious architecture award. Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty The Queen and is given to a person or group of people who have had a significant influence "either directly or indirectly on the advancement of architecture". Awarded since 1848, previous Royal Gold Medallists include Frank Gehry (2000), Sir Norman Foster (1983), Frank Lloyd Wright (1941) and Sir George Gilbert Scott (1859).

A tour de force in contemporary Irish and British architecture, Sheila O'Donnell and John Tuomey co-founded their practice O'Donnell and Tuomey in Dublin during 1988, having previously worked together for internationally renowned architects Stirling Wilford Associates and Colquhoun & Miller in London. Their new practice coupled Sheila's quiet, studied 'rationalism' alongside John's fluent, rhetorical 'constructivism' and through their buildings, publications, exhibitions and teaching they have forged a confident new identity for Irish architecture.



In the early 1990s, O'Donnell and Tuomey were part of the 'Group 91 Architects' group whose collective skill in masterplanning spearheaded the regeneration of Dublin's neglected Temple Bar. It was the pair's first permanent building, the Irish Film Institute (1991) that brought them profile and acclaim for its dynamic contribution to the revitalised Dublin quarter.

Their early work, from a private home in Navan to schools, public housing and community buildings, provided the canvas for them to experiment and evolve their unconventional creative approach and celebrated style. More recent projects include the modest but brilliant Photographers' Gallery in Soho and the exceptional 2014 RIBA Stirling Prize-shortlisted Saw Swee Hock Student Centre at the London School of Economics.

Speaking when it was announced they would receive architecture's highest honor, Sheila O'Donnell and John Tuomey said: "We're delighted to have been chosen for this unexpected honour. We're humbled to find ourselves in such a company of heroes, architects whose work we have studied and from whose example we continue to learn. We believe in the social value and the poetic purpose of architecture and the gold medal encourages us to prevail in this most privileged and complicated career."





RIBA President Stephen Hodder said: "O'Donnell + Tuomey's work is always inventive - striking yet so well considered, particular to its place and brief, beautifully crafted - and ever developing. It is an absolute joy and inspiration to hear them describe their work, and always a delight to experience one of their buildings. Sheila and John are at the vanguard of contemporary Irish architecture and I am delighted they are to receive this lifetime-honour."

O'Donnell + Tuomey have been short-listed for the RIBA Stirling Prize a record five times, in 1999 for Ranelagh Multi-Denominational School (Dublin, Ireland), 2005 for the Lewis Glucksman Gallery (Cork, Ireland), 2011 for An Gaeláras Irish Language Arts and Cultural Centre (Derry, Northern Ireland) and 2012 for Lyric Theatre (Belfast, Northern Ireland) and in 2014 for the London School of Economics Saw Swee Hock Students' Centre (London, UK).

They have exhibited three times at the Venice Architecture Biennale and are both alumni of the School of Architecture at University College Dublin where they continue to teach and inspire the next generation of architects.

