



IRELAND'S MODERNIST MISSION IN AFRICA

DIRECTED BY NICKY GOGAN AND PAUL ROWLEY
PRODUCED BY MAYA DERRINGTON
MUSIC BY DENNIS McNULTY
WWW.STILLFILMS.ORG

BUILD SOMETHING MODERN
PRESS KIT



A Real Art film funded by the Arts Council of the Chevening Scheme

www.stillfilms.org

SYNOPSIS

Africa in the 1950's. The colonising nations are preparing to leave. Independence is just around the corner, the first steps towards a new modern Africa. Yet Europeans are still coming in droves. This time however, it is missionary priests and nuns who are being shipped out to Africa in the thousands to "press the crucifix to the lips of the pagan", or as was commonly stated at the time, to "save the black babies".

Meanwhile in Ireland, a newly independent republic itself, but also a rigid conservative society run by the Catholic Church, young architects are eager to be among the first Irish modernists. Yet in the Ireland of the 1950's, they find it impossible to design the modern buildings that they see being built internationally. And strangely, it is the missions that give them this opportunity.

Build Something Modern tells the story of a hidden canon of architecture - groundbreaking young architects who pushed the boundaries of design, with surprisingly little recognition in their own country. Between the 1950's and 1970's many adventurous architects travelled to Africa for excitement and creative freedom. At the same time others were given the opportunity to design hundreds of modern buildings in Africa, but remarkably never got to see the finished constructions.

These structures - churches, seminaries, hospitals and schools - were for the most part built as part of a massive community effort. They were co-ordinated by the missionaries, often without a contractor and with the architect mostly absent. **Build Something Modern** reveals a surprising and untold history about these people and their innovative creations. We travel back to the 1950s, when colonies were still in place, through the atrocities of numerous wars where many of the structures were destroyed, right up to present day Africa.

Reworking stunning imagery from both the personal archives of the architects and recruitment films made by the missions, the film encompasses **Still Films** unique visual and storytelling style. **Build Something Modern** is a touching and revealing film about people and the special relationship with the things they create as they reflect on it many years later.

Build Something Modern is a Reel Art film funded by the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon. The film is directed by Nicky Gogan and Paul Rowley (Seaview, The Rooms) and produced by Maya Derrington (Pyjama Girls).

Further information, high resolution stills, and audio excerpts available for download at www.stillfilms.org.



Director Bio. NICKY GOGAN

Nicky Gogan, a 1993 graduate of the National College of Art and Design Ireland has a background in new media and is a recent graduate of EAVE 2008. In 1996 Nicky trained at Organa in New York, one of the worlds first multimedia companies in the world. She returned to Ireland to become an instructor in the creative use of technology at Arthouse. She set up Sink Digital Media the same year and worked as a digital media producer until 2003. In 2005 Nicky launched Ireland's first digital channel for short films and animation, Wildlight Channel.

Nicky was one of the first active advocates of digital filmmaking in Ireland. She set up the Darklight Film Festival in 1999. The festival has a broad range of commitments to Irish and international filmmakers working in innovative ways; providing a screening platform for new work, facilitating seminars, network opportunities and running a national an international touring programme. Nicky's work as a curator/programmer has been seen at Darklight, and in her work as curator of exhibitions at The Digital Hub where she also chaired and programmed the Talk Digital seminar series from 2002 - 2005.

In 2006 Nicky co-founded production company Still Films with Maya Derrington and Paul Rowley, she completed her first feature documentary as director/producer, Seaview, which premiered at the Berlinale in 2008. Still Films are committed to pursuing new approaches to filmmaking in all genres and is dedicated to providing a framework for the development of emerging creative talents as well as new methods of distribution. The collaborative ethos of working with independent producers and directors, having them utilise Still Films as a resource of talent and infrastructure, has blossomed over the past year and we are now producing a slate of widely varied and exciting new projects.

Awards:
Nomination for 'Multi Media Person of the Year', Digital Media Awards 2003 and 2004. Winner of the 'Innovation Award' Irish Internet Association Net Visionary Awards 2003. The Wildlight Channel won first prize for mobile content at the 2006 Digital Media Awards and was nominated for Best Mobile TV channel at the 2006 Mobile TV Awards at Mipcom. Still Films first TV series, Sweded TV has been chosen to represent Ireland in Input 2009 and Seaview was nominated for best feature documentary at the IFTA's 2009, Trolley boy was nominated for IFTAS 2010 and Pyjama Girls in 2011.

Director Bio. PAUL ROWLEY

Paul is a filmmaker and visual artist. He has directed four feature films and over twenty five shorts films and video installations over the last ten years, and has received many awards for his work. His critically acclaimed feature documentary Seaview, which he co-directed with Nicky Gogan, premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and has toured festivals internationally since. Seaview was nominated for an IFTA (Irish Film and Television Award) and received a special Jury mention at DMZ DOCS in Korea. His short Surface Noise premiered at the Berlin Film Festival this February.

His early short film Suspension was awarded a Golden Spire at the San Francisco Film Festival in 1999. In 2000, in collaboration with American artist David Phillips, he won the Glen Dimplex Artists' award, which is the Irish Museum of Modern Art's annual prize for contemporary art. Paul recently won the Irish American Arts Awards, in both the under 35 category and the overall prize. He has also completed two feature length experimental films. His first As Láthair, which examines colonial histories through re-working of the western genre, was completed in 2002. Paul just recently completed a new feature film The Rooms with support of an Arts Council Project grant. Filmed in Greece, Italy, Germany, Spain, the United States and Korea, the film is a visually complex study of a world abandoned that somehow continues to operate.

Paul recently completed a 60 screen permanent video installation in the international terminal at LAX airport, a commission by the City of Los Angeles. He has recently a new feature doc **Build Something Modern**, commissioned by the Irish Arts Council and the Dublin International Film Festival. The film, co-directed with Nicky Gogan, examines the peculiar history of Irish architects exporting hundreds of modernist designs for structures to be built in Africa in the early 1960's.