

# Dundee Contemporary Arts

RICHARD  
MURPHY  
ARCHITECTS



The Company

Press

Awards

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The Breakfast  
Mission



## South Façade

Dundee Contemporary Arts forms a major part of the re-establishment of the cultural identity of the City of Dundee. It has succeeded in making a public arts venue which is inclusive and enticing and encourages interaction between the public and many forms of visual arts. To quote the Sunday Times "It is one of the most satisfying, sublime and stylish public buildings opened in years". This was one of the most complex projects that the practice has completed.

The practice won the project competition in July 1996. From the outset the aim of our scheme was to group all activities; galleries, cinemas, printworkshops, shop and research facilities, around a central social space and cafe. The building partially reuses the brick warehouse of the former Macleans garage and forms an 'L' shaped plan on a site which falls 3 storeys from front to back. The cafe and foyer sit at the internal corner of this 'L' and are therefore at the heart of the building in plan and section.

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The site has a very narrow street frontage between the Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Georgian house of the Clydesdale Bank. In order to draw visitors into the building we aligned the foyer on the Tay Street opposite so that it might form an extension of that public realm into the building; we set the entrance back below a dramatic canopy and beside the shop (the commercial face of the arts activities within) to give a breathing space to the

street edge and a presence to the approach, and finally we made use of continuous rooflights to cast sunlight and shadow across the internal walls of the foyer drawing the eye to the furthest part of the plan.

This theme of the use of light is continued by the use of windows to give glimpses of the Tay estuary to the south and also between foyer and cafe and galleries and cinemas. The aim is to entice the visitor to see an exhibition or a film when they might have come only for a coffee, to draw them in without their feeling the need to specifically come for a show, and to help everyone understand where they are in the building and where everything else is. Even the main cinema has a large window below the screen allowing the audience to be connected to Dundee before and after the film and allow the external world a glimpse of the interior at the same time. This is part of the idea of the building as part of the city as a whole. Everything is visible from either the internal street or the cafe/bar. The street is supported by the necessary ancillary facilities and behind the scenes by a double height office space.

Adjacent to the cafe and visible from it is the world of the printmakers, placed there as an enticement to participate whilst beneath is the two storey "engine room" of the university facilities grouped around a double height experimental gallery.

Finally the language of the building grows out of the idea of inserting the new facilities within the eroded shell of the former brick warehouse. New building slips past the old in a series of planar elements of copper glass and steel. These planes then become a language of the new wing beneath a single unifying roof profile and are repeated in sliding doors and walls internally.

Since its opening the building has been a phenomenal success attracting more than three times the number of visitors expected.

## Other Details

Architects	Richard Murphy, Bill Black, James Mason, Edward Hollis, Oliver Chapman, Will Tunnel, Alan Grey, Brent Railton, Ian Strakis
Engineers	ARUP Scotland
M&E Engineers	ARUP Scotland
Quantity Surveyor	Thomson Bethune
Acoustic Engineers	Sandy Brown Associates
Colour Consultant	Linda Green, Studio Green
Contractor	Torith Construction Ltd
Construction Cost	£6.1m
Client	Dundee City Council

## Awards

## AWARDS

1999 Regeneration of Scotland Supreme Award

2000 RIBA Award

2000 Civic Trust Award

2001 D.I.A. - Commendation

2007 Dundee Institute of Architects - Building of the Decade Award



## Press

September 2016 20 Years of Award Winning Architecture in Dundee

February 2011 An Artistic Discovery

February 2011 Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre

2000 Kunstara

January 2000 Murphy Reigns Supreme

19 December 1999 Review Of The Year

December 1999 When Material Meets Transparency

December 1999 Richard Murphy Takes Regeneration Supreme Award

October 1999 Best Architects Go Head To Head

August 1999 Dundee

Dundee Institute of Architects - DIA20Y Book

Property Executive

The Arup Journal, Millennium Issue 1

Deutsche Bauzeitschrift

Project Scotland

Sunday Herald

Acciaio Arts Architettura

Chartered Architect

Project Scotland

Architectural Review

August 1999	Dundee	Architectural Review
July 1999	Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre (specifiers Choice)	AJ Focus
June 1999	The Art House	The Scotsman
Summer 1999	Dundee Contemporary Arts	Ahss Magazine
May 1999	Discovering Art	Arca Issue No. 1
22 April 1999	Murphy's Magic	Architects' Journal
April/May 1999	Inspiration: Dundee's New Arts Centre	Artwork
26 March 1999	Vertical Hold	Building Design
21 March 1999	Beautiful Vision	Scotland On Sunday
7 March 1999	Dundee's Rprime Example Of Good Architecture	The Sunday Times
March 1999	Prime Example Of Ingenuity	Glasgow Herald
28 February 1999	Striking A Post Industrial Pose	Sunday Herald
Winter 1999	Generations (regeneration Of Scotland Award)	Prospect
Summer 1999	Centre For An Art Lover	Prospect
1999	Contemporary Arts Centre In Dundee	Archis
December 1998	Glasgow Was Miles Better But Here Comes Dundee	The Scotsman
Ocotber 1998	Urban Space And Fresh Ideas	The Herald
1997	New Work/future Visions	British Architecture
15 July 1996	£8m Arts Centre Design Decided	Evening Telegraph
July 1996	Hi-tech Village For Dundee	Scotland On Sunday
Spring 1996	Richard Murphy	Arq
August/September 1996	Chance Of Re-discovery Of Dundee	Artwork

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