

# Irish Design Trail



**museum**  
National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

**Discover treasures of  
Irish design on display  
in the Museum...**

# ***“A wish to find work for Irish hands in the making of beautiful things....”***

*Evelyn Gleeson, Dun Emer Guild Prospectus, 1903*

The National Museum of Ireland cares for vast collections of artefacts, of which only a fraction are on display at our four museum sites. This includes the decorative arts collections of furniture, glass, silver, ceramics, clothing and jewellery, musical and scientific instruments, coins, stamps and much more. The decorative arts exhibitions at Collins Barracks provide an insight into the breadth of these collections, which include the best of Irish design across these mediums over the past two hundred years.

When the Art & Industrial Division was established in 1877 as part of the then Dublin Museum of Science and Art, its remit included the commission, collection and display of Irish design. This had the dual aim of preserving state-of-the-art exemplars and encouraging the advancement of arts and crafts in Ireland.

Over time, Irish design has been influenced by our rich heritage, much of which can be seen at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, from Neolithic passage tomb engravings to Bronze Age gold and medieval illuminated manuscripts and metalwork.



These artistic traditions inspired the Celtic Revival movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, some exceptional works of which are on display here at the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History.

Meanwhile, Irish designers kept pace with trends and movements outside Ireland, from Neo-classicism to Art Nouveau and Modernism. Irish design has also had its innovators, such as Eileen Gray whose pioneering work in architecture and furniture design is now internationally recognised.

The National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History continues this mission by collecting remarkable and representative pieces of art, craft and design in a range of mediums by Irish designers, working at home or abroad.

This guide aims to provide Museum visitors with a way to navigate the decorative arts exhibitions, showcasing Irish design. Take this trail and discover some of the highlights and hidden treasures of the Museum's historic and contemporary design collections.

***“To create,  
one must first  
question everything.”***

*Eileen Gray*



## Follow the trail...



### 1 Unhappy Judas, Harry Clarke, 1913

What's in Store, Gallery 14

Harry Clarke, illustrator and artist, created this evocative panel early in his career in 1913. It is indicative of his later work which often featured religious iconography. Here, Clarke brings the heavenly fate of Judas Iscariot alive through his expressive figures, rich colour palette, and profuse ornamentation.



### 2 Warrior-Lady Bag, Úna Burke, 2013

21st Century Irish Craft, Gallery 1a

Úna Burke is a contemporary leather artist whose designs have appeared on the silver screen and worn by stars such as Rihanna and Lady Gaga. Burke's signature style and techniques are on full display in this black handbag, which is composed of leather strips fitted together with brass studs and embellished with spikes.



### 3 Armillary Sphere, Lynch & Sons, 1808-1825

Curator's Choice, Gallery 1

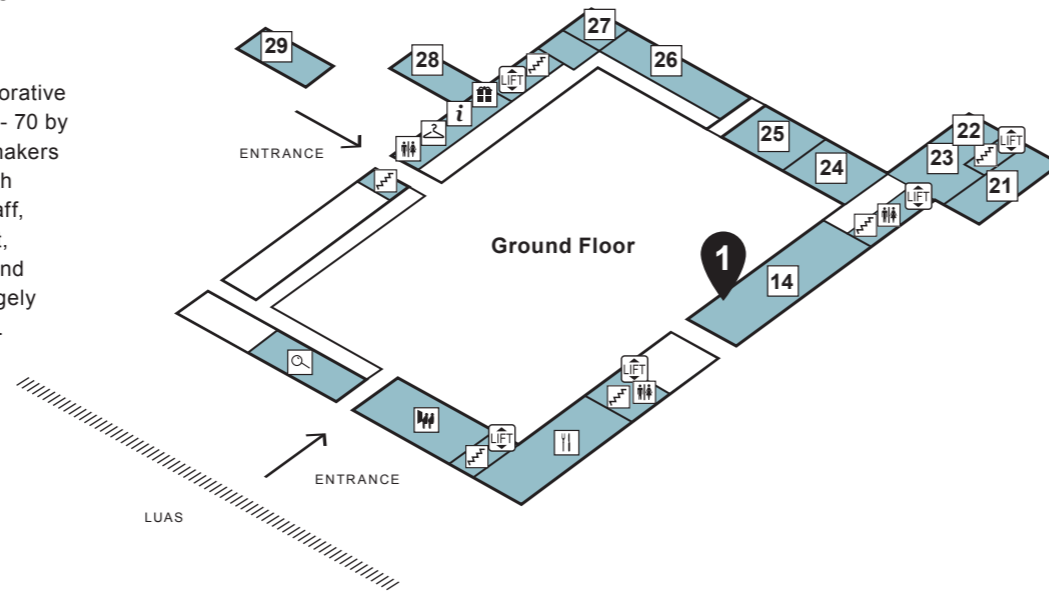
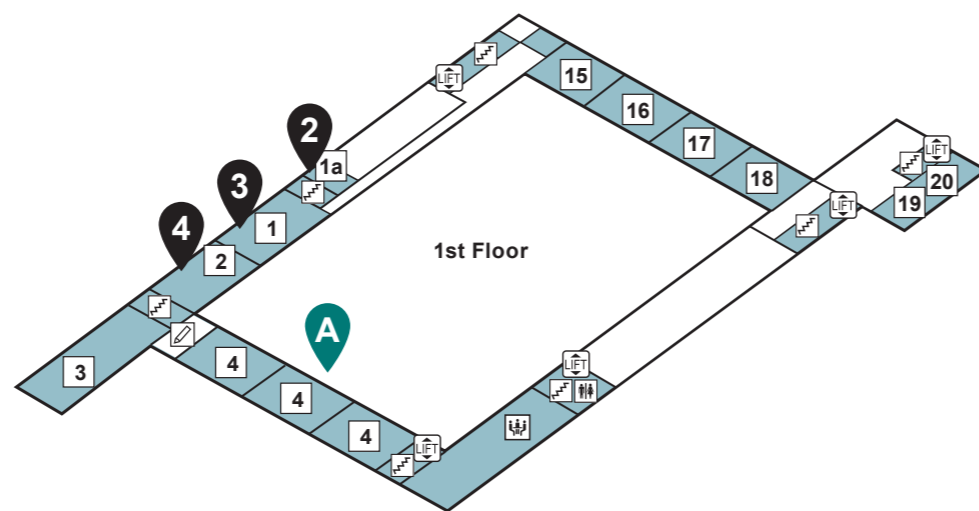
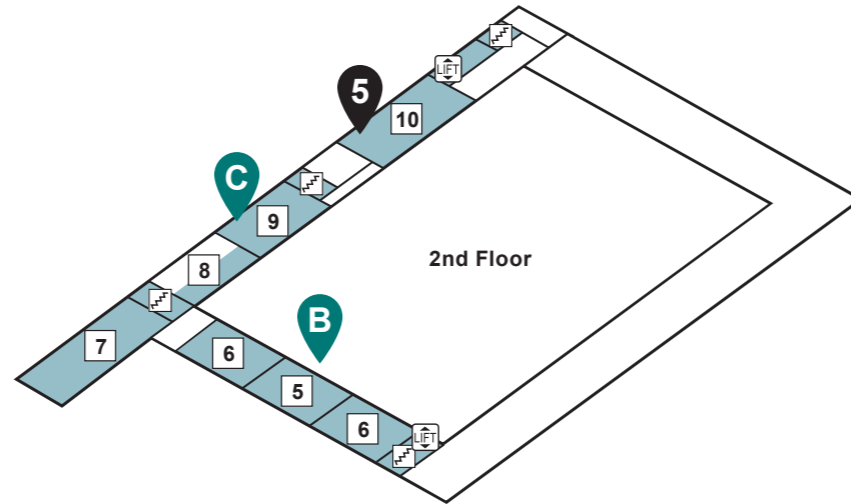
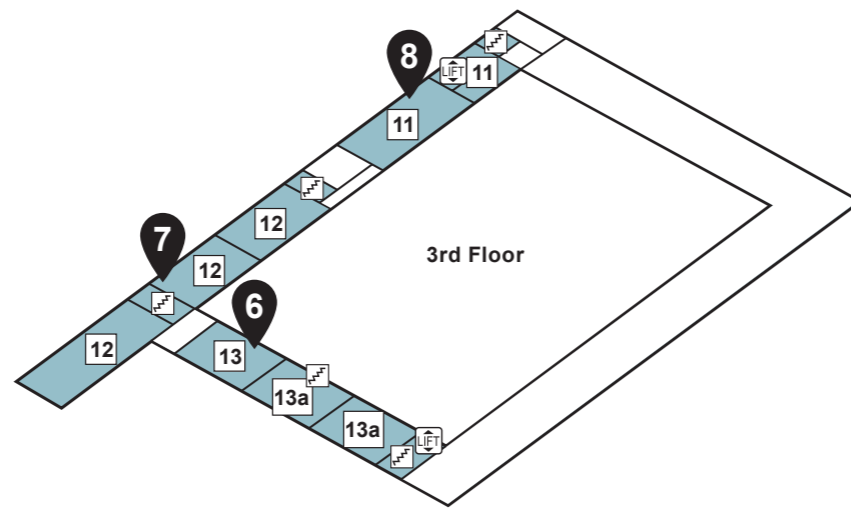
In the 19th century, Dublin was a hub for the production of scientific instruments, with several active firms designing telescopes, sextants, and other gadgets. This brass armillary sphere, produced by Lynch & Sons, elegantly models some of Earth's rings of longitude and latitude for the purposes of instruction and display.



### 4 Decanter, Pugh Glassworks, 1850-1860

Out of Storage, Gallery 2

This ruby decanter displays a geometric checkered pattern, ridged neck and decorative stopper. It was produced between 1860 - 70 by Pugh Glassworks, the last active glassmakers in Ireland until the mid-20th century. With Dublin's finest glass artisans on their staff, including Franz Tieze and Joseph Eisert, Pugh's designs featured intricately cut and engraved ornamentation that proved hugely popular among the Irish consumer base.



### 5 Mullingar Town Trophy, Percy Oswald Reeves, 1934

GAA: People, Objects & Stories, Gallery 10

Enameller, metalworker, and teacher, Percy Oswald Reeves produced this copper and marble Gaelic football trophy for Mullingar in 1934. Melding Celtic knotwork and enamel with geometric lines and sculptural figures in the Art Deco style, Reeves' ancient and modern hybrid design is a fitting testament to the endurance of the GAA in Ireland.



### 6 Display of traditional Irish chairs

Irish Country Furniture, Gallery 13

Ten chairs, made from locally sourced natural materials such as rushes, straw, and willow, demonstrate the breadth of traditional Irish designs and crafting techniques. These chairs were typical of rural Irish homes before the commodification and mass production of furniture in the mid to late 20th century.



### 7 Celtic Revival Outfit, Dun Emer Guild, 1920s

The Way We Wore, Gallery 12

This outfit was designed by Kitty McCormack of the Dun Emer Guild, a co-operative craft studio founded by Evelyn Gleeson in 1902. Worn by Clare Kennedy at the pan-Celtic Congress in Bangor, Wales in 1927, the outfit includes a dress, veil, headband, and cloak. It is embroidered with Celtic interlace and zoomorphic designs which take inspiration from medieval works like the Book of Kells.



### 8 E-1027 table, Eileen Gray, 1926-1929

Eileen Gray, Gallery 11

This side table is one of modernist architect and designer Eileen Gray's most famous creations. Intended to be mass-produced, this is the first of only six tables of its kind that still survive. Notably, it has an adjustable arm that can raise or lower the height of the tabletop. Made from chromium-plated steel, this sleek and functional piece was designed to adorn the villa of the same name that Gray designed in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France.

## ...But don't miss these galleries!

- A Irish Silver**  
Five centuries of the highest quality silver objects produced in Ireland can be found here.
- B Period Furniture**  
Room settings from the 16th century show the best of Irish home furniture design over time. Paper and pencils are available in the Take Your Seats gallery to design your own chair, inspired by remarkable exemplars.
- C Ib Jorgensen**  
Famous fashion designer Ib Jorgensen's glamorous portfolio of work is on display here.

## Find your way...

<b>3rd Floor</b>	11	Eileen Gray 1878 – 1976
	12	The Way We Wore – 250 Years of Irish Clothing and Jewellery
	13	Irish Country Furniture
	13a	A Dubliner's Collection of Asian Art: The Albert Bender Collection
<b>2nd Floor</b>	5/6	Period Furniture
	7	Alison Lowry: (A)Dressing our Hidden Truths
	8	Out of Storage (ii)
	9	Ib Jorgensen A Fashion Retrospective
	10	GAA: People, Objects & Stories
	<b>1st Floor</b>	1
	1a	21st Century Irish Craft
	2	Out of Storage
	3	Airgead: 1000 Years of Irish Coinage
	4	Irish Silver
	15/20	Soldiers and Chiefs
<b>Ground Floor</b>	14	What's in Store
	21/23	Soldiers and Chiefs
	24	Barracks Life Room
	25	Recovered Voices
	26	Imaging Conflict
	27	Temporary Exhibition Space
	28	The Riding School
29	Asgard	

## Key to Map

	Reception
	Cloakroom
	Toilets
	Shop
	Café
	Exhibition/Public Space
	Lecture Theatre
	Learning Resource Room
	Temporary Exhibition Gallery
	Stairs
	Lift
	Office Space

# Irish Design Trail

*The Education & Outreach  
Department runs programmes  
for the public, families, and  
schools throughout the year.*

To scan the QR code, open your phone's camera, hover over the code, then click the link.



For information about upcoming events at NMI – Decorative Arts & History, **scan here!**



Do you have comments or suggestions for this trail or the Museum? **Scan here!**



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