



Written by Teresa Stoppani
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**Greenwich Architecture Open Lecture Series 200607
Part I - Identities and Representations**

- University of Greenwich School of Architecture & Construction
- Mansion Site, Avery Hill Campus
- Bexley Road, Eltham, London SE9 2PQ
- Norbert Singer Lecture Theatre (M055)
- Thursday 07 Dec 2006 17.30

**Yvonne Farrell
Grafton Architects Dublin
Anchor and animation**



We came to Milan in misty October, when time stands still with no light or shade to tell the time of day. Small observations led to big moves. Observing the stone floor of the city, the rugged solid geological walls of the city, not pretty, but challenging. On the campus are the heroic buildings of Pagano & Muzio, with Moretti not far away on Corso Italia! We step from a noisy street into a lush courtyard with an aviary filling the space with birdsong.

A city of hard exteriors and friendly interiors.

We begin. We see that this city is full of 'big spaces ... we should make another one ... this city has beautiful rooms ... la Scala, Stazione Centrale ... we should try to make another one ...'. This city is rugged, robust tough defensive solid, we should make a building like this. We have never made a building like the Bocconi building. We would never have thought of making a building like this except in Milan. Half the building carved out of the ground, virtually no windows on the outside and a myriad of courtyards and suspended gardens inside.

Responding to the character of the city as described by their Milanese colleagues, "hard on the outside, friendly on the inside", Grafton Architects have conceived their recently completed Bocconi University in Milan as an edge with a crusty 'shield', constructed in a robust material (stone, render, concrete). Inside it, the Aula Magna articulated by a folded/pleated sculpted wall is a more refined and 'luxurious' special space within its oyster shell.

Yvonne Farrell will explore the Bocconi University Project in the context of other Grafton Architects' projects, discussing their attention to context, materiality and structure.

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara studied architecture at the University College Dublin and set up Grafton Architects in Dublin in 1978. The practice has received numerous Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland and Architectural Association of Ireland Awards, has been short-listed for the 2003 Mies van der Rohe Prize and awarded the 2004 Downes medal.

Farrell and McNamara have been teaching at UCD since 1976, and have taught and lectured in Europe, Jordan and China. They have a history of involvement with public exhibitions, publications and debate in relation to Architecture. They organised 'Traditions & Directions' exhibition on Irish architecture (London & Dublin, 1980), 'Making a Modern Street' exhibition, a collaboration with artists and architects (1981), a strategy for urban living Exhibition (Making a Modern Street, 1990) coinciding with Millennium celebrations of the founding of Dublin city.

Farrell and McNamara were co-founders of Group '91, a co-operation between eight architectural practices, with shared architectural values. Group '91 won the major international Competition for Urban Development of inner city Dublin - The Temple Bar Framework Plan. They have built numerous projects, including schools and university buildings in Ireland. In 2002 Grafton Architects won a International Competition for new facilities for Università Luigi Bocconi in Milan, now under construction. In 2003 they were invited to participate in the Urban Development Competition for Bjorvika District, Oslo, Norway. Recent projects include the Urban Institute of Ireland, University College Dublin and the Meath Arts Centre, Navan, Co. Meath.

Grafton Architects: www.graftonarchitects.ie