



Press release – February, 2025

Creativity Connects People:

A rich Ireland-Japan dialogue on arts and crafts through the ages marks the opening of the new Ireland House in Tokyo and the Ireland Pavilion at Osaka World Expo

With major participation of Making In Cultural Programme and Joseph Walsh Studio

A 3-part curatorial project:

RINN / 輪 at Ireland Pavilion, Osaka World Expo – from 13 April to 13 October 2025

RINN / 輪, Inaugural Exhibition of Ireland House, Tokyo – from 17 April to 20 May 2025

RINN / 輪 at A Lighthouse called Kanata Gallery, Tokyo – from 17 to 30 April 2025



Magnus RINN in the making – Photo by Norman Wilcox

To celebrate the deep and long-lasting connections between Japan and Ireland, the Government of Ireland commissioned Joseph Walsh Studio and the Making In Cultural Programme – a not-for-profit foundation conceived and developed by the Irish designer – to undertake a creative programme of engagement with Japan in 2024 and 2025, through major participation in Osaka World Expo 2025 and a group exhibition in Tokyo.

On this occasion, Joseph Walsh Studio will present *RINN/輪*, a three-part curatorial project showcased across three different locations in Japan, before being reunited at the Glucksman in Cork (Ireland), this summer. *RINN/輪* has been in development for months at the Fartha Campus, a creative hub in South Ireland that houses Joseph Walsh Studio.

Japanese art and craft shares with its Irish counterparts a focus on natural materials and features of the landscape, with a similar blurring of the Western distinction between ‘art’ and ‘craft’. Both cultures emphasize a deep respect for the past and an awareness of the ephemeral nature of existence, thus fostering a sense of continuity and reverence, which is visible across all art forms.

As an established ambassador of Irish arts and crafts, Joseph Walsh is committed to championing those who care deeply about making since the creation of his studio in 1999. He has notably fostered collaborations with Japanese makers, and - through the creation and development of the Making In Cultural Programme – reasserted the value of making across all creative disciplines.

RINN/輪, Ireland and Japan: a dialogue on making, place and time at Ireland House and A Lighthouse called Kanata Gallery, Tokyo

Presented in partnership with A Lighthouse called Kanata Gallery, *RINN/輪 Ireland and Japan: a dialogue on making, place and time* is an exhibition that delves into the culture of making and the relationship to place and time, between Ireland and Japan, specially created for the opening cultural programme of Ireland House Tokyo. Overlooking a park in central Tokyo, Ireland House is scheduled to open in 2025, and will serve as a 3,000 square metre flagship example of the Ireland House concept, serving as a vibrant hub for creative dialogue. This state-of-the-art facility will house the Irish Embassy, State Agencies, the official residence, as well as an exhibition and performance area and library, serving as a vibrant hub for creative dialogue.

RINN/輪 will also be reflected at Expo 2025, through imagery and related exhibition objects. The exhibition will return to Ireland later in 2025 at the Glucksman Gallery in University College Cork.

Inspired by *Making In* and the connections that have developed between makers from Japan and Ireland, *RINN/輪* is jointly curated by Joseph Walsh and Wahei Aoyama of A Lighthouse called Kanata Gallery. Featuring both new and collaborative works from Irish and Japanese makers in art and architecture, the exhibition will explore the idea of circularity; connections between people, relationship to place; relationship to the past and the future, through material form-finding.

The themes and ideas explored through the makers’ work will be contextualized in the supporting publication with essays by historians, scholars, authors, poets and curators, while the exhibition will include objects such as historical pieces, paintings and making tools, creating a new cultural canvas for Ireland-Japan relationships.

Possible contributors to the publication include Glenn Adamson, Writer & Curator; Professor Finola O’Kane, Historian; John Fitzgerald, Author; Michifumi Isoda, Scholar & Author and a Curator from the National Craft Museum Kanazawa.

The exhibition will continue with a Part II entitled *Quadrumvirate*, hosted by the gallery A Lighthouse called Kanata, bringing together two Irish artists and two Japanese artists in dialogue: Joseph Walsh, Sean Scully, Kan Yasuda, and Sueharu Fukami.



Magnus RINN in the making – Photo by Norman Wilcox

RINN/輪 at the Ireland Pavilion at Osaka World Expo

A significant milestone in the studio's history, Joseph Walsh will unveil *Magnus Rinn* at the Ireland Pavilion Expo Osaka, his first monumental outdoor sculpture, showcasing his exceptional craftsmanship and artistic vision. Through these initiatives, the *Making In* Cultural Programme and Joseph Walsh Studio continue to advance an understanding and appreciation of design, making and craftsmanship, with a view to fostering cultural connections and dialogues between Ireland and Japan.

Magnus Rinn is a circular form, transitioning from bronze to wood and finished in a gold gilding. The work symbolizes the relationship between man and nature, representing the passing of time and Nature's cycles. This singular form will be made of bronze and wood; the lower half in bronze with the texture of the maker's hand, while the upper section is made of high-performance Oak. A three-dimensional free form lamination will be achieved through newly-innovated processes at Joseph Walsh Studio. The shape of this element will be influenced by the material employed and its growing conditions. The entire work will be gilded. The wood grain will read through the gilding, as will the texture of the hands forming the mould for the bronze. These textures will speak to the relationship between man and nature; the circular movement reflecting time passing and our coexistence and harmony.

About Joseph Walsh Studio and Joseph Walsh

Joseph Walsh's work reflects his passion for expression through material and form. From monumental scale sculptures to one-of-a-kind site-specific commissions and collectible design editions, every piece within his dynamic body of work reveals an intuitive relationship with making, a sympathetic use of materials and an expressive engagement with form.

In 1999, Joseph Walsh founded Joseph Walsh Studio, which encompasses a design studio, workshop, gallery and archive, set around an 18th-century farmhouse in the countryside of County Cork on the south coast of Ireland. Art, craft, design and technical innovation merge in the exquisite and expressive pieces that the studio creates, from monumental sculptures, one-of-a-kind site-specific commissions to collectible design editions, primarily in wood, but also incorporating other materials such as stone and bronze.

Striving for excellence, creativity and experimentation, Joseph Walsh Studio Workshop has become one of the leading studio workshops in Europe. A centre of excellence in making, it is committed to increasing the knowledge and understanding of wood and to raising standards of craftsmanship, enriched by its team of talents coming from all over the world. www.josephwalshstudio.com

About *Making In*

Making In is an annual gathering of makers – a series of unique conversations and performances that celebrate making – hosted by Joseph Walsh Studio at his Workshop in Fartha, County Cork. It considers making as a way of thinking, exploring, expressing and imagining and is a focal point for like-minded individuals who believe in sharing and passing on the skills and knowledge of craftsmanship - across disciplines and generations. Each year at this event, creative voices from around the world share their stories of making with an international audience of practitioners, art and design professionals, students, collectors and patrons.

Making In is a strategic partner for both Ireland House Tokyo and Ireland at Expo 2025. Moderated by historian and author Glenn Adamson, the theme for *Making In* 2024, Circle, brought a focus to the cyclical and consequential aspects of making, across craft, art, design, architecture, fashion, gastronomy and performance.

Out of the annual *Making In* seminar, other projects have emerged. Most recently is a three-part series of documentary films that capture the conversations, collaborations and energy of Making In, by award-winning director Pat Collins. The first in this series, titled *MAKING*, premiered at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris this past Spring. The second film, to premiere in Osaka and Tokyo on the 15th of April 2025, will feature participants in the 2024 edition of Making In at Joseph Walsh Studio including a significant focus on the Ireland/Japan dimension.

Since its beginning, *Making In* has welcomed speakers from Japan including sculptors Kan Yasuda and Satoru Ozaki; Takahiro Yagi, Kaikadō and designer Shuji Nakagawa. In 2024, participants include architect Shigeru Ban; 8th-generation NARIKOMA-YA Kabuki Theatre actor Shikan Nakamura VIII and Hiroyuki Tsujii, custodian of the Karasaki Pine Tree. www.makingin.org

About the Ireland Pavilion at Osaka World Expo, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs

Expo 2025 will take place in Osaka, Kansai, Japan from 13 April to 13 October, and is expected to attract 28 million visitors with over 160 countries participating.

As part of Ireland's participation at Expo 2025 Osaka, an ambitious programme is in development to showcase Ireland to an international audience. The Ireland Pavilion, designed by the Office of Public Works Ireland and TSP Taiyo Japan, became the first international participant country at Expo 2025 to receive a certificate of construction completion on 17 December 2024.

The Pavilion design is based on the triple knot or triskele, an ancient motif which has appeared in Irish art and craft since Neolithic times. The design also looks to the future by using sustainable materials that can be reused after Expo. The Ireland Pavilion will serve as a hub for Irish organisations, Team Ireland, the diaspora, affinity diaspora, and as a place where connections with Ireland are fostered. An immersive visitor experience will leave all those who enter the pavilion with a better understanding of Ireland's culture, its people, and its ties with Japan

As Japan is Ireland's second largest trading partner in Asia, participation in Expo Osaka is part of the Global Ireland strategy to build Ireland's impact and visibility in the world. Ireland's presence at Expo Osaka will be complemented by the opening in 2025 of a new flagship 'Ireland House' in Tokyo housing the Irish Embassy and State Agencies, and both elements are part of a wider programme of events as part of Ireland Japan 2025. <https://www.ireland.ie/en/expo/>

About Ireland House

Overlooking a park in central Tokyo, Ireland House opens in 2025, and will serve as a 3,000 square metre flagship example of the Ireland House concept. This state-of-the art facility will house the Irish Embassy, State Agencies, the official residence, as well as an exhibition and performance area and library, serving as a vibrant hub for creative dialogue.

The new Ireland House will be a showcase, state-of-the-art platform from which Team Ireland in Japan will be able to project and promote what Ireland has to offer and to mark Ireland's commitment to its long-standing and ever-strengthening relationship with Japan. It is designed to act as a beacon for business, diplomacy, culture and community.

About A Lighthouse called Kanata

Since 2007, A Lighthouse called Kanata has been dedicated to the reevaluation of contemporary Japanese art in the 21st century, aiming to expand the boundaries of contemporary art from a diversified, multi-ethnic perspective. Through the rediscovery and evolution of aesthetic traditions, Kanata focuses on abstract painting and sculpture by both Japanese and international artists, reimagining beauty through an emphasis on materiality. The gallery hosts 4 to 5 exhibitions annually and participates in 6 to 8 international art fairs. Its program is further enriched by

publications that document and promote both emerging and established artists. Kanata also partners with leading international institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum (NY), the V&A (London), and the Long Museum (Shanghai), among others, creating global platforms for the recognition of the gallery's unique perspective and aesthetic.

Practical information

World Expo 2025 – 13 April to 13 October 2025
Osaka, Japan

MAKING In Circle film launch – 15 April 2025
Tokyo International Forum

RINN / 榑 *Ireland and Japan: a dialogue on making, place and time* – Opening on 16 April 2025
Ireland House, Tokyo, Japan

RINN / 榑 *Part II, Quadrumvirate* – from 17 to 30 April 2025
A Lighthouse called Kanata Gallery, Tokyo

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