

CALL FOR PAPERS
Extended deadline: 29 February
Conference
THE IRISH SHORT STORY

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
15 - 16 - 17 November 2012

Plenary speakers: Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Heather Ingman (Trinity College Dublin), Éibhear Walshe (University College Cork), Anne Fogarty (University College Dublin)

Often hailed as a 'national genre', the short story has known a long, diversified and distinguished tradition in Ireland, with such famous representatives as Sheridan LeFanu, James Joyce, George Moore, Somerville & Ross, Pádraic Ó Conaire, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Liam O'Flaherty, Mary Lavin, John McGahern, Anne Enright, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Claire Keegan and many others. Irish writers have not only played a crucial role in the development of the modern short story at the end of the nineteenth century and in its consolidation as a major literary form in the course of the twentieth century, they have also been at the forefront of attempts to define the short story as a genre particularly suited to capture modern life: the theoretical essays of Elizabeth Bowen, Seán Ó'Faoláin and Frank O'Connor are still considered authoritative texts in international short story theory.

Somewhat at odds with its status as the Irish prose form 'par excellence', is the rather more marginal status of the genre in literary criticism. The stories of individual writers are often considered as but an aside to their novelistic output, and studies of the formal and thematic development of the Irish short story have been few and far between. Yet, there are signs that this is changing. The study of the Irish short story has received a new impetus with such books as Heather Ingman's highly acclaimed *A History of the Irish Short Story* (2009) or the *Blackwell Companion to the British and Irish Short Story* (2008). Public awareness of the short story, on the other hand, has been raised through initiatives such as the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award and recent anthologies such as Anne Enright's *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* and Joseph O'Connor's *New Irish Short Stories*.

This conference hopes to both capture and further strengthen this new critical interest in the Irish short story by bringing together scholars working on the various forms, concerns and contexts of the short story in Ireland, as written both in English and in Irish. The conference specifically seeks to address the development of the short story as a literary genre in its own right - from its early forerunners in the tale tradition, through its paradigmatic modern(ist) embodiments to its contemporary transformations. It invites papers which address the output of individual writers as well as those that trace more general developments from a comparative, theoretical or contextual perspective. We also explicitly invite papers on the short story in Irish, although we would prefer these papers to be delivered in English. Since 2012 also marks the centenary of the birth of Mary Lavin, papers on her short fiction are also particularly welcome.

The conference is hosted by the K.U.Leuven department of Literary Studies and the Leuven Centre for Irish Studies (LCIS). It will take place in the newly refurbished Irish college in Leuven (the Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe).

Papers should not exceed 2500-3000 words (20 minutes' delivery). Proposals for papers (250 words) should be sent by e-mail to Elke D'hoker (elke.dhoker@arts.kuleuven.be) by February 29th 2012. More information about the conference will be posted on www.irishstudies.kuleuven.be/