

*Talking with My Father*, Sé Merry Doyle, 2015

Sé Merry Doyle's *Talking with My Father* weaves together stories concerning the life and the architecture of Robin Walker, a partner in the firm of Scott Tallon Walker, who decisively introduced a Miesian aesthetic into the vocabulary of modern Irish architecture. The film takes the viewer back and forth between the Ireland of 2015 and the 1960s, a journey woven from stories, drawings, photographs, text, and period films. Narrated by Simon Walker, the architect's son, the film is at once about reckoning with the memory of his father and the precariousness of Walker's work at a moment where there is little interest in remembering, much less preserving it. Robin Walker largely gave up architecture at the height of his success to concentrate on writing and teaching, an enigmatic retreat at the heart of the film. Revisiting the subtleties of Walker's schools, houses, university campuses, and offices, Doyle's *Talking to my Father* sets these against their much-altered existence in the present, deftly linking their present condition within to the modernization of Irish society during the 1960s and 1970s. Less nostalgic than gently indignant, the film is a love letter to Walker's tough-minded yet sensitive architecture amid another moment of profound change. In *Talking to my Father* the fate of Walker's buildings comes to stand for the fate of those years, still present yet largely forgotten amid the more recent and profound economic transformation of Ireland. The jury was particularly impressed with the film's lyrical and beautiful cinematography, which brings Walker's modern structures and landscapes to life, the urgent plea for their preservation and the intimate search for a son's understanding of his father.

2017 Award Committee:

Kenneth Breisch, Chair

Craig Buckley

Therese O'Malley