

## Reimagining Ireland's Bogs



### A Panel discussion and exhibition launch

Speakers: Bob Speers, Kate Flood, Evelyn D’Arcy and Katie Smirnova.

National Botanic Gardens 1<sup>st</sup> February at 2.00pm.

Bogs and peatlands have always been dynamic landscapes and are now at the heart of a transformative shift. This panel brings together four perspectives on Irish bogs and peatlands today, exploring research, architecture, agriculture, biodiversity and the arts, illuminating the cultural, ecological, and socio-economic transitions taking place across the midlands and the need for continued stewardship of these landscapes.

Traditionally viewed as working landscapes associated with turf-cutting and Bord na Móna, these iconic landscapes are evolving into spaces of restoration, conservation, and community and cultural renewal. This bog-inspired cultural renaissance sees writers, artists, communities and other groups reimagining their significance in Irish life. Yet threats to Ireland’s peatlands remain, as extractive activities continue in some areas and forestry and renewables are seen as appropriate after-use of the bog.

**Bob Speers** is an artist whose current exhibition *Thin Places* will be running in the gallery of the National Botanic Gardens from Feb.1<sup>st</sup> to Feb 23rd He describes the peatlands and bogs which feature in his painting as mystical or Thin Places. These are places where the boundary between our tangible world and the unseen world seem to touch.

**Kate Flood** is a peatland researcher exploring the cultural and social dimensions of peatlands and the role of communities in the restoration and conservation of peatlands.

**Evelyn D’Arcy** is an architect and co-founder of collaborative practice 12th Field. In partnership with Irish Architecture Foundation, 12th Field are currently working on *Bog Bothy*, a transformative place making project co-creating spaces for shelter, retreat, and deep engagement with Ireland’s evolving peat landscapes.

**Katie Smirnova** has worked with the FarmPEAT Project to engage with farmers and communities around the Midlands' raised bogs. Currently, she is helping to develop the knowledge and data-sharing PeatSense Platform.