

**Orla Murphy** MRIAI is Assistant Professor in UCD School of Architecture Planning and Environmental Policy, Co-Director of UCD Centre for Irish Towns (CfIT) and owner of Custom Architecture, a collaborative micro-practice focused on design, research and public engagement with architecture. Orla lives in Westport Co. Mayo in Ireland, and her research has been driven by a focus on rural towns. In 2012 Orla published *Town: Origins, Morphology & Future*, and accompanied this book with short animated film, TOWN, co-directed with Orla McHardy. This research received an RIAI Award.

In 2017 Orla, together with Jeffrey Bolhuis, Miriam Delaney, Jo Anne Butler, Tara Kennedy and Laurence Lord, was appointed to co-curate the Irish Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale. The pavilion, Free Market, explored public space within Irish market towns. Free Market toured to four towns with a bespoke public engagement programme as part of its national tour in 2019 and was awarded by both the AAI and the RIAI. The Free Market team has presented their findings from the public engagement strand of the exhibition to the Dáil Committee on Rural and Community Development and the Department of Housing.

In UCD Orla jointly runs the Master of Architecture Design Thesis course with Emmett Scanlon, and has been adapting the course to teach and research with a focus on the role of architectural practice in response to the climate crisis. She also established the UCD Centre for Irish Towns in 2019 with Philip Crowe, the aim of which is to gather together researchers across disciplines whose interests intersect with towns, to build connected and cross-cutting research, pedagogy and policy support. Orla represents UCD Centre for Irish Towns on the Advisory Group to the Irish government's new Town Centre First Policy development.

Orla is also co-presenter of the RTÉ documentary series Building Ireland, which explores Ireland's built heritage from the perspective of architecture, engineering and geography. The series has recently broadcast its third season.

**Relevant links:**

UCD profile: <https://people.ucd.ie/o.murphy>

Free Market: <http://www.freemarket.ie/>

Town, animated short film: <https://vimeo.com/98429001>

Town Centre Living Initiative Synthesis Report: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/86215-the-town-centre-living-initiative/>