

22-23 APRIL 2021

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Orla Murphy



Orla Murphy MRIAI is part-time Assistant Professor in [UCD](#) School of Architecture Planning and Environmental Policy, where she jointly co-ordinates the Master of Architecture Design Studio with Emmett Scanlon. Orla is also Co-Director of the UCD Centre for Irish Towns (CfIT) and owner of [Custom Architecture](#).

Orla lives in Westport Co. Mayo and her research has been driven by a focus on rural towns. Over the last 10 years, Orla's work has increasingly focused on rural towns, through design research, publication, public engagement and advocacy. Particular projects and collaborations with this focus include Atlas of Cavan (2008), Town: Origins, Morphology and Future (2012), Mapping Towns Offaly (2012), [Free Market](#) (2018) and UCD Centre for Irish Towns.

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 the history, present and future of public space within Irish market towns. Free Market toured to four towns in Ireland as part of its subsequent 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.

Orla co-authored the Town Centre Living Initiative Synthesis [report](#) with Dr Philip Crowe and Madeleine Leyes. She 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. 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

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