

## Mapping Spectral Traces International Network

Following on from the success of *Mapping Spectral Traces IV* international symposium, co-convened by Dr Nessa Cronin (Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway) and Dr Karen Till (Department of Geography, NUI Maynooth) in May 2011, we are delighted to announce the international launch of the *Mapping Spectral Traces Network*: [www.mappingspectraltraces.org](http://www.mappingspectraltraces.org)

The April conference marked the launch of an Irish-wide collaboration between *Ómós Áite*, based at the Centre for Irish Studies at NUI Galway, and the *Space&Place Research Collaborative* based at the Department of Geography, NUI Maynooth, and was one of a series of events organized by the *Mapping Spectral Traces* International Network to take place in 7 institutions across 5 countries in 2011-12. The next *Mapping Spectral Traces* international conference will take place in Galway, April 2012, and further details will be announced later this year.



*St Joseph's Holy Well, Lenane, Co. Galway. © Conor Foley, 2010*

*Mapping Spectral Traces* is a trans-disciplinary, international group of scholars, practitioners, community leaders and artists who work with and in communities, contested lands and diverse environments. As part of a commitment to socially engaged creative practice, network members have worked collaboratively and individually on projects that 'map' the unseen and unacknowledged difficult pasts that continue to structure present-day social relations. Acknowledging and addressing this emotive layer of the present and the past in contemporary life – in our cities, rural landscapes, and in ourselves – is a primary concern of this network. Through workshops, exhibitions, presentations, excursions, poster sessions and other forms of exchange, we have engaged in place-based social justice agendas in different parts of the world.



*She Lay as if at Play.* ©Mel Shearsmith, 2011

The network also serves to mediate and facilitate inter- and trans-disciplinary international dialogue to explore the role of the visual and performing arts in addressing such relevant concerns as ecological activism, ‘deep mapping’, place-based memory work, geographies of trauma, postcolonial geographies and related topics. As such, it has the ability to address the unseen as well as the seen, and to wed a wider, more holistic approach to topics that too often have been the subject of narrow focus. We believe that our work should have social relevance; creative practices that enable communities and various publics to care for and represent their pasts will be particularly relevant for primary and secondary educators, for those engaged in research in higher education, and for professionals working in urban design and policy at the neighborhood scale. We also support the participation of younger and older artists and community leaders in our network who may not otherwise have access to institutional resources.

The network is linked through its members (artists, landscape architects, architects, scholars, urban professionals, curators, media experts, local historians and community-based practitioners), and to a number of related initiatives and research groupings across its partner collaboratives and institutions across the humanities, social sciences, and visual, conceptual and performing arts.

If you wish to receive further information about *Mapping Spectral Traces* and/or *Ómós Áite: Space, Place Research Group* based at NUI Galway, please contact Dr Nessa Cronin, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway. Email: [nessa.cronin@nuigalway.ie](mailto:nessa.cronin@nuigalway.ie)

#### **Convening Collaboratives:**

- Land2 (University of Leeds, School of Design; UWE-Bristol, PLaCE Research Centre): <http://www.land2.uwe.ac.uk/>
- Ómós Áite (National University of Ireland Galway, Centre for Irish Studies): [http://www.nuigalway.ie/research/centre\\_irish\\_studies/omos\\_aite.html](http://www.nuigalway.ie/research/centre_irish_studies/omos_aite.html)
- PLaCE Minnesota (University of Minnesota Departments of Art and Landscape Architecture; College of Design)
- PLaCE Research Centre (UWE-Bristol, Faculty of Creative Arts, Humanities and Education, UK): <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/place/>

- PLaCE Scotland (University of Dundee, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design): <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/djcad/research>
- The Space&Place Research Collaborative (National University of Ireland Maynooth, Department of Geography): <http://geography.nuim.ie/research/space-place>
- Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Melbourne

