

Space&Place and Ómós *Aite* Workshop with Professor Linda McDowell

6 December 2013, 10:30am-12:30pm

Filmbase, CREATE office, Second Floor; Temple Bar, Dublin 2;

directions: <http://filmbase.ie/about/location/>

Special thanks to CREATE for generously providing space for this workshop

Special Guest: **Linda McDowell**: Professor of Human Geography, University of Oxford: Linda's research focuses on the connections between labour market restructuring and class and gender relations in times of significant change. She has published studies of investment banking (*Capital Culture* 1997), deindustrialisation (*Redundant Masculinity?* 2003), post-war migration (*Hard Labour* 2005) and low status service sector employment (*Working Bodies* 2009). Her most recent book is *Working Lives* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Confirmed Participants:

Kate Aston, Independent Artist who works with social change in mind: I am interested in the relationship between public spaces and their citizens. I am currently examining a mixture of creative methods and social media approaches to tackle several issues that affect women in our society such as abortion laws and domestic and sexual violence through my creative practice. I am very interested to see how learning about feminist geography might influence my work.

Almar Barry, Lecturer, Geography, St. Pats College, Dublin City University: My research interests are in entrepreneurship, employment and gender. I would like to participate in the workshop to ensure ongoing professional development as a geographer.

Margaret Brehony, Independent Researcher and Board Member of the Society for Irish Latin American Studies: My research interests include Irish migration, gender and inter-ethnic relations in the Caribbean - colonial period. I am not familiar with feminist geographical approaches and curious to learn more about how these approaches may contribute to my work.

Michelle Browne, Independent Artist: My research interest looks at the experience of mothers in the city, particularly with a buggy. I am interested in the workshop as I wish to learn more from the approach of geographers to research methods, and am particularly interested in Linda's interest in embodied and emotional knowledge and how this might come to bare on researching women's experience of the city. Through my initial research with mothers anger was highlighted a significant emotion felt in traversing the city and I wish to explore this further.

Jackie Bourke, Independent Researcher: My doctoral thesis drew on the literature of children's geographies to explore the experience of urban public space from the perspective of the child. I have been an advocate for children's participative rights for over 20 years and I am the founder and co-convenor of Playtime.ie, a consultancy which specialises in children's outdoor needs in urban neighbourhoods. There is an important synergy between feminist and children's geographies which I am currently reading about and I would be very interested to attend this workshop to learn more about Professor McDowell's work.

Tim Collins, Independent Researcher, Musician and Music Teacher and *Ómós Aite*: Space/Place Research Group, Co-Convenor, NUI Galway, Centre for Irish Studies: Linda's work was very valuable to my PhD work on investigating the gendered nature of dance practices in Sliabh Aughty. It would be great to meet her and to engage with her work again.

Ruth Comerford-Morris, PhD candidate, UCD Geography: My research examines the dialectical relationship between urban design and city marketing, and how this relationship is central to understanding the entrepreneurial city, including economic, social, physical and cultural transformations. I am interested in how people participate in and react to the urban environments created through periods of intense globally competitive urban development. Feminist geographers' focus on the lived experiences of individuals and groups in their own localities resonates with my own research that highlights the disconnect between the lived and conceived cities, and the role of planning and urban design in this schism.

Nessa Cronin, Lecturer, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway, and *Ómós Aite*: Space/Place Research Group, Co-Convenor: My current research interests are broadly in Irish Place Studies and include: critical and counter-cartographies; the significance of a 'sense of place' in Irish literature and cultural traditions; and the changing nature of space/place relations in contemporary Irish culture and society.

culturstruction, Collaborative Architecture and Design Studio, founded by **Jo Anne Butler** and **Tara Kennedy**: We work together as designers, artists, curators and facilitators on a range of projects including: small scale built work; temporary public installations; exhibition design and project curating; public lectures and panel contributions; workshop programmes and public-realm research. The practice of designing architecture today is predominantly computer based. Slumped unhealthily at computers we feel disconnected from the physicality of the spaces and our bodies. In construction, the role of maker is traditionally male. As female practitioners, trained in sculpture now working in architecture, we want to think more about physicality, embodiment and labour in the 'work' of design. We wonder if a good starting point could be through feminist theory – which is something we know little about.

Lisa Godson, Lecturer, Visual and Material Culture, NCAD: In terms of feminist spatial practices, I'm interested in how gendered approaches to religious space in Ireland considered women as preoccupied with the 'back'/private space of religion - the praying on behalf of others, the domesticating of sacred personages within the family and so on, and men with the 'front'/public space - participating in processions, acting as assistants in church etc. I'm also now looking into how religious space extended to Irish migrants in the 19thC; I've found some fascinating advice books to Irish girls in America!

Raina Howe, MA in Irish Studies, NUI Galway: My research interests lie in the environmental history of Ireland and its transformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. My MA was entitled "The Wooden Door of Leinster: Decline of the Gaelic Environment 1500-1600" and I hope to continue this study for a PhD. I hope the workshop can give me a new perspective in how I view the environment (whether natural or man-made) in relation to gender, and how gender plays a role in how a landscape is developed.

Gerry Kearns, Prof. NUIM Geography: I am a geographer working at the intersection of history, politics, and medicine. My current projects include an investigation of how the Irish Catholic Church has used spaces of subjectivation to produce Catholic bodies. I am also looking at the cultural politics of spatial metaphors in AIDS discourse. I would like the opportunity to think about how the relations between feminist practice in art and in the academy, particularly these relate to themes of disease and the body.

Silvia Loeffler, Independent Artist, Researcher and Lecturer (NCAD and DIT): My work deals with emotional relationships to spaces. I am currently working on 'Glas Journal', an artistic research project that documents men and women's experiences of Dun Laoghaire harbour, and the gender dimensions of the harbour as a place of home and work. Harbours have historically been masculine spaces of labour, but both men and women have created homes and intimate attachments to this space. In this workshop, I am interested in exploring how research practices might interrogate such assumed divisions between masculine public spaces and feminine private spaces.

Claire McGing, PhD Candidate, NUIM Geography: My research interests lie predominantly in feminist critiques of electoral geographies, with a specific focus on gendered institutionalism and women's representation in parliamentary politics. I would like to learn more about feminist approaches to geography, and to also hear any career advice Linda might have for young women academics.

Bryonie Reid: Independent Researcher and Artist: I am a cultural geographer and artist with particular interests in the complex relationships between place and belonging, whose academic and visual practices intersect and overlap. Having had a positive experience of largely female and explicitly feminist working groups, I am keen to develop my understanding of feminist research methodologies in partnership with other feminist scholars and artists, as well as to explore further the productive relationship between academic (particularly geographical) and visual art practices.

Zoë O'Reilly, Independent Artist and recent PhD Graduate, NUIM Geography and Media Studies: My research interests include the subjective experiences of migrants; the current status of traditionally nomadic peoples, including research on Irish travellers and nomadic tribes in India; feminist methodology and theory; participatory visual research methods. I am interested in attending the workshop with Linda due to her wide research experience and expertise in several areas of interest to me. I feel that understanding more about her work and experience could be of use, and a positive influence at this early part of my career.

Karen Till, Sr. Lecturer, NUIM Geography and Space&Place Collaborative Director: My geo-ethnographic research and curatorial practice explores the interrelationships between place and personal and social memory in the context of contemporary cities marked by state-perpetrated violence or other forms of structural injustice. After taking a seminar with Linda as a MA student (ages ago), I remain inspired by feminist theory in my work, particularly in questioning spatial boundaries, such as public/private, mind/body, inside/outside, local/global. As a cultural geographer and ethnographer, I use a range of participatory and qualitative feminist research methods, so look forward to discussing current feminist practice with such an interesting group of people.

Blaithin Quinn, Independent Artist and Architect: My current practice-based research explores an interdisciplinary approach to engaged architecture practice through collaborative projects, with a particular focus on how contemporary art practice can inform public engagement with architecture. With regard to this workshop, I am interested in how feminist approaches to design might influence our understanding and experience of the built environment and in how feminist spatial practice can expand architecture as a discipline: exploring alternative modes of practice, challenging power structures, opening up public engagement and thinking beyond the discipline.

Moynagh Sullivan, Lecturer, NUI Maynooth English: My general research interests include: Psychoanalytic and Gender Theory, Twentieth Century and Contemporary Poetry, Women's Writing, Postmodernism and Popular Culture. A recent publication explored how economic developments of the last two decades have transformed questions of what and who constitutes the "Other" within Irish society, but also how older societal faultlines and processes of 'Othering' based on gender, disability, class and religious difference remain prevalent. Because Linda's work also examines change and continuity in class and gender relations in times of significant change, I look forward to learning how a geographer addresses similar research questions.