



TRIGGER WARNINGS: EXHIBITING SENSITIVE MATERIALS

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

10 OCTOBER 2023

GRANGEGORMAN
HISTORIES

FÉILE NA STAIRE
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN FESTIVAL
OF HISTORY

SCHEDULE

10.45 **WELCOME** Ruth Hegarty (Managing Editor, RIA)
INTRODUCTION Philip Cohen (Chair, Grangegorman Histories)

KEYNOTE

11.00 **RISKY HISTORIES: THE VALUE OF PRESENTING
DIFFICULT PASTS**

Manon Parry (University of Amsterdam & VU Amsterdam)

PANEL 1

12.00 **BUILDINGS WITH A COMPLICATED HISTORY**

CHAIR: Dara Lynne Lenehan (EPIC Design)

Victoria Northwood (Bethlem Museum of the Mind, UK)

Colin Gale (Bethlem Museum of the Mind, UK)

Jennifer O'Mahoney (South East Technological University)

Denise Murray (Metropolitan Workshop)

LUNCH

PANEL 2

14.30 **HIGHLY-CHARGED OBJECTS**

CHAIR: Siobhán Doyle (Historian and Curator)

Alan Counihan (Artist)

Elizabeth Gagen (Aberystwyth University, UK)

Brenda Malone (National Museum of Ireland)

16.00 **CLOSING REMARKS** Nora Rahill (Grangegorman Histories)



MANON PARRY

Professor Manon Parry is a historian of medicine and an exhibition curator, specializing in the uses of the humanities for health and wellbeing. She has curated gallery and online exhibitions on a wide range of topics, including global health and human rights, disability in the American Civil War, and medicinal and recreational drug use. Traveling versions of her exhibitions have visited more than 300 venues in Argentina, Canada, Germany, Guam, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. She has served as an advisor on exhibition projects at the Smithsonian/National Museum of American History; Folger Shakespeare Library; George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens; Library of Congress/Capitol Visitor's Center; Mütter Museum; National Archives and Records Administration (all USA); Mucem: Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (France), the Rijksmuseum Boerhaave (The Netherlands), and KU Leuven (Belgium). She is co-editor, with Ellen S. More and Elizabeth Fee, of *Women Physicians and the Cultures of Medicine*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), and author of *Broadcasting Birth Control: Family Planning and Mass Media* (Critical Issues in Health and Medicine Series, Rutgers University Press, August 2013). Her current book project *Human Curiosities: Expanding the Social Relevance of Medical Museums*, examines trends in European medical museums.



RISKY HISTORIES: THE VALUE OF PRESENTING DIFFICULT PASTS

Museums of the history of psychiatry were some of the first medical museums to reimagine how their collections could be interpreted to engage broad audiences, including visitors who are highly critical of the history of medical management of mental illness. In recent years the trend has accelerated, with several leading museums no longer defining themselves as repositories of the history of psychiatry but taking a wider approach to the mind in science, society, and culture. While this is a useful corrective to narrow histories of medical prowess that ignored patient perspectives, it also simplifies the story and draws too clear a distinction between a (cruel and ignorant) past and the (supposedly enlightened) present. In contrast to escalating pressure to remove highly charged topics and objects from display, I propose deeper engagement with these “risky” materials and the histories, and the contemporary legacies, that they represent. In this lecture, focusing on examples from a range of recent exhibitions, I explain why.





DARA LYNNE LENEHAN

Chair

Dara Lynne Lenehan is the founder and principal designer of EPIC Design, trading as EPIC Heritage Consulting Ltd., an award-winning creative interpretive exhibition design agency. EPIC holds a ten year track record of delivering best-in-class visitor experiences and exhibitions for museums and heritage centers, which include the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Museum an Gharda Síochána, Wicklow Gaol, The Treaty, 1921: Records of the Archives and most recently launched The Derry Girls Experience.

Following her time in N.C.A.D. she completed a B.Sc in Real Estate Management from Oxford Brookes University and a Master's degree in Cultural Policy and Art Management from University College Dublin. Dara Lynne has worked with various cultural institutions, including Business to Arts, the Abbey Theatre, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). Previous experience includes sales, retail and merchandise management, collections management, developing funding streams, visitor experience management and exhibition design, interpretive planning and procurement.

As a designer, Dara Lynne combines her gathered expertise and knowledge of building structure, materials and finishes along with her artistic approach and visualisation abilities to conceive and project manage exhibitions to fruition for her clients. She is dedicated to achieving interpretive excellence through the careful and sensitive research of archives and collections. Her designs are unique and bespoke on every project.





VICTORIA NORTHWOOD

Victoria started her career as an Archivist, working for organisations including the Royal Free Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Shakespeare's Globe. Between 2011 and 2015 she led the re-development of the Archives & Museum service at Bethlem Royal Hospital, and its re-launch as Bethlem Museum of the Mind. The museum was shortlisted for the prestigious Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year in 2016.

Victoria established her freelance consultancy in 2016, and studied part-time for a Masters in International Heritage Management during the pandemic. She has worked for a range of clients including the Royal College of Physicians of London, Wellcome Collection and the Bath Preservation Trust. Inspired by her work at Bethlem, she continues to seek out projects which make connections between historic collections, creativity and wellbeing. Alongside her consultancy, Victoria is a Trustee of the British Records Association and busy mother of two teenagers!





COLIN GALE

Colin Gale is the Director of Bethlem Museum of the Mind, London, a position he has held for 5 years, prior to which he was the Museum's Archivist for 18 years. He is also a former Teaching Fellow at University College London's archives and records management postgraduate course. From 2013 to 2015, he worked alongside Victoria Northwood in the conception and design of the Museum's permanent displays. He has co-authored *Presumed Curable: An illustrated casebook of Victorian psychiatric patients in Bethlem Hospital* (Wrightson Biomedical) and *After the hundred year rule: guidance for archivists and records managers on access to medical records under the Freedom of Information Act* (Society of Archivists).





JENNIFER O'MAHONEY

Dr Jennifer O'Mahoney is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and a Chartered Member of the Psychological Society of Ireland. She is Co-Director of the Crime and Justice Research Group and a Senior Researcher at INSYTE (The Centre for INformation SYstems and TEchno-culture) at SETU. Her research focuses on how victimology and trauma are remembered and narrated; the relationship between memory and cultural heritage in digital humanities; and activism and social change. She is the primary investigator of the Waterford Memories Project (www.waterfordmemories.com), which examines historical institutional abuse in the south-east of Ireland. The project has recently become a member of the International Colation of Sites of Conscience network. Jennifer is a currently a working group lead of the EU Cost Action "Cultures of Victimology: Understanding processes of victimization across Europe", which aims to develop an innovative and overarching theoretical framework for cultural victimology.





DENISE MURRAY

Denise Murray is Studio Leader at Metropolitan Workshop's Dublin studio. Denise has over 15 years' experience of working on complex urban sites, collaborating with a range of actors to deliver long-term sustainable change. Metropolitan Workshop share this interest in developing a collaborative approach to operating in our cities and in enabling bottom-up groups to act. She gained a distinction for her MA thesis at The University College London investigating the potential of self-organised growth in London.

Denise brings this experience to the Co-Lab collective of architects who have spent the last 4 years looking at the Past, Present and Future of Ireland's Twentieth Century Institutions of Social Care. The current phase of the project is titled Run Ireland's (In)Visible Building Project. The project received the 2022 RIAI Research award for the work on the Sean McDermott Street Magdalene Laundry. The site has since been declared a National Site of Conscience.





**SIOBHÁN
DOYLE**
Chair

Dr Siobhán Doyle is a Historian and works as a Curator in the National Museum of Ireland. She holds a PhD in Museum Studies from Technological University Dublin and has lectured in Design History. Siobhán's PhD research focused on how death is represented through museum display. In 2022, her first book *A History of the GAA in 100 Objects* was published by Merrion Press.





ALAN COUNIHAN

For over thirty years visual artist Alan Counihan worked primarily in the realm of site-specific sculpture and fulfilled many public art commissions in Ireland and the USA during that time. He was also the recipient of several substantial grants and awards including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and his work is in many public and private collections in Ireland and abroad. In 2014 Counihan created a temporary site-specific installation in the disused Long Stores of St Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman based on the personal belongings of patients which, along with the institution's archives, had been discovered and retrieved from the attic of an old annexe building in 2010 prior to the closure of the hospital. The installation, 'Personal Effects: a History of Possession' was later exhibited at various venues in Dublin (Culture Box, Axis Ballymun, The Royal Hibernian Academy) and at St Canice's Hospital, Kilkenny. A radio documentary, 'Ghosts of Grangegorman', based on the research for and creation of the installation was produced for RTE's Doc on One series and broadcast in September 2015.

<http://www.alancounihan.net>





ELIZABETH GAGEN

Elizabeth Gagen is a senior lecturer in human geography at Aberystwyth University. She has developed a range of research expertise relating to cultural and historical geographies of childhood, education and mental health. Over her career she has published on topics including psychological governance in education and play, archive methods and ethics in historical geography, and heritage and memory in relation to the history of mental health. Her work has included collaborating on an exhibition on the working life of Cefn Coed Mental Hospital, Swansea Museum, 1932-2018. She has a strong interest in equality, diversity and inclusion in Higher Education and works in a variety of roles across university and the sector to support the EDI agenda. She also sits on the University Research Ethics Panel.





BRENDA MALONE

Brenda Malone, historian and museum professional, is the Curator of Military History Collections at the National Museum of Ireland. Her particular areas of interest include the development of the idea of 'nation', and how this is collected and portrayed in National Museums particularly through its historical collections. She curated and co-curated many Decade of Centenaries exhibitions, in particular the 1916 anniversary exhibition Proclaiming a Republic, and the award-winning military history exhibition Soldiers and Chiefs, and has written and spoken widely about the collections and display and their meaning at both an individual and national level. She developed the Contemporary History collection at the NMI in 2018, which has become the vehicle through which the NMI can collect important material reflecting modern Irish society, primarily difficult histories not previously recorded into the national collections. She is currently the lead curator developing the upcoming exhibition Changing Ireland; Stories from the collection 1900 to 2020.



GRANGEGORMAN HISTORIES

Grangegorman Histories is a public history project of Dublin City Council (DCC), Grangegorman Development Agency (GDA), Health Service Executive (HSE), Local Communities, National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Royal Irish Academy (RIA) and Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). The project aims to uncover, catalogue and commemorate the histories of the Grangegorman area.

In the past 250 years Grangegorman has been the site of a workhouse, a hospital and a prison, and now it is being integrated into the city as a health and education campus. The buildings of Grangegorman stand as architectural monuments to that past and its complex histories. The Grangegorman Histories diverse programme of events, publications and learning opportunities aims to help reveal the often difficult history of the place.

Explore our programme and resources at www.grangegormanhistories.ie.

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