

*Draft Press Release: Galway, 16-18 May 2013*

This collaboration between artists and academics takes place during Galway Dance Days and the annual Conference of Irish Geographers, being held in Galway during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations for the Department of Geography. Over three days of performances, workshops, film shorts, panel discussions and academic papers, artists, academics, directors, and curators, will engage with shared concerns relating to space, place, landscapes, environments, bodies and activism. La Veronal reflects upon placed bodies, the choreography of national representation that allows the shapes thrown by Soviet gymnasts to suggest not only physical but also political risk. Elena Giannotti explores the remains of desire, the imaginative self and ambiguous boundaries. Olwen Fouéré reads from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* as if it the text choreographed a body, a body that must also be a river and a life. Fitzgerald & Stapleton provoke the settings in which they announce their flesh, 'The Work! The Work!', and it can't and must be funny.

Thinking through and moving with our bodies, Art&Geography Ireland participants will explore places, spaces, and environments, taking the bodily measure of landscapes from bogs to docklands, forests to streetscapes, coastlines to gardens, continents to asylums. We will (re)imagine the folds of the spatial fix as an origami of political economy. Learning from children, artists and residents, we will see how sustainable spaces of inhabitation are performed. We will reflect upon the ways communities curate themselves and animate the places they inhabit, even as they choreograph pathways through global networks. With body and movement we will be able to draw upon new repertoires and follow the contours of evanescent traces, perhaps enabling us to create new performances of place that invite more just social, spatial and ecological futures.

Just as the body is an archive, places are embodied, yet shared, contexts of meaning and memory that connect us to our multiple emotional, cultural and political worlds. And yet against this, when we see the reduction of inhabited places to real estate, or the displacement of social and ecological communities into reservations, we find the denial of connectedness in favour of a myth of entitled autonomy. Living as we do in the time of the great global warming, when the pursuit of private profit denies communal claims, and when the reckless corruption of the few meets the immiseration of the many, the connections between bodies, between bodies and places, and between bodies, landscapes, homes and communities need to be rethought and re-emphasised. Dance Days with Art&Geography Ireland gives us a space to do just that.

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Thank you to our performers, workshop leaders and other artists and practitioners for their time, insights and enthusiasm. – Ríonach Ní Néill, Gerry Kearns and Karen Till