

Museum Plinth Project (MPP) Announces Recipients of Inaugural 2026 Residencies Dublin, Ireland [18 May 2026]

The Museum Plinth Project is delighted to announce the recipients of its inaugural artist residencies for 2026. Following a highly competitive open call, early-career artists Sian Costello and Mel Galley have been selected for six-month research residencies hosted respectively by the National Museum of Ireland and Marsh's Library.

Conceived and led by artist Dominique Crowley in collaboration with artist and curator Sharon Murphy, the Museum Plinth Project is a new research-led initiative supporting emerging and early-career visual artists through sustained engagement with major cultural and heritage institutions. Developed in partnership with the National Museum of Ireland, Marsh's Library, Dublin City Arts Office, and LAB Gallery, the programme places artistic enquiry, institutional research, and critical reflection at its centre. The residencies will run from 1 July to 31 December 2026 and provide each artist with structured access to collections, archives, curatorial mentoring, and institutional expertise.

The inaugural residencies coincide with Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, offering a timely context for artistic reflection on cultural memory, systems of knowledge, and the role of public institutions.

Dominique Crowley and Sharon Murphy on behalf of the Museum Plinth Project said: *We are delighted to support Sian Costello and Mel Galley as the inaugural artists in residence for the Museum Plinth Project. Both artists exemplify the strength and originality of a new generation of research-led practitioners whose work engages critically with archives, material culture, and systems of knowledge. Their proposals demonstrate intellectual rigour, conceptual ambition, and a readiness to enter deeply into dialogue with the collections and histories of the National Museum of Ireland and Marsh's Library. We see these residencies as an important incubator for artistic research, offering early-career artists the time, institutional access, and critical support to develop new work of depth and significance.*

Selected Artists

Sian Costello - National Museum of Ireland Residency

Based in Limerick, Sian Costello is recognised for a multidisciplinary practice spanning painting, photography, installation, and performative self-portraiture. Her work explores figuration, authorship, and the histories of image-making through the use of camera obscura and staged composition. Since graduating from Limerick School of Art and Design in 2020, she has exhibited widely in Ireland and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions including *The Crush* at PS² and *Hot Child* at Ormston House.

Sian said: *I feel honoured to be given the opportunity to engage with our National Museum as an Artist in Residence with the Museum Plinth Project. To be selected, represents a pivotal moment of recognition in my early career and I am excited to handle the responsibility of the collection with the support of such experienced and insightful project partners*

Mel Galley - Marsh's Library Residency

Mel Galley is an early-career practitioner whose constellation-shaped practice weaves together research, making, teaching, and writing. Her work moves fluidly between fabrication workshops, archival research, database exploration, landscape wandering, and studio-based bookbinding. She holds a Master's in Art and Research Collaboration from Institute of Art, Design and Technology and has exhibited across Ireland and the UK, including presentations at LAB Gallery, BETA Festival, and Signal Film and Media. Her artist books are held in the Bodleian Libraries and in private collections.

Mel said: *I am delighted to be awarded the residency; the chance to spend six months with one site and one set of ideas is crucial at this time in my practice, especially for that place to be as specific and many-layered as Marsh's Library. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to work alongside staff and researchers based here, allowing for my own thinking and making to be shaped over the months by the library and all that it holds. I really can't wait to get started!*

Partner's Perspectives

Paolo Viscardi, Keeper of Natural History, National Museum of Ireland said: *The Museum Plinth Project offers a fantastic opportunity for the National Museum to work with our colleagues in Dublin City Arts Office, Lab Gallery and Marsh's Library to support early career artists in their collections informed practice. We're excited to work with Sian Costello and we look forward to seeing how her practice based research evolves.*

Amy Boylan Assistant Director of Marsh's Library said: *Marsh's Library is very proud to support and be part of the Museum Plinth Project's innovative new residency programme. We look forward to collaborating with Mel Galley as she unearths new possibilities from our space and collections.*

Margarita Cappock, the Lab Gallery and Dublin City Arts Office said: *Dublin City Arts Office and the Lab Gallery are delighted to support the Museum Plinth Project and to collaborate with the National Museum of Ireland and Marsh's Library. We wish the recipients, Sian Costello and Mel Galley, every success with their residencies.*

The selection panel was deeply impressed by the quality and ambition of submissions received from artists across the island of Ireland. The shortlisted artists included: Ally Nolan, Emily McGardle, Conor O'Connell, Sarah Edmonson, Sarah Ellen Lundy, Síofra Egan and Van Tran.

About the Museum Plinth Project

The Museum Plinth Project was established to support artists at a formative stage in their careers whose practices engage critically with history, material culture, archives, and systems of knowledge. Through mentorship and institutional collaboration, the programme fosters ambitious artistic research and new forms of public engagement. The project is led by Dominique Crowley and Sharon Murphy and developed in partnership with the National Museum of Ireland, Marsh's Library, Dublin City Arts Office, and LAB Gallery.

Further information is available at [Museum Plinth Project](#) Email: admin@museumplinthproject.com

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