

DR GILLIAN O'BRIEN, READER IN MODERN IRISH HISTORY, LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Professional Biography:

Gillian O'Brien is Reader in Modern Irish History at Liverpool John Moores University, a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. She was a member of the Irish National Consultation Panel for Cultural Heritage and Global Change (2012-14) and of Dublin City Council's Heritage Working Group (2011-14).

She has published widely on a range of topics. Key publications include (as author) *Blood Runs Green: The Murder that Transfixed Gilded Age Chicago* (Chicago University Press 2015); (as co-author) *Primary Education in Ireland* (Royal Irish Academy, 2013); (as co-editor) *Portraits of the City: Dublin and the Wider World* (Four Courts Press, 2012) and *Georgian Dublin* (Four Courts Press, 2008)

Gillian O'Brien has been the historical advisor for several Irish museum and heritage sites including Spike Island, Nano Nagle Place, and Kilmainham Gaol and Courthouse. She is currently undertaking a tour of all 'Dark Tourism' museums and heritage sites in Ireland to assess how the complex stories of a difficult past are told.

Personal Statement

I would bring a breadth of expertise to the IMA board. As a historian I combine a passion for Ireland's heritage (both the built environment, landscape and artefacts) with a deep understanding of the context in which it was produced, while my extensive experience as a historical advisor has given me a keen awareness of the complex issues surrounding the development and running of museum and heritage sites. In March I organised a workshop for museum professionals designed to address these issues head-on and the resulting report *Inception, Development, Operation. A Report on Best Practice for Site-Specific Museums and Heritage Centres* was published in June. Further workshops are planned for 2019.

I believe that the association has an important role to play in maintaining and improving museum standards and if appointed I would particularly embrace the challenges associated with developing public history, education and outreach within the sector.