

Textile Language of Conflicts
International Colloquium 6-7th November 2017
Minor Hall (MD106), Main Building, Magee campus, Ulster University
Northland Rd, Derry/Londonderry. BT48 7JL
<http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflictextiles/search-quilts/fullevent/?id=171>

The two-day International Colloquium was part of a five-day programme which incorporated:

- Textile Language of Conflicts exhibition at Magee Campus, Ulster University
- Interactive workshop for students in the exhibition space
- Field trip (for Colloquium delegates) to the Ulster Museum, Belfast.

A total of seventeen delegates participated in the Colloquium programme, with a combined total of 140 engaging in the exhibition and interactive workshop for students.

International Colloquium Programme, Monday/Tuesday 6-7th November

In the weekend prior to the Colloquium, delegates arrived from Colombia, Catalonia, Spain, Japan, Germany, England, California, Chile, Venezuela, Ireland and Northern Ireland. The programme was residential, with accommodation provided at the scenic Downhill Beachhouse, Castlerock, a 30 minute train journey from Derry. The residential aspect facilitated a rich exchange of ideas into the evening and a deepening of conversations started during the daytime presentations.

After an informal visit to the exhibition on Monday 6th November, delegates were welcomed to the Colloquium by Gillian Robinson, Research Director ARK and Professor of Social Research, Ulster University.



Organising team members Gillian Robinson, Roberta Bacic and Breege Doherty. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

A presentation on the **Conflict Textiles web archive** was then delivered by Martin Melaugh, Director of CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet), Ulster University and Breege Doherty, Assistant Curator, Conflict Textiles.

Over Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, a series of three panel presentations were convened. Each panel was comprised of four delegates, who each delivered a 15 minute presentation, followed by a brief discussion.



(L-R) Colloquium chair Gillian Robinson with panel chairs, Karen Nickell, Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Helen Perry. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Panel 1

Chair: Karen Nickell

Speaker	Presentation title
Berit Bliesemann de Guevara , Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University.	Knowing violent conflict through textiles: three possible applications in international studies
Elizabeth (Elsie) Doolan , Phil/PhD student - Department of Information Studies, Archival Studies Specialization, University College London.	Arpilleras as Archives
Marina Vinyes , PhD candidate (Université Paris-Sorbonne / Universitat de Barcelona).	From one's own Pain, English translation by Cristal Palacios (Venezuela) PhD candidate, Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University

Fiona Clark, Northern Ireland, Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies, Queen’s University.

Protecting Paradise: literature, *arpilleras* and ecological social justice issues



Panel 1: (L-R) Fiona Clark, Elsie Doolan, Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Marina Vinyes. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Panel 2

Chair: Berit Bliesemann de Guevara

Speaker	Presentation title
Helen Perry , Museum Services Development Manager, Northern Ireland, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.	Causeway Coast and Glens Museums Services work with Conflict Textiles
Pilar López , Catalonia/Spain, Coordinator FUNDACIO ATENEU SANT ROC.	Arpilleras in Sant Roc, English Translation by Danielle House (England)
Gaby Franger , Germany, Museum Frauenkultur regional-international, Fürth, Germany. Board member of International Association of Women’s Museums (IAWM).	Has the pen or pencil dipped so deep in the blood of human race as the needle?
Tomoko Sakai , Japan. Associate Professor, Cross-cultural Communication, Tohoku Gakuin University, Sendai.	Memoryscape and everyday materiality in arpillera



Panel 2: (L-R) Helen Perry, Gaby Franger, Pilar López and Tomoko Sakai. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Panel 3

Chair: Helen Perry

Speaker	Presentation title
Karen Nickell , Lecturer in the History and Theory of Textile Art, Design and Fashion in Belfast School of Art at Ulster University.	‘Troubles Textiles’ and the trouble with textiles
Karen Logan , History Curator, National Museums Northern Ireland.	Collecting the Troubles and Beyond: Conflict Textiles at the Ulster Museum
Beatriz Elena Arias López , Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia.	Textile narratives as a means of community care for mental health English, translation by Fiona Clark
Lorna Dillon , Associate Lecturer, Modern Languages, University of Kent, England, applying to do her post doctoral on Conflict Textiles.	Advocacy Art: The Agency of the Conflict Textiles Collection



Panel 3: (L-R) Karen Logan, Lorna Dillon, Beatriz Elena Arias López and Karen Nickell. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

In the closing plenary session, Gillian Robinson facilitated the process of distilling the learning from the event through asking each delegate to formulate one question. This prompted a rich dialogue.



Gillian Robinson arranging final questions from delegates, while Cristal Palacios provides translation. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Berit Bliesemann de Guevara facilitated the final session ‘Moving Forward’ where a number of next steps were agreed.

Delegates commented positively on *“the energy, the diversity of opinions, perspectives, the discussions, the extraordinary range of experience, ... the people, all of the participants have been wonderful and have provided such a diverse perspective. Feel[ing] connected.”*



Delegates enroute to Magee Campus after their train journey from Castlerock for the second day of the Colloquium. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Textile Language of Conflicts exhibition, Monday 6th November

The exhibition launch, chaired by Professor Gillian Robinson, commenced at 6pm and finished well after the appointed time of 7.30pm. Colloquium delegates, University staff, students and members of the general public attended, over 80 in total.

Professor Malachy O’Neill, Provost Magee campus, welcomed attendees and affirmed the overall exhibition programme in terms of academic research and civic engagement. Professor Brandon Hamber, The John Hume and Thomas P. O’Neill Chair in Peace, INCORE, School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences delivered the keynote address "Reflecting on masculinities through the eye of a needle".

Curator Roberta Bacic followed with a guided tour of the exhibition. This also included a brief input by two textile artists on their exhibited pieces: Irene MacWilliam - “Common Loss” and Deborah Stockdale - “They fell like stars from the sky”.

Over the duration of the exhibition guided tours were facilitated for four groups.



Textile artist Irene MacWilliam talks about her piece “Common Loss” at the exhibition launch. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

Interactive workshop for students 10:30-12:30pm Thursday 9th November

Students from the Higher Education Program Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA) programme in the USA participated in this interactive workshop.

Key elements included:

- An Introduction to CAIN, Accounts of the Conflict and the role of textiles in uncovering sensitive issues
- Overview of Conflict Textiles digital archive
- Guided tour of exhibition
- Screening of film “Common Threads”
- Discussion on key learning points



Students from the Higher HECUA programme who attended the interactive workshop with (R-L) Roberta Bacic, Beatriz Elena Arias López and Gillian Robinson (Photo: Martin Melaugh)

Field trip (for Colloquium delegates) to the Ulster Museum, Belfast, Wednesday 8th November

This event was facilitated by Karen Logan, History Curator, National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI). Over the course of the morning, Karen, who was also a Colloquium participant, gave delegates an insight into **Collecting the Troubles and Beyond**. This is a new initiative within NMNI, which aims to widen the scope of the collection through greater academic and community engagement.

A guided tour of the Belfast murals by Bill Rolston, Emeritus Professor, Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University concluded the day.

Final comments from Colloquium delegates

As well as completing formal evaluation sheets at the close of the Colloquium, further unsolicited feedback has been received via email from delegates.

“It was a great, meaningful event and [I] am sure it marks a point in the history of arpillera research.”

“Thanks for having organised the colloquium. It has been very interesting...”

“I am certain we all left very content and with new insights and reflections. I do wish we keep in touch.”

“Gatherings like these are very stimulating and give a more human dimension to research. In my case very solitary.”

These comments illustrate a depth of connection, both personal and professional, developed and deepened over the five days, which delegates bring with them as they resume their work/study in various continents.