



Conference Programme

9-9.15am: Introduction and Welcome

Lydia Cole, Faye Donnelly, Laura Mills and Natasha Saunders

9:15-10:00: Thread 1: Guided Tour and Responses

Guided Tour – Roberta Bacic

Chair: Dr Lydia Cole

Break, 10-10.15

10:15 – 11.50: Thread 2: Stitching War, Conflict and Resistance

Respondent: Jeffrey Murer

Danielle House (Aberystwyth University), **'Bordando por la Paz y la Memoria: Re-building worlds and the *narco-machine*'**

Abstract: Since the war on drugs in Mexico began in 2006, the violence and the victims it consumes have been framed as un-grievable. Images and words, portrayed daily in the Mexican media and by the state, criminalise the victims, and the violence itself has pushed society to the limits of what is intelligible. It is within this context that the project Bordando por la Paz y la Memoria - Embroidery for Peace and Memory - came about and can be understood. This collective and ongoing public memorial rehumanises the dead and disappeared, asserts them as grievable victims, creates community, and rebuilds worlds in a new mould.

Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (Aberystwyth University), **'Knowing through Needlework? Conflict Textiles and the Study of War and Violence in International Politics'**

There is a rich tradition in Wales, the UK and all over the world of banners, wall hangings (*arpilleras*), handkerchiefs and other forms of textiles, which denounce injustice and craft bonds of solidarity. Textiles have been used to voice protest, memorialize victims and name those responsible for injustices of all kinds. They have also been used to imagine better futures. Following this rich tradition of "craftivism", this presentation shares some examples of protest textiles that have been

made in response to various current events (refugees, UK universities strikes) and of textiles produced by rural communities in Colombia, and invites you to get involved.

Clare Hunter (Author: Threads of Life), **'A Sense of Self Description'**

The banner-maker and community textile artist Clare Hunter will explore how and why sewing is often chosen as a medium for self-expression by those living in adversity as a way to assert their identity, provide eye-witness accounts, archive experiences and make their voices heard when they have been silenced. Examining the tactile, therapeutic and practical aspects of needlework Clare would like to involve participants in making a small collective signature panel.

Darya Tsymbalyuk (University of St Andrews) & Nicola Anne Montague (Dundee Embroiderer's Guild), **'Mapping home'**

The presentation will invite participants to draw and remember their hometowns, and then will reflect upon the use of mental mapping in research and art, providing examples from the Donbas Odyssey project (Ukraine).

Lunch Break, 11.50 – 1.10

1.10 – 2.45: Thread 3: Art, Textile and Representation

Respondent: Chris Peys

Roxani Krystalli (Tufts University, University of St Andrews - Visiting Scholar), 'Weaving memory: The politics of former combatants in Colombia'

Memory initiatives often leave out the narratives of former combatants. This is a common criticism that former combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have leveled against the Colombian state during its transition from armed conflict. In an attempt to address this gap, state officials and NGO partners have traveled to transition zones for demobilizing combatants in order to conduct 'memory workshops,' which consist of commemorative acts involving stitching, drawing, and more narrative components. In this presentation, I will discuss some of the key insights arising from observation of such workshops between October 2018 - February 2019, as well as elaborate on how these interventions illuminate questions about power and politics during the time-of-not-war-not-peace.

Maria Dalton and Taryn Sheppard (University of St Andrews), 'The Quilt on the Wall: Gender, Representation and Processes of Change in the Murals of Northern Ireland'

Abstract: Guns. Balaclavas. Prisoners. Hunger strikers. These images have dominated Northern Ireland's war-torn walls in the form of murals for the past fifty years, now forming one of the most instantly recognizable aspects of Northern Irish culture. The use of murals as territory demarcation, signifiers of influence, celebrations of historical achievements, and expressions of suffering was

commonplace during Northern Ireland's troubled conflict. However, recent years has seen the emergence of new murals seeking to abandon this militarized style and focus on positive imagery of change, including an increasing number of murals created by, or featuring, women. In particular, on a wall in the Lower Shankill estate, stands a graphic of a women's peace quilt. Focusing specifically on the story of this quilt, this presentation explores this unique overlap between textiles and murals. In so doing, it will consider the significance of Belfast's changing visual landscape, illustrating the power of murals as visually communicative markers of the temperament of a post-conflict society, and the gendered stories they tell.

Giovanna Di Mauro (University of St Andrews), '**Visual Representations of Everyday Life in Transnistria**'

Literature on photography and political violence is growing rapidly, addressing subjects such as representation of war (Sontag, 1977; 2004); representations of soldiers (Kennedy, 2009), post-conflict memory (Milton, 2014; Möller, 2013), and artistic witnessing (Danchev, 2016; Möller, 2017). As photographs often carry more meaning than written words (Schwark, 2017) to the point that they can inspire words (Barkawi, 2009), photography represents an important instrument for depicting violence. After all, it is through photographs that we habitually look at violent conflicts, often taking place far away, and give meaning to them.

This paper explores the work of Anton Polyakov, Anya Galatonova and Ramin Mazur, three Transnistrian photographers who document everyday life in the separatist region – in 1990, Transnistrian officials declared the state's independence from Moldova, but to date Transnistria remains unrecognised. These artists belong to a new generation of photographers who aim to challenge Western stereotypes of the Transnistrian conflict, and of life in the de-facto state. Via photographs and semi-structured interviews, the paper presents the origins of their work and how they developed it. The paper also demonstrates the degree to which international media and non-governmental organisations played a role in the making and diffusing of these photographs. Through the application of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, the paper tries to assess: 1) to what extent these photographers can be considered politically engaged; 2) how international actors have contributed to the transnationalisation of the Transnistrian artistic field.

Break, 2.45 – 3

3-4: Thread 4: Weaving it Together: Stitch in Research and as Pedagogy

An open session with prompts on *Threads, War and Conflict* in pedagogy from Lydia Cole, Faye Donnelly, Laura Mills and Natasha Saunders.

There will be time for participants to (continue to) engage in stitch in this part of the programme.

4-5pm – Closing remarks and Future Plans

6pm - Conference Dinner @ tbc

List of Participants

1. **Lydia Cole** – University of St Andrews
2. **Faye Donnelly** – University of St Andrews
3. **Laura Mills** – University of St Andrews
4. **Natasha Saunders** – University of St Andrews
5. **Roberta Bacic** – Conflict Textiles
6. **Berit Bliesemann de Guevara** – Aberystwyth University
7. **Danielle House** – Aberystwyth University
8. **Clare Hunter** – Author, Threads of Life
9. **Roxani Krystalli** – Tufts University, University of St Andrews (Visiting Scholar)
10. **Darya Tsybalyuk** – University of St Andrews
11. **Taryn Shepperd** – University of St Andrews
12. **Maria Dalton** – University of St Andrews
13. **Giovanna Di Mauro** – University of St Andrews
14. **Chris Peys** – University of St Andrews
15. **Jeffrey Murer** – University of St Andrews
16. **Meredith More** – V&A, Dundee
17. **Kirsty Hassard** – V&A, Dundee
18. **Nicola Anne Montague** – Dundee Embroiderer's Guild
19. **Iryna Sklokina** – Lviv Centre for Urban History, CRSCEES academic fellow