

**Guantanamo: Legality, Art and Resistance
Stories from the Front Lines of Human Rights**

19th March 2026

**Queen's University Law School
Room 08.014, Main Site Tower**

Agenda

9.30am	Arrival with tea, coffee and refreshments provided.
10am	Opening remarks from Professor Fionnuala Ni Aolain, Robina Chair in Law, Public Policy and Society at the University of Minnesota, Professor at Queen's University Belfast School of Law, and UN Commissioner for the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.
10.10am - 12.15pm	<p>Session One: Background and Context Chaired by Fionnuala Ni Aolain</p> <p><u>Speaker One: Mansoor Adayfi (joining remotely)</u> Mansoor Adayfi is a human rights activist, artist, co-founder of the Guantanamo Survivor's Fund, and former Guantanamo Bay detainee. His memoir of his time at Guantánamo, <i>Don't Forget Us Here</i>, was published in 2021.</p> <p><u>Speaker Two: Beth Jacob</u> Beth Jacob is a lawyer who has represented Guantanamo detainees since 2005. She was previously a senior supervising attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center, and is the founder and director of Healing and Recovery after Trauma. This organization aims to support people who are detained at Guantánamo Bay Naval Station, and those who have been released from detention at Guantánamo Bay Naval Station. It also represents those who have been unjustly detained or tortured in other locations, during and after detention.</p> <p><u>Speaker Three: Amber Ginsburg</u> Amber Ginsburg teaches at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts. She is the founder of the Tea Project. Inspired by stories of men detained in Guantanamo Bay drawing flowers on Styrofoam cups, Amber Ginsburg (alongside Aaron Hughes) undertook a project to create 779 porcelain cast Styrofoam teacups, one for each individual detained. Each teacup is</p>

	<p>detailed with the name of one of the 779 individuals along with their country of citizenship. This project aims to both highlight the dehumanization and destruction of detention, while also offering a glimpse into the moments of hope that can be shared over a cup of tea.</p> <p><u>Speaker Four: Bill Rolston</u></p> <p>Professor Rolston was formerly the Director of the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University, and is currently an Emeritus Professor. His research interest lies in wall murals in Northern Ireland. He has also conducted research in political murals in Chile, Sardinia, the Basque country and Gaza.</p>
<p>12.15pm - 1.55pm</p>	<p>Break for lunch, provided by Queen's University Belfast</p>
<p>2pm - 4pm</p>	<p>Session Two: Curation and the Power of Public Engagement Chaired by Professor Helen Kinsella</p> <p>Helen M Kinsella</p> <p>Helen M Kinsella is a Professor of Political Science & Law, an affiliate faculty of the Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies, the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, the Human Rights Center, and the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change, University of Minnesota. She is also a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, The Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland.</p> <p>She has held fellowships at the Council on Foreign Relations with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the New York University School of Law, and postdoctoral and predoctoral appointments at Stanford University and Harvard University. In Spring 2023, she was the Fulbright U.S. Friends of Queen's University Belfast Distinguished Scholar. Her research focuses on the theorization of gender and armed conflict, and she is working on a book on sleep in war and another on the histories of the laws of war through the United States' wars against Native peoples.</p> <p>She is the author of <i>The Image before the Weapon: A Critical History of the Distinction between Combatant and Civilian</i> (Cornell University Press, 2011; paperback 2015). Her work has also appeared in journals such as <i>American Political Science Review</i>, <i>Review of International Studies</i>, <i>International Theory</i>, <i>Political Theory</i>, <i>Political Power and Social Theory</i>, <i>Feminist Review</i>, among others.</p>

Speaker One: Erin L. Thompson

Erin L. Thompson holds a PhD in Art History from Columbia University and a JD from Columbia Law School. She is a professor of art crime at the City University of New York. She studies the damage done to cultural heritage and communities through looting, theft, and deliberate destruction of art. In 2017, she curated the first full-scale exhibition of art made by detainees at Guantánamo Bay, and has continued to write extensively about the subject.

www.artcrimeprof.com

Speaker Two: Cullen Strawn (joining remotely)

Cullen Strawn holds a BMus in performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as well as MA and PhD degrees in folklore and ethnomusicology from Indiana University, Bloomington. He has won fellowships and grants including the Fulbright-IIE, Fulbright-Hays, and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) for ethnographic field research on aspects of arts and culture in West Africa and the United States. In addition to working as a musician, audio engineer, software developer, and managing editor of the Ethnographic Video for Instruction and Analysis (EVIA) Digital Archive, he has served as curator at the Musical Instrument Museum and consulted for major arts and educational organizations including Carnegie Hall, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Endowment for the Arts. At Old Dominion University, Cullen oversees public-facing initiatives spanning arts and humanities.

Speaker Three: Maya Wassell Smith

Maya Wassell Smith is Assistant Curator of Art at Royal Museums Greenwich and a collaborative doctoral candidate at Cardiff University, where her research examines the craft practices of sailors in the long nineteenth century. Her work engages closely with objects in both academic and museum contexts. She holds a BA and MA in History of Design and Material Culture from the University of Brighton. Her research has been published in *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies* and in the edited collection *Objects of Poverty* (Bloomsbury, 2025). Maya has held curatorial and collections management roles at London Borough of Newham Collections, SS Great Britain and the Brunel Institute, and Leeds Museums and Galleries. Her broader research interests focus on decorative art and its intersections with subjectivity, materiality, colonial, vocational, and gendered histories

Speaker Four: Roberta Bacic

Roberta Bacic is a Conflict Textiles curator and Visiting Professor at Ulster University. More information about her work can be found at

<https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles>

4pm	Event ends Speakers are invited for cheese and wine at Number 3 Carnesure Mews, Comber, Co Down BT23 5TA at 7pm. This is about a 30-minute drive from the city centre, so either taxi or shared rides with local participants will be needed.
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From everyone at Queen's University School of Law and Human Rights Centre, we thank you for attending this event, and look forward to seeing you later this month.