

Stitching Solidarity: Activism in Textile Art

A Call for Symposium Contributions

Papers, Workshops & Performances

Dates and Venues

- 1 March 2025: Pre-Symposium Workshop, Derry (Optional)
- 2 March 2025: Visit to the Threads of Empowerment Exhibition & Special Collections, Queen's University Library, Belfast (Invited)
- 3 March 2025: Ulster University, Belfast (Paper Presentations and Seminars)
- 4 March 2025: Community Practice Workshops: Ulster University, Cathedral Quarter and others

In a world that often denies the right to resist, we invite scholars, artists, textile-makers and activists to explore the multifaceted ways textiles can serve as a powerful medium for expressing, documenting, and archiving narratives of resistance.

This symposium aims to transcend traditional notions of protest and vocal activism, highlighting the quieter, more subtle forms of resistance that emerge through textile-making practices. We are particularly interested in examining how the imagery of a single thread or the accumulation of small, meaningful actions can weave together into a bold tapestry of dissent.

Papers, workshops & performances may address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- **Conceptualising Solidarity and Resistance:** Framing and understanding the act of resistance and solidarity, as well as activism, in textile-making.
- **Textile as Testimony:** Documenting, preserving, and sharing stories of resistance through textiles.
- **Textiles, Subversion, and Dissent:** Conveying subversive narratives within formal institutional spaces.
- **Healing and Activism:** Investigating the therapeutic aspects of textile-making and their political power in healing and empowerment.
- **Networking Resistance:** Highlighting the collaborative, community-driven nature of textile art and how these networks can amplify voices of resistance and foster solidarity.
- **Curating Textiles:** Exploring the challenges and opportunities for curating and exhibiting textiles with political content.

We welcome proposals that challenge traditional academic discourse and embrace alternative modes of knowledge production. Interdisciplinary approaches and submissions incorporating artistic, visual, performative, or other non-traditional formats, along with more traditional presentations of papers, are strongly encouraged. Showcasing the power of textiles through praxis is a key objective of the symposium.

We particularly encourage early career academics and artists to submit abstracts.

Abstract Format

Submit a proposal for a paper, workshop or performance, or other formats. The proposal should include a title and a brief outline of your paper/workshop/performance (up to 500 words) and a one paragraph CV. We will allocate 30-minute slots for papers or performances, and for workshop specify your suggested timing.

Submissions are made online: <https://tinyurl.com/Stitching-Solidarity>

Submission Deadline: Friday, 17 January 2025 by 5pm.

Decisions will be made by 24 January 2025.

Funding and Support

We do not have funding to support participation, but there is no fee for attending.

Presenters and workshop facilitators are responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs, subsistence and workshop materials. We are however happy to provide a support letter/acceptance letter if needed for external funding.

General Attendance

If you wish to attend the Symposium but not present, please register here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Stitching-Solidarity>

Background to the Symposium

Conflict Textiles houses a large collection of international textiles, exhibitions, and associated events focusing on conflict and human rights abuses. It is an Associated Site of [CAIN](#) at Ulster University. The collection primarily comprises *arpilleras*, quilts, and wall hangings, emphasising the struggle for the disappeared and other human rights violations. Exhibitions featuring these textiles have been hosted globally in museums, universities, art galleries, embassies, and community spaces.

Currently, Conflict Textiles is holding a major exhibition entitled “Threads of Empowerment: Conflict Textiles’ International Journey” at Ulster Museum (June 21, 2024 – April 27, 2025). The Symposium is part of the programme and will also build on previous events, notably:

- 2014: Textile Accounts of Conflicts: Digitally Archiving Stories for Peacebuilding. Hosted by INCORE, Ulster University [[more](#)].
- 2014: Conversations about Textile Narratives of Conflict, Testimony, and Resistance: Commissioned by the Childhood, Transition and Social Justice Initiative at Queen's University and INCORE, Ulster University [[more](#)].

- 2017: Textile Language of Conflicts exhibition and colloquium. Hosted by INCORE, Ulster University and CAIN [[more](#)].

The symposium is organised by staff from Ulster University, Belfast School of Art, Queen's University Belfast, Manchester University, University of Galway, University College Cork, the International Association of Women's Museums, and the Conflict Textiles Trust.