

AHRC Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past  
AHRC Cultural Value Project

# Culture, Conflict and Post-Conflict Symposium

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**9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

**British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London**

Organisers

Geoffrey Crossick (AHRC Cultural Value Project)

Patrycja Kaszynska (AHRC Cultural Value Project)

Andrew Thompson (AHRC Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past)

Christine Boyle (AHRC Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past)



Marlene Steyn. Blended brothers, 2011; Oil and mixed media on canvas, 168 x 151, 5 cm  
Image used with permission of the artist. ©Marlene Steyn



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

### **About the cover art:**

[Marlene Steyn](#) is a London-based artist from South Africa. Marlene depicts fantastical worlds, inner turmoil, and conflict in her paintings. Says Steyn, "I am interested in the points where histories, contemporary culture, psychology and imagination become entangled." Her recent time completing an MA at the Royal College of Art has further cemented her interest in the complex historical discourse surrounding current artistic practices; a discourse, she says, which contemporary painting "carries with a hunched back".

### **About Kabosh Theatre Company and *Those You Pass on the Street***

Founded in 1994, [Kabosh](#) is an independent theatre company focused on creating exciting theatre in interesting places using the history, stories and buildings of Northern Ireland as its inspiration. It is the only theatre company in Northern Ireland that produces site-specific theatre. The company constantly strives to push boundaries of live theatre performance, to cultivate partnerships with arts practitioners and create new environments for performance.

#### ***Those You Pass on the Street* (Rehearsed reading)**

by Laurence McKeown

Cast: Maggie Cronin, Vincent Higgins, Paul Kennedy and Carol Moore

*Elizabeth walks into a Sinn Fein constituency office seeking assistance regarding anti-social behaviour in her area. Frank takes her details and promises to look into it. He later learns she is the widow of an RUC man killed by the IRA, and is warned to tread carefully. This brief encounter poses challenges for personal preconceptions and beliefs, straining family and political loyalties.*

Written by playwright and Republican ex-prisoner Dr Laurence McKeown, *Those You Pass on the Street* explores the complexities of dealing with the legacy of conflict, especially when that conflict is localised and personal. It contrasts party political positioning with individual needs. It challenges the view that any mechanism for dealing with the past is simply about 'whose side gets what'. This work was originally commissioned by Healing through Remembering and co-produced with Kabosh.

Kabosh artistic director Paula McFetridge will be available to answer questions after the performance.

## **Quick reference schedule of sessions**

<b>9 September 2014</b>		<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b>	
<b>12:15 – 1:15</b>	Lunch and registration	<b>9:00 – 9:30</b>	Tea & coffee, registration
<b>1:15-1:30</b>	Welcome and introduction	<b>9:30 – 11:00</b>	Panel 3: Conflict and Post-Conflict: Whose Processes and Power?
<b>1:30 – 2:15</b>	Plenary speaker		
<b>2:15 – 3:45</b>	Panel 1: Concepts, Theories and Approaches	<b>11:00 – 11:15</b>	Tea & coffee
<b>3:45 – 4:00</b>	Tea	<b>11:15 – 12:45</b>	Panel 4: A War by Other Means? Culture as Conflict
<b>4:00 – 5:30</b>	Panel 2: Temporality, Memory and History	<b>12:45 -1:45</b>	Lunch
<b>6:00 – 8:00</b>	Performance & Discussion: <i>Those You Pass on the Street</i>	<b>1:45 – 3:15</b>	Panel 5: Culture and the Construction of Shared Spaces
<b>8:00-10:00</b>	Buffet dinner	<b>3:15 – 4:15</b>	Concluding Session – Discussion led by Chairs

Special thanks to Jill Mustard and the team at Arts and Humanities Research Council for their assistance with funding and administering this event.

# Culture, Conflict and Post-Conflict symposium

## 9-10 September 2014

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### Programme

9<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**12:15 – 1:15 Lunch and registration**

**1:15 – 1:30 Welcome and introduction**

**1:30 – 2:15 Keynote address**

**Paul Gready**, Professor of Politics and Director of the Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of York

**2:15 – 3:45 Panel 1: Concepts, Theories and Approaches**

*Chair: Andrew Thompson, Chair in Modern History, University of Exeter and Leadership Fellow, AHRC  
Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past*

**Michaela Crimmin**, Co-Director of Culture+Conflict and tutor and research associate at the Royal College of Art

**Sara McDowell**, Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Ulster

**Rachel Beckles Willson**, Professor of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London

**3:45 – 4:00 Tea & coffee**

**4:00 – 5:30 Panel 2: Temporality, Memory and History**

*Chair: John Sloboda, Research Professor, Guildhall School of Music & Drama*

**Anna Reading**, Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, Kings College, London

**Kristin Kuutma**, Professor of Cultural Research, University of Tartu

**Daniel Jewesbury and Robert Porter**, Lecturers in School of Media, Film and Journalism, University of Ulster

**5:30 – 6:00 Break**

**6:00 – 8:00 Kabosh Theatre Company, Rehearsed Reading of *Those You Pass on the Street*. Discussion to follow.**

**8:00 – 10:00 Buffet dinner**

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10<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**9:00 – 9:30 Tea and registration**

**9:30 – 11 Panel 3: Conflict and Post-Conflict: Whose Processes and Power?**

*Chair: Stefanie Lehner, Lecturer in Irish Literature, Queen's University Belfast*

**Cahal McLaughlin**, Professor of Film, School of Creative Arts, Queen's University Belfast

**Stefanie Kappler**, Lecturer in International Relations and Director of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies, Liverpool Hope University

**Arild Bergh**, Senior Researcher, Norwegian Defence Research Institute

**David Grant**, Senior Lecturer, School of Creative Arts, Queen's University Belfast

**11:00 – 11:15 Tea**

**11:15 – 12:45 Panel 4: A War by Other Means? Culture as Conflict**

*Chair: Patrycja Kaszynska, Project Researcher, Cultural Value Project*

**Elizabeth Crooke**, Professor of Heritage and Museum Studies, University of Ulster

**Anthony Haughey**, Lecturer in the School of Media, Dublin Institute of Technology

**Stuart Taberner**, Professor of German, University of Leeds

**12:45 – 1:45 Lunch**

**1:45 – 3:15 Panel 5: Culture and the Construction of Shared Spaces**

*Chair: Geoffrey Crossick, Distinguished Professor of Humanities, School of Advanced Study, and Director of the Cultural Value Project*

**Damir Arsenijevic**, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, De Montfort University

**Dominic Bryan**, Director of the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast

**Paul Cooke**, Centenary Chair in World Cinemas, University of Leeds

**3:15 – 4:15 Concluding Session**

Roundtable Discussion - we will invite the chairs of panels to offer brief reflections on what has emerged from the conference, and then open up for a wider discussion to which we hope everyone will contribute. The organisers would very much like to hear from everyone present as to what they felt were the significant issues and ideas to emerge from the event and in what ways these may point to an agenda for future research.

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### Speaker abstracts

#### Keynote address

**Paul Gready, Professor of Politics and Director of the Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of York**

This paper will explore three types of relationship between culture and human rights in post-conflict settings, drawing in particular on the case study of South Africa. First, 'culture vs. human rights' will explore how the two are sometimes in tension. For example, advocating different 'regimes of truth', or with artists testing the boundaries of acceptable freedom of expression. Second, 'human rights to culture' looks at how post-conflict legal and political settlements seek to protect a right to culture, cultural expression and cultural diversity. Finally, 'human rights in and through culture' will address culture as a means of advancing human rights goals. This can take the form of giving voice to the otherwise voiceless, or cultural processes as key to empowerment and shaping the ways in which rights are understood and claimed.

#### Panel 1: Concepts, Theories and Approaches

**Michaela Crimmin, Co-Director of Culture+Conflict and tutor and research associate at the Royal College of Art**

##### *Debating Artists' Interpretations*

What is it that artists specifically contribute to the consideration of conflict that other disciplines do not? There are artists living in the everyday of war; artists who are part of a resistance movement and who use their art to challenge the dominance of despots; artists who join the peace movement; artists who have provocations and questions; artists who make observations or offer reflections; artists dealing with the trauma of war; artists rewriting histories; those who use art as propaganda; those who use art to bring people together. There are artists who are optimistic in their outlook, and others who are disaffected by the state of the world, yet in both cases make work that has powerful agency with the intent of provoking a response. This presentation will provide a current, albeit brief, account from recent AHRC funded research into the role of art in the context of conflict and a consideration of the value, the questions and the possibilities that have been discussed in the course of this work.

**Sara McDowell, Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Ulster**

The politics of nomenclature surrounding conflict is fraught with contestation and often has serious ramifications for the way in which a conflict unfolds and how it is transformed following the cessation of violence. The designation of victim, terrorist, freedom fighter, rebel, hero, oppressor, paramilitary, protector is entirely dependent on perception and self-identification. It is too fiercely resisted in hierarchal battles over the right to claim victimhood and legitimise or delegitimise the use of violence. In a 'post-conflict' or transitional society, discourse evolves, reflecting new forms of political governance, transitional justice mechanisms and cultural understandings of the past. The semantics and discourse of conflict is then inextricably linked with cultural practice and expression. Culture can become a vehicle through which the designation of roles and responsibilities are

negotiated, articulated, reified and or resisted. This presentation teases out some of the complexities surrounding the use of language during and after violent conflict and considers how this impacts upon culture (and vice a versa).

**Rachel Beckles Willson, Professor of Music, Royal Holloway, University of London**

My contribution will reflect on what culture can do that politics can't, and address the dangers of de-politicising culture. The discussion will draw on my research into the development of western classical music in Arab communities of Palestine and Israel. As a case study it will consider specific events on the ground alongside relevant discussions in international press organs; but it may allow us a fresh framework more broadly, amid oft-expressed hopes that musical activity can remedy socio-political and economic woes.

## **Panel 2: Temporality, Memory and History**

**Anna Reading, Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, Kings College, London**

*Story Telling and the Restitutional Assemblage*

How might telling stories help with post-conflict restitution? I explore how restitution needs to be understood not in terms of singular moments or acts, but in terms of different kinds of stories that form memory assemblages as part of the complex emotional and energetic labour of restitution. Restitutional labour involves the payment of money, the building of monuments, and state apology as well as cultural acts and the telling of stories. In this way the restitutional assemblage works through different felt registers, across multiple temporalities and in different locales and domains.

**Kristin Kuutma, Professor of Cultural Research, University of Tartu**

This paper will look at how Bosnia and its neighbours have responded to the challenge of representing the past, as demonstrated in archives and museums in the states that emerged from the break-up of Yugoslavia. My presentation is based on fieldwork carried out in national (ethnographic) museums in 2012. These state-supported institutions have worked through history in different and even divergent ways when legitimizing, sustaining or rejecting particular narratives, images or ideas. All museums visited have struggled with the challenge of presenting a public narration of history in the aftermath of conflict.

**Daniel Jewesbury and Robert Porter, Lecturers in School of Media, Film and Journalism, University of Ulster**

Daniel and Robert have been investigating the space of 'post-conflict' Belfast for a number of years. One of the key aims of this on-going research is to begin to develop a multi-disciplinary and comparativist methodology capable of critically engaging with the economic-political forces that shape the contemporary urban environment. This short presentation will outline, in broad brushstrokes, their current research on Belfast, work undertaken in preparation for their new book: *Belfast: Inventing Space and Place in the Post-Conflict City* (Intellect, 2015).

## **Panel 3: Conflict and Post-Conflict: Whose Processes and Power?**

**Cahal McLaughlin, Professor of Creative Arts, Queen's University Belfast**

After 30 years of violent conflict in Northern Ireland, the Prisons Memory Archive investigates ways that narratives of a conflicted past can be negotiated in a contested present. The Hass (2014), Eames-Bradley (2009) and the Bloomfield (1998) Reports each recommend storytelling as a way of

engaging with this issue, which is both politically and psychically sensitive. The PMA aims to research the possibilities of engaging with the story of the 'other' in a society that is emerging from decades of political violence.

The PMA filmed interviews back inside the women's prison, Armagh Gaol, in 2006 and the men's prison, the Maze and Long Kesh Prison in 2007. Using protocols of co-ownership, inclusivity and life-story telling, the PMA filmed a range of participants including prison staff, prisoners, visitors, teachers, chaplains and probation officers. Their stories are poignant in their humanity and challenging in their address and help us to understand and negotiate a way out of violence.

**Stefanie Kappler, Lecturer in International Relations and Director of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies, Liverpool Hope University**

This paper will look at the various ways in which top-down processes have attempted to shape grassroots agencies through particular funding practices (often neglecting arts and culture as those tend to challenge established narratives and are not as amenable to external control as more standardised agencies, such as formal peacebuilding NGOs). As a result, local arts organisations and movements have often resorted to informal survival mechanisms to avoid being co-opted into top-down discourses, whilst serving as platforms on which local voices can interact and communicate. I will primarily discuss this particularly in relation to examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but will also refer to the South African and Northern Irish context, but will also refer to the South African and Northern Irish context.

**Arild Bergh, Senior Researcher, Norwegian Defence Research Institute**

*The power of music or the music of power?*

When music is used to (attempt to) transform conflicts, the idea of the "power of music" is promoted to the foreground, both as a reason for its use and as a cause of any changes. However, power issues inherent in relationships between people who are (or have been) in conflict and external actors is largely invisible in this discourse. In this presentation issues pertaining to power differentials between musicians and people in conflict will be discussed and the top/down and bottom/up concepts will be expanded to hopefully be able to better see power issues in future music related projects.

**David Grant, Senior Lecturer, School of Creative Arts, Queen's University Belfast**

*Shoulder to Shoulder: the co-existence of truths in the 'Theatre of Witness'*

A reflection on the trilogy of 'Theatre of Witness' productions which addressed different aspects of recent Northern Ireland experience, and which were conceived and directed by Teya Sepinuck at the Playhouse in 'Derry between 2009 and 2012: We Carried Your Secrets (2009) involved a mainly male intergenerational cast; I Once Knew a Girl... (2010) had an entirely female cast and exposed painful memories suppressed during the Troubles; and Release (2012), where ex-prisoners and paramilitary ex-combatants shared the stage with a former Prison Governor, a former soldier and a former police detective. There has been much discussion of the need in Northern Ireland for a Peace and Reconciliation process akin to South Africa's. But reports from South Africa itself suggest that this has not been the panacea outsiders often imagine, and Northern Ireland politicians are very uneasy about the perception that the rights of victims are being ignored in this race for reconciliation. Viewed in this context, the capacity of the Theatre of Witness to eschew labels such as victim, survivor and perpetrator, and to allow sometimes contradictory and unreconciled accounts of the region's recent history to sit together side by side, may well provide a model or more aptly, (following Stanley Raffel) a metaphor for wider dialogue.

## Panel 4: A War by Other Means? Culture as Conflict

### **Anthony Haughey, Lecturer in the School of Media, Dublin Institute of Technology**

The assemblage of research objects resulting from fieldwork in post conflict countries to create art installations may be viewed as 'living archives' (Bailey, D. and S. Boyce; and Hall, S. 2001). Testimonies of survivors, victims and perpetrators recall Benjamin and Ricoeur's account of ethical memory and archives. Memory that is 'not so much locked into the past, but is concerned with opening the past as a mechanism to release the future' (Ricoeur: 2004). Constructing an archive in this way may be considered as transformative; an act of resistance – to recover the dead, the lost voices, forgotten memories and 'cleansed histories?' described by Allen Feldman as 'a vast secret museum of historical absence' (2004). Like archives, art works may be considered as always being in a process of disappearance and re-emergence generating new forms and meanings and being resistant to closure. In this short presentation I will discuss a number of art strategies deployed to challenge, reinforce and negate cultural understanding of emergent post conflict identities in N. Ireland and Bosnia Herzegovina.

### **Stuart Taberner, Professor of German, University of Leeds**

This talk focuses on the representation of victimhood in recent German-language and Afrikaans culture. It parallels the ways in which 'perpetrator collectives' in Germany and South Africa have in recent years sought to accrue the cultural and political capital of 'victimhood' and seeks to demonstrate how a comparative approach of this kind may illuminate the general and specific contexts that shape post-conflict writings of the past as well as different groups' post-conflict efforts to re-position themselves within newly dominant narratives of self-scrutiny, traumatic memory, and reconciliation. In my talk, I will refer to German and Afrikaans literary texts, as well as to memorials in Germany and South Africa.

### **Elizabeth Crooke, Professor of Heritage and Museum Studies, University of Ulster**

This paper will address the divergent narratives that are emerging in Northern Ireland with regard to the contribution arts and culture has made (and can still make) to conflict resolution and political transformation in the region. Reflecting on the more recent period in Northern Ireland, this paper will draw upon the many cultural projects that have claimed a 'peace-making' role, and ask how we should judge their impact. It will address the argument whether culture has become 'a war by other means' and consider the continued political and contested nature of cultural practice in place referred to as 'post-conflict'.

## Panel 5: Culture and the Construction of Shared Spaces

### **Damir Arsenijevic, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, De Montfort University**

In this paper I will discuss 'Jokes, war and genocide', an artistic theoretical group in Bosnia and Herzegovina I set up several years ago. The aim of the group is to explore specific forms of witnessing that disrupt the dominant regimes of commemoration and open up spaces for speech about war and its effects beyond censorship and prohibition. The group creates public interventions that enable communities to explore difficult topics in the context of Bosnian society, which is presently locating, exhuming, identifying and re-burying its dead. Practices and experiences surrounding missing persons confront the horrific past and the shapeless future in the present whose metonym is a mass grave. Whilst the dominant ethno-nationalists, who amassed their wealth in the blood of war and genocide, manipulate social affect in order to profit from the mass graves—



discovered and clandestine ones alike—there are initiatives that strive neither to forget nor fetishize the dead and the missing. These initiatives insist on the commons—as a means of different and more humane sociality—and are to be found in popular acts of witnessing that cannot be mythologized but are, as such, usually silenced and neglected. I will outline the framework for bringing together such popular acts of witnessing and discusses the ways in which we materialise hope against the predominant insistence on making impossibility convincing.

**Dominic Bryan, Director of the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast**

*Carnivals, Festivals, Parades and Protests: Identity, Ritual and the Sharing of Public Space in Belfast*

The paper will examine evidence of changes in the way public space is being used in central Belfast and how it potentially reflects on political identities in the city. It will look at the development of a 'carnival space' and examine if section 75 Equality legislation (1998) and the policy of a Shared Future (2005) have contributed to the evolution of alternative cultural practices and consequently the profiling of alternative local identities in the city. The paper will conclude by speculating on whether a new civic identity that spans the political and ethnic divisions has started to develop in Belfast in contrast to the increased residential division that has taken place since the 1998 Agreement.

**Paul Cooke, Centenary Chair in World Cinemas, University of Leeds**

*From 'Auschwitz-land' to Banglatown: Heritage Conflicts, Film and the Politics of Place*

This talk will examine the tensions between historical dramas and the physical heritage sites they represent, looking at how conflicts between the two can open up new ways of exploring, and taking ownership, of history. Drawing on the work of Michael Rothberg, Griselda Pollock and Rodanthi Tzanelli, I will look at a range of case studies, all connected by Rothberg's notion of 'multidirectional memory', in order to examine the way debates between film and heritage culture negotiate the politics of place and the need to take account of the experience contemporary 'consumers' of the past, on the one hand, and the moral imperative to acknowledge the experience of the historical subject, on the other.