Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts)

Iniva is an evolving, radical visual arts organisation dedicated to developing an artistic programme that reflects on the social and political impact of globalisation. With the Stuart Hall Library acting as a critical and creative hub for our work, we offer residencies, commission new work and promote existing practices enabling artistic ambition and development.

http://www.iniva.org/library/library_events_news_and_recordings/clothes_cloth_ancestor_culture_group_march_2015

26 Mar 2015

Troubles textiles

Dr. Karen Nickell on her doctoral research 'Embroidery in the Expanded Field: Textile Narratives in Irish Art Post-1968’ with a response from Professor Catherine Harper. Thursday 6.30 - 8.30pm

Audio recordings of the talks are available at the bottom of the page.
Textiles are embedded in Irish social, cultural and political life. They have played a significant role in the construction of colonial, national, religious and feminine identity; they act as signifiers of personal and community allegiances and as territorial markers.

This talk explores textile practices and outcomes that responded to the conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles. The presentation begins with a discussion of individual art responses to the socio-political circumstances, including early work by Catherine Harper. It continues with a discussion of community-led and artist-led projects and their diversity of intent - memorialisation, protest, identity, remembrance, healing and storytelling.

The presentation concludes with peace-led projects and the role textiles can play in post-conflict resolution of multiple (and often conflicted) memories. The Troubles textiles are examined within broader critical contexts such as fine art responses, activist art and international war textiles; by showing their relevance to existing fields of practice I hope to open a debate on their significance and cultural value. Karen Nickell, 2015

**Biographies**

**Karen Nickell** studied Psychology and taught for almost 20 years; during this time she developed her creative skills and was awarded a National Gold Medal of Excellence for Craft and Design. In 2006 she enrolled at the Belfast School of Art to study Fine and Applied Art (specialism painting) and graduated with first class honours in 2008, winning the Bank of Ireland Student Tordah award and the Arts Society of Ulster graduate award. Following a 3-year doctoral research project she was appointed to teach History and Theory of Textiles at the Ulster University and now combines lecturing with her own studio practice.

**Catherine Harper** is Dean of the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries; Professor of Textiles at the University of Portsmouth. The Northern Irish visual artist studied woven textile and specialised large-scale public art. Her PhD investigated three-dimensional woven glass/carbon composite components for the automotive industry. Following a residency in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, she began to explore performic and textual practices within craft, textiles, body, gender and subjective narratives. Her publications include Intersex, 2007. Textiles: Primary and Critical Sources, 2012. Catherine is UK Editor of Textile: the Journal of Cloth and Culture, contributor to Selvedge magazine, and Editorial Board member of The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education.

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