

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Conflict Textiles Trust

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland No **NIC 109368**

Annual Report & Statement of Accounts

For the year to March 31st 2025

621 Seacoast Road, Benone, Limavady, BT49 0LH



INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, the second year of Conflict Textiles Trust's existence. Its origins go back to 2008 when Roberta Bacic began to curate exhibitions of *arpilleras* (appliqué textiles originating in Chile as resistance to the Pinochet Dictatorship) and other textiles from her own collection and those of friends and colleagues, in order to raise awareness of these textiles as an art form and to raise awareness of the messages that they contained about the harmful effects of violence, oppression and conflict. The primary focus is on gross violations of human rights and their consequences for those caught up in violent conflict: displacement, torture, disappearances, gender-based violence, etc. Since then nearly 400 exhibitions and events have been organised and she collected a loyal group of supporters in Northern Ireland and across the world. Conflict Textiles became an entity with a registered name and a registered logo. On 11th October 2022 it was established as a trust and on 22nd February 2023 it became a registered charity. It was able to open a bank account in April 2023.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This year saw the consolidation of the Trust and its working practices. At the same time there were a number of significant developments. The highlights of the year included the major exhibition at the Ulster Museum in Northern Ireland, *Threads of Empowerment: Conflict Textiles' International Journey* starting in June 2024, and ending in April 2025, with an estimate of over 240,000 visitors, and with 12 associated satellites in different parts of Northern Ireland and beyond; a symposium in early March 2025 at Ulster University in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, with other events in QUB and other locations in Belfast; the mounting on linen and exhibiting at the Linen Hall Library of the donation of 16 *arpilleras* from the mid-1970s which had been collected as part of the solidarity between people in Germany and the opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile; continuing collaboration with the Transformative Memory International Network in Canada and Indonesia; donation of two textiles to the Linen Hall Library; participation in *War-Torn Children, Childhoods in a World at War* a major exhibition at Fundación Museo



de la Paz de Guernica, Basque Country, Spain; an exhibition of print and other materials from the collection in the Special Collections exhibition area in the McClay Library, QUB; tour by one piece from the Conflict Textile Collection around many sites of Memory in Chile over one year, stimulating discussion and reflection.

In total, during the year, the Trust organised and/or participated in 13 exhibitions, including associated activities, and/or participated in 8 other events as follows:

Exhibitions:

1. Tower Museum, Derry-Londonderry: *Conflict Textiles presence at the Tower Museum: 2008 - 2024*
2. Ulster University, Coleraine Campus Library: *Permanent Rotating exhibition*
3. Advanced Research Centre (ARC), University of Glasgow: *Stitching Memory: Commemorating 50 years of solidarity in Scotland*
4. Ulster University, Derry-Londonderry Campus Library *Permanent rotating exhibition:*
5. Fundació Ateneu Sant Roc, Badalona, Catalonia: *Permanent rotating exhibition Rincón de la Arpillera Embajadora*
6. Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal: *From Displacement to Empowerment*
7. Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland: *Rotating Textile Corner in The Troubles and Beyond Exhibition*
8. Ulster Museum, Belfast: *Threads of Empowerment: Conflict Textiles International Journey*
9. Linenhall Library, Belfast: *Stitching for Solidarity*
10. Queen's University Belfast, McClay Library: *Conflict Textiles/Ark Permanent Rotating exhibition*
11. Ballymoney Museum: *Arpilleras' journey in the Causeway Coast and Glens Museum Services*

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12. Special Collection Display Area, McClay Library, Queen's University,
Belfast: *Conflict Textiles @ Special Collections & Archives*

13. Fundación Museo de la Paz de Gernika, Basque Country / Spain
War-Torn Children, Childhoods in a World at War

Pieces from the Collection are also included in the Ulster Museum exhibitions,
Troubles and Beyond and *Inclusive Global Histories*.

Other events:

- i. Seminar with Year 3 students, School of Applied Social and Policy
Belfast Campus, Ulster University
- ii. Workshop *Creating Communities of Solidarity* The Manchester
Museum
- iii. Touring Sites of Memory, Chile *Arpillera Itinerante Hornos de
Lonquén* Multiple locations
- iv. Workshop, Guided tour and Associated activities: *International
Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2024* Ulster
Museum
- v. Donation *Our Lady of Words and Flora Poetica* Linen Hall Library
- vi. Book Launch, Guided Tour and Associated Activities *Arpilleras
Poéticas* Huenún, J. and Bacic, R. (eds) Chile: Pehuén Editores at
Ulster Museum
- vii. Symposium: *Stitching Solidarity: Activism in Textile Art* Ulster
University, Ulster Museum and Other locations
- viii. Symposium: *Indonesia Knowledge Exchange 2025 - Conversing
with Domestic Memories*: Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia

More information on all the exhibition and events are available on the Trust's
website: www.conflicttextiles.com.

In addition to curating and organising and co-organising activities, Conflict Textiles
also attended other events and activities, and supported an international network
of *arpilleristas* (makers of *arpilleras*), artists, academics, activists, film makers,
musicians, museums and art galleries, poets and policy makers, all committed to

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creating and raising awareness of the textiles and the messages they convey. The Trust also responds to requests for consultation and advice by those studying the arpillera movement at post-graduate and post- doctoral level; researchers, owners, collectors and museums seeking information on the provenance and validation of textiles; publishers seeking permission to use images: and mentoring makers in their creative processes.

The trust receives offers of textiles as donations but there is insufficient spare capacity to process and document these and therefore the Trust has to be selective in accepting donations depending on how closely related they are to the core themes of the collection.

Overall, it becomes increasingly difficult to respond to the level of interest and requests that the trust received and to administer the collection voluntarily. For some time the Trust has been considering a future long term home for the collection that would ensure not only that it was preserved and maintained, but would be a living collection, continuing to organise exhibitions, activities and events to highlight that impact of war on communities and supporting human rights and peaceful and sustainable development. It became apparent that the most suitable home for the Collection is the Derry/Londonderry site of the Ulster University. During the year, the Trust entered into discussions with Ulster University to explore transfer of the collection into the custody of the University. The Trust and the University signed a memorandum of understanding On 24th April 2024 which included a proposal to commission a Feasibility Study by independent experts on the transfer of the collection. This study was carried out and the Trust was encouraged that the authors concluded:

The fit between the significant collection, its values and the University's strategic aims and objectives is strong, with clear advantages for both parties.

We concluded that the transfer of the collection to the University is desirable and feasible, with substantial benefits to both it and Conflict Textiles.

Discussions on the transfer are continuing



FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

The income for the year was £13,333.45, and expenditure was £11,297.29, as follows:

	Expenditure	Income
Apr-24	£ 494.32	£ -
May-24	£ 795.48	£ 3,000.00
Jun-24	£ 1,659.25	£ -
Jul-24	£ 1,333.50	£ -
Aug-24	£ 1,177.18	£ 2,000.00
Sep-24	£ 342.00	£ 250.00
Oct-24	£ 565.60	£ 2,000.00
Nov-24	£ 1,174.96	£ 1,325.00
Dec-24	£ 1,261.23	£ 1,058.45
Jan-25	£ 1,044.67	£ -
Feb-25	£ 381.60	£ 3,700.00
Mar-25	£ 1,067.50	£ -
	£ 11,297.29	£ 13,333.45

Opening bank balance 6/4/2024	£ 1,928.33
Total Income for year	£ 13,333.45
Total Expenditure for year	£ 11,297.29
Closing bank balance 31/3/2025	£ 3,964.49

Income and expenditure was half of that for the previous year. The biggest item of expenditure was payments for services rendered: £8775. a significant reduction on the previous years, relying on a number of people to provide textile, curatorial, archival and IT services on an *ad hoc* basis as and when required. Agreements for the provision of curatorial support and IT support were made with suitable individuals. One is a connected person, being the granddaughter of a trustee but in accordance with clause 7.3 of the Trust Deed, at the Trust Meeting on 11 April 2024 the trustees decided this is the most effective and cost effective way to obtain IT support, the related trustees

having absented themselves for the discussion. Working in this way has reduced the overall cost of services. It has provided a high level of support in specific areas but does not relieve the Trustee curator of general administration and support oversight of those providing these services. There is a significant gap that still needs to be filled if the Collection is to be managed effectively at the optimum level

Other expenditure was modest. Mounting exhibitions was the second main item of expenditure (£1514.60) followed by marinating the textiles and preparing them for exhibition (£750). Even with the major symposium in March, there was limited expenditure on travel and accommodation, as most participants covered their own costs and friends and colleagues provided some accommodation.

In terms of income, it was encouraging that most came from payments for commissions (£8,775) and the rest (£4558.45) came from donations.

It has not been possible to identify a source of funding that would make the Trust sustainable, and the Feasibility Study on transferring the Collection to the University concluded that “The University will carry the core revenue costs and the salary costs”.

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Again in 2024-2025 the expenditure of the Trust (£11,297.29) is risible when viewed in the light of all the activities of the Trust - 13 exhibitions and 8 other events, as well as the ongoing networking and support services. It has only been possible because of the significant time that is provided *pro bono* by the curator and the *pro bono* support from the other trustees. The level of activity is also made possible by the support in kind from commissioning organisations, including exhibition spaces, workshop and meeting spaces, travel costs and administrative support. All these contributions are appreciated, as well as CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet), located at the Ulster University. It hosts the Conflict Textiles online archive as an associated site:

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www.conflicttextiles.com Nevertheless it is recognised that the current level of activity is unsustainable without significant financial support or by locating the Collection in the care of a larger organisation, such as Ulster University which is committed to the current work of the Trust.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The record on its website of each Conflict Textile event includes a section on “Outcomes”, provided, where possible, by the commissioning agency or otherwise provided by the representatives of the Trust involved in the event. It is often not possible to carry out a detailed assessment of exhibitions which may be on display for a considerable period of time without direct supervision. Only a small number of venues collect records on the numbers of visitors and rely on voluntary completion of forms to record their experience. Nonetheless the Outcome statements provide useful information to guide future practice.



Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name

Conflict Textiles Trust

Charity Number

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland, No. **NIC 109368**

Principal Address

621 Seacoast Road,
Benone,
Limavady,
BT49 0LH

Charity Trustees as of 31st March 2025

Brandon Hamber
Clem McCartney
Gillian Robinson
Lauren Dempster
Roberta Bacic
John Peto (appointed a trustee at the Trust Meeting on 11th April 2024)

Bank

Co-operative Bank,
P.O. Box 101
1 Balloon Street,
Manchester,
M60 4EP

Independent examiner of accounts

Lorraine O'Neill

Structure, Governance, and Management

Governing Document and Constitution

Conflict Textiles is a charitable trust, governed by a trust deed adopted 11th October 2022

The Society is run entirely by its Trustees. There are no formal officers and duties rotate between the trustees. Trustees are appointed for life.

Trustee Selection and Management

The trustees met quarterly: 11th April 2024, 11th July 2024, 9th October 2024, and 27th January 2025. The meetings rotate between Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Coleraine and Benone, where the collection is presently stored. Attendance has been satisfactory though on occasions some members have had to join virtually.

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At each meeting the latest accounts are reviewed against budgets and forecasts; spending is discussed and approved, and decisions made about taking up new opportunities in the light of available funds and personnel. Spending decisions are also taken between meetings and reported at the next Trustees meeting.

The meetings also provide a forum to review recent activities within the programme and to plan forthcoming events and discuss problems and issues that have arisen. These are regularly discussed informally by the Trustees.

Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objects

The object of the Trust as set out in the Trust Deed (Clause 2) is to use the visual-tactile medium of textiles (textile language) to:

- 2.1.1 raise awareness of and communicate the experience of conflict and human rights abuses and its consequences;
- 2.1.2 facilitate the expression of feelings and experiences of people in situations of conflict;
- 2.1.3 share stories of conflict with others around the world to build social cohesion and solidarity; and
- 2.1.4 empower those whose voices are often ignored in situations of conflict bringing new voices into public discourse.

The activities of the Trust

In order to further the Objects of Conflict Textiles Trust, under Clause 3 of the Trust Deed, the Trustees have the powers, which they exercise in line with the charitable purposes laid down in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 section 3, as amended:

- 3.1 To run exhibitions and associated activities, including workshops.
- 3.2 To lend items from the collection for other exhibitions provided borrower commits to a loan agreement and undertakes proper care and security.
- 3.3 To maintain and preserve a digital and physical archive.
- 3.4 To promote or carry out research.
- 3.5 To provide advice.
- 3.6 To publish or distribute information.
- 3.7 To co-operate with other charities and bodies.

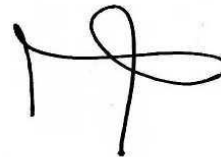
Public Benefit Statement

The trustees of Conflict Textiles Charitable Trust confirm that they have complied with their duty under section 2 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, as amended, to have regard to the Charity Commission NI's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Society in the year to March 31st 2024.

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In evaluating public benefit we aim to make our activities and events available to all regardless of personal circumstances, race, gender, ability, or faith, and ensure that any restrictions placed on that availability are both necessary and reasonable. Virtually all activities are free. Most activities take place in Northern Ireland though events during the year took place in Ireland, Great Britain, Chile, Japan, Spain, United States of America and virtually on line. The public benefit policy guided the planning and implementation of these events.

This report approved and adopted by a meeting of the Trustees on 22nd October 2025 and signed on their behalf:



Roberta Bacic
Trustee