

Conference Programme
Drawn Threads and Running Stitches
12th-13th November 2026

The Ulster Folk Museum (National Museums NI) holds Ireland's largest public collection of dress and textiles relating primarily to the nine counties of Ulster. This collection includes dress and accessories, lace, linens, and embroidery, dating from 1760 to present day.

Drawn Threads and Running Stitches is a current project at the Ulster Folk Museum focused on the research, conservation, and rehousing of a significant collection of whitework embroidered textiles. The project is supported by The Broderers' and the Associated Companies' Joint Venture Project.

Building on this work, this two-day conference will bring together researchers, practitioners, and curators to explore embroidery, textiles, and costume with a particular focus on whitework.

Thursday 12th November

9.30am-10.00am Registration, Tea/Coffee

10.00am-10.20am Welcome & Introductions

Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive, National Museums NI

Valerie Wilson, Curator of Textiles, Ulster Folk Museum

Dr Lynn Hulse, Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Broderers

10.20am-10.50am Keynote – Ciaran Toal

Early Irish linen damask and the King's tablecloth

10.50am-11.05am Q&A

11.05am-11.15am Comfort Break

11.15am-11.35am Charlotte McReynolds

The Lanto Sygne Needlework Collection: A Gift to the Ulster Museum

11.35pm-11.55pm Luba (Lubomira) Nurse

Naming Openwork: Reading Leopold Iklé's 1908 Catalogue as a Source of Knowledge

11.55am-12.15pm Anna Robinson

Collars, Cuffs and Cleaning: Caring for Lace in the 19th C.

12.15pm-12.35pm Fiona McKelvie

Inventory of Linen: A Rare Nineteenth-Century Record of Household Textiles at Hawnes Park

12.35pm-12.55pm Dr Lyndsey McDougall

White as Snow: A Methodist Signature Quilt and Whitework Traditions in Ulster

12.55pm-1.15pm Q&A

13.15pm-14.15pm Lunch

2.15-4.00pm For in-person attendees there will be guided group visits 'behind the scenes' to view a selection of textiles in the Cultra Collections Store, and to see how dress and textiles contribute to the interpretation of living history in the open-air museum.

Friday 13th November

9.30am-10.00am Registration, Tea/Coffee

10.00am-10.05am Welcome & Introductions

Valerie Wilson, Curator of Textiles, Ulster Folk Museum

10.05am-10.35am Keynote – Dr Isabella Rosner

"To revive a beautiful art": The Royal School of Needlework's History, Collection, and Work

10.35am-10.50am Q&A

10.50am-11.00am Comfort Break

11.00am-11.20am Dr Patricia Wilson Nguyen

Stitching Logic: Whitework Samplers as Sites of Constructionist Pedagogy, c. 1618–1670

11.20am-11.40am Angela Hermano Crenshaw

Piña and the Picturesque: Philippine Embroidered Motifs and Women Collectors

11.40pm-12.00pm Yvette Stanton

Fries Witwerk: Identifying the Characteristics of Frisian Whitework Embroidery

12.00pm-12.20pm Aleksandra Syc

Reviving Maków Whitework Embroidery: Community Archives, Historical Pattern Books, and Contemporary Practice in Southern Poland

12.20pm-12.40pm Hazel Bruce

Inspired by Tradition: Contemporary responses to the whitework project

12.40pm-1pm Q&A

13.00pm-14.00pm Lunch

2.15-4.00pm For in-person attendees there will be guided group visits 'behind the scenes' to view a selection of textiles in the Cultra Collections Store, and to see how dress and textiles contribute to the interpretation of living history in the open-air museum.

Speaker Biographies

Dr Lynn Hulse is a textile scholar and practitioner, specialising in embroidered furnishings of the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts movements. She is the author of several publications on decorative needlework and editor of *May Morris: Art & Life* (2017). Her most recent book *May Morris Designs* was published by the Ashmolean Museum in August 2025. Lynn is a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Broderers and a fellow of both the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Royal Historical Society. She is also the founder of Ornamental Embroidery, which delivers workshops, lectures and first-hand study sessions of objects in public and private collections.

Ciaran Toal is the Keeper of Collections at the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum, and manages an internationally significant linen collection. His research interests span the history of Lisburn, the Lagan Valley, and the nascent Irish linen damask trade. His most recent publications explore Lisburn's Swanzy Riots (1920), and he is currently preparing articles on Lisburn's suffragettes and aerolinen in Ulster during the First World War (1914-18).

Charlotte McReynolds is Curator of Art at the Ulster Museum, (part of National Museums Northern Ireland). She is the curator of *Ashes to Fashion: A Collection Reborn*, and the author of an accompanying publication by the same name. Her primary responsibility is for the Ulster Museum's dress and textiles collection, as well as its collections of jewellery, silver and toys and dolls. Previous fashion exhibitions she has curated for the Ulster Museum include *Fashion & Feminism* (2018), *Vice Versa* (2019) and *La Belle Époque* (2020) and *Anything Goes! Fashions of the 1920s* (2022) and *A Century of Style: Fashion Photography from the National Portrait Gallery Collection* (2023).

Luba (Lubomira) Nurse is a textile historian and conservator. Since 2023 she has been Head of Collection and Library at the Textile Museum St. Gallen. Her interests are cross-disciplinary approaches to object-based research, and innovations in collection documentation and curation. Most recently she curated the collection for the exhibition *Collecting Fashion. From T-Shirts to Haute Couture* (2025–2026). In 2024–2027 she is a co-researcher in the Horizon Europe and SERI Switzerland funded project "TEXTile digitisAtion toolS and mEthodS for cultural heritage (TEXTaiLES)".

Anna Robinson is a textile conservator who is currently undertaking PhD research at the University of Lincoln. They hold a master's degree in textile conservation from the University of Glasgow and a graduate diploma in objects conservation from Fleming College Canada. They have worked as a textile conservator for public and private collections and in addition to their studies, are currently a lecturer and research assistant.

Fiona McKelvie has worked in the textile industry since 1982 and is a Belfast-born specialist in Irish linen, with a long-standing interest in its history, heritage and commercial significance. She has lectured widely on the subject and appeared on several podcasts including *Cloth Cultures* with Amber Butchart and *Haptic & Hue*. Fiona also runs McBurneyandBlack.com, a website specialising in antique and vintage Irish linen. In 2022, she returned from London to settle in a former flax mill in County Down, a fitting home for her continuing research into Irish linen.

Dr Lyndsey McDougall is an artist-researcher, embroiderer and lecturer in Art and Design History and Theory at Belfast School of Art, Ulster University. Her research explores embroidery and textiles through material culture, with particular interests in women's histories, religion, place and ecologies of making. Her doctoral research used case studies of Masonic and religious embroidery made in Ireland from c.1760 to the present to explore their material and social histories. Alongside her academic research, Lyndsey maintains an embroidery practice rooted in craft, materials, natural

dyes and place. Her work considers tacit knowledge, communities of makers, and reciprocal relationships between making, materials, people and the more-than-human world.

Dr Isabella Rosner is the Curator of Textiles and Contextual Studies Lecturer at the Royal School of Needlework. She is the author of *Stitching Freedom: Embroidery and Incarceration* (Common Threads Press) and *Fierce is the Needle* (forthcoming from Bloomsbury and St Martin's). Isabella also hosts the successful Sew What? podcast about historical needlework and those who stitched it'.

Dr Patricia Wilson Nguyen is an independent researcher, professional embroiderer, and founder of Thistle Threads, specializing in the experimental archaeology of historic embroidered textiles. Her research on the pedagogical infrastructure of early modern needlework includes "On Female Education: Projects of Mastery in Seventeenth-Century English Boarding Schools" (*Winterthur Portfolio*, 2025) and co-authored works on materiality and making in *Textile History* (2025/2026). She led the Plimoth Jacket Project, a reconstruction exhibited at Winterthur, manufactures reproduction threads, and taught a 600-pg course on reticella. She holds a Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of Michigan and an S.B. from MIT.

Angela Hermano Crenshaw is an art historian, curator, and educator specializing in dress and textiles. She is pursuing a PhD in Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture at Bard Graduate Center in New York City, where she earned her MA in 2024. Her work focuses on American receptions of the Philippines in the US colonial period via textiles and material objects. Angela received her undergraduate degree in Art History from the University of St Andrews in Scotland and held positions at Providence College Galleries and the RISD Museum, where she curated the exhibition "From Pineapple to *Pañuelo*: Philippine Textiles."

Yvette Stanton OAM is an Australian embroidery historian and author specialising in historical whitework traditions. She has published eleven books on embroidery, including multiple titles on whitework, and teaches internationally. Her research has taken her to major collections across Europe, including the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, where she conducted the hands-on examination of Frisian whitework that underpins this paper. She is PhD student at UNSW (Australia) working on a comparative study of openwork embroidery. In 2026 she received the Medal of the Order of Australia, an Australian civilian honour, for her service to embroidery.

Aleksandra Syc comes from the Maków Podhalański region in southern Poland, where the tradition of Maków embroidery originated. She studies embroidery at the Krystyna Duchniak Embroidery School and under the guidance of Halina Bania. At the STIM-ART Association, she serves as archivist and librarian, initiating the creation of a community library and social archive dedicated to embroidery heritage. Her practice includes Maków whitework embroidery, wool embroidery, spinning, and kumihimo. She is particularly interested in the reinterpretation of historical embroidery traditions through fantasy and historical motifs. Aleksandra holds degrees in History and Public Administration from the Jagiellonian University.

Hazel Bruce has been a textile artist and educator since 1990, exhibiting nationally and internationally. She is a member of the 62 Group of Textile Artists, is a lecturer in textile art and embroidery at Ulster University and is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her artistic practice is informed by post war approaches to education and abstraction and stylisation in painting and textiles. Marks and patterns in the landscape, memory, textile history and industry and colour theory are also important. Her educational interests focus on the importance of practical skills in a changing Higher Education landscape.

Important Information

Conference Base

Our base for the conference will be Cultra Manor which is located on the grounds of the Ulster Folk Museum, 3 miles from Belfast City Centre.

Airports

The closest airport to the Ulster Folk Museum is George Best Belfast City Airport which is located 11 minutes from the Ulster Folk Museum. From Belfast City Centre it is 18 minutes to George Best Belfast City Airport. Buses are available.

Belfast International Airport is located 28 minutes from Belfast City Centre and 35 minutes from the Ulster Folk Museum. It is possible to take a bus from Belfast International Airport to Belfast City Centre.

It is also possible to fly into Dublin Airport in Ireland. Buses to Belfast City Centre depart every hour from Dublin Airport and take a total of 2 hours 30 minutes.

Please note that Euros are accepted in Ireland and Pounds (GBP) are accepted in Northern Ireland.

Hotel recommendations

We would recommend staying in Belfast City Centre or Titanic Quarter. Noted below are recommendations of centrally located hotels in both Belfast City Centre and in Titanic Quarter to suit a variety of budgets. It is possible to travel via train to the Ulster Folk Museum from both areas.

Hotel	Location	Link
Premier Inn: Belfast Titanic Quarter	Titanic Quarter (Travel to Cultra station from Titanic Quarter station)	www.premierinn.com Select Belfast Titanic Quarter
AC Hotel Belfast *Premium hotel	Titanic Quarter (Travel to Cultra station from Titanic Quarter station)	https://www.marriott.com/en-gb/hotels/bfsac-ac-hotel-belfast/experiences/
Titanic Hotel Belfast *Premium hotel	Titanic Quarter (Travel to Cultra station from Titanic Quarter station)	https://www.titanichotelbelfast.com/#hp1
The Flint Hotel	Belfast City Centre (Travel to Cultra station from Belfast Grand Central station)	https://www.theflintbelfast.com/
Travelodge Belfast	Belfast City Centre (Travel to Cultra station from Belfast Grand Central station)	https://www.travelodge.co.uk/ Select Belfast Central
Bullitt Hotel	Belfast City Centre (Travel to Cultra station from Belfast Grand Central station)	https://bullitthotel.com/
Europa Hotel	Belfast City Centre	https://www.europahotelbelfast.com/

	(Travel to Cultra station from Belfast Grand Central station)	
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Public transport

We would recommend travelling to the museum from Belfast City Centre or Titanic Quarter by train.

The Ulster Folk Museum is located in Cultra and the closest train station is Cultra. You will come across the Transport Museum first when you arrive, and it is a 15-minute walk from there to the Folk Museum. Please note the walk is uphill; this is steep in parts.

Further information on how to find us is included in the link below:

<https://www.ulsterfolkmuseum.org/how-find-us>

Clothing recommendations

The Ulster Folk Museum is an open-air museum and parts of the afternoon sessions will be taking place outside. Suitable clothing and footwear is recommended. The weather in Northern Ireland can be changeable and it is best to be prepared for the potential of rain as well as low temperatures.

Dietary requirements

Lunch will be provided on both days of the conference (sandwiches, tray bakes, tea/coffee/water). If you have any dietary requirements that you would like to discuss further, please get in touch with victoria.millar@nationalmuseumsni.org

Accessibility

If you have any access requirements that you would like to discuss further, please get in touch with victoria.millar@nationalmuseumsni.org

Enquiries

If you have any general enquiries relating to the conference, please get in touch with victoria.millar@nationalmuseumsni.org

Even more to see and do!

After the conference ends, you might be interested in the following:

Ashes to Fashion exhibition at the Ulster Museum

Celebrate and commemorate fifty years of collecting fashion at the Ulster Museum and experience a collection reborn.

10:00 to 17:00 (Closed Mondays)

[Tickets available here](#)

Knit + Stitch Show at Eikon Exhibition Centre

Meet up with like-minded crafters, discuss ideas, learn new skills, find inspiration and shop for your annual craft supplies, including wool, fabric and beyond from big brands and specialist suppliers – all under one roof at Knit + Stitch Northern Ireland.

12th – 15th November

[Tickets available here](#)