The re-establishment of power sharing in May 2007 was a watershed in the bloody and bitter conflict that blighted Northern Ireland for almost four decades. For the first time Northern Ireland would be governed by all the main unionist and nationalist parties, suggesting that the promise of the 1998 Agreement for a peaceful, stable, and reconciled society could be fulfilled. This event aims to create a forum to facilitate discussion and debate on the role of culture in remembering the Northern Irish conflict and fostering reconciliation and peace.

Taking a multifaceted approach to ‘peace process culture’ by considering various art forms and media, such as photography, performance, drama, film and visual art, this one-day conference interrogates the various roles that cultural productions play in an ethnically divided society, where views about the past conflict are intimately linked to questions of identity and electoral politics. The event brings together artists from different backgrounds and practices to reflect upon the complexities of the different approaches to conflict-resolution and reconciliation, complementing these insights with contributions from academics and civil society actors. In so doing, it seeks to interrogate the intersections between politics, ethics and aesthetics in the context of the Northern Irish peace process by investigating practices of remembrance and reconciliation.
10.30am: Registration and Tea/Coffee

10.50am: Welcome Address – Sir George Quigley (IBIS Chair)

Session 1: Legacies of Conflict
The gradual transition from violence to peace can have multiple consequences. These may include the possible obscuring of the tragic remnants of the past, the restoring of fractured relationships in the present and the aspiring for a better future. Culture inevitably finds itself confronted with those consequences and must make difficult decisions regarding the mix of old and new in their engagements with the changing contemporary situation. This session investigates the dilemmas that art and its critics face in having to negotiate the legacies of the past while simultaneously looking towards the future.

Timeframe: 11.00am-12.30pm
Format: A 10-15-minute presentation by each panelist, followed by a Q&A session
Participants:
Chair: Pat Cooke
Anthony Haughey, Edna Longley, Philip Napier, Philip Orr

12.30pm – 1.45pm: Lunch (provided at venue)

Session 2: Re-Imaginings of Northern Ireland
The advent of a new and peaceful dispensation provides opportunities for a more inclusive and pluralist re-imagining of Northern Ireland. This session explores some of the different forms and shapes that these new imaginings have taken. It asks how contemporary art negotiates the new realities and dilemmas of everyday life. It also questions to what extent artists and practitioners feel able to buy into the politician’s promise of a ‘new era’ and interrogates in what ways they envision a ‘shared and better future’.

Timeframe: 1.45pm – 3.15pm
Format: A 10-15-minute presentation by each panelist, followed by a Q&A session
Participants:
Chair: Eamonn Hughes
Imelda Foley, Tim Loane, Eoghan McTigue, David Park
**Session 3: Arts and Culture after Conflict**

Since Northern Ireland has for so long been represented as a place of inexplicable and enduring violence, what role can the arts and culture play in re-imagining the spaces opened up by the promises of the 1998 Agreement? Is there a specific function that the arts need to fulfill in post-conflict societies? Are they faced with a special responsibility in engaging with the experiences of victims and perpetrators? What implications does this confrontation with the legacies of conflict have for their artistic practices? Is it more important to face the future, to create opportunities for radical change and suggest a distinct break with the politics of the past? What impact do the arts have on constructions of identity, on narratives of history and on electoral politics? In short: what is the role of the arts in a post-conflict society? This session will provide a forum for the presentation of multiple perspectives and allow broad debate on the role of arts and culture in post-conflict societies.

**Timeframe:** 4.15pm – 5.40pm

**Format:** A 5-10 minute introduction from panel chair, followed by a roundtable discussion

**Participants:**

- **Chair:** Gerry Anderson
  
  Robert Ballagh, Alan Gillis, Medbh McGuckian, Glenn Patterson, Pauline Ross

**5.40pm: Closing Address – Kim Mawhinney (Ulster Museum)**

**5.45pm – Wine Reception**

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