



ITEM NO. 17a | DATE. 2011-2012  
DESCRIPTION.

## Everyday Objects Transformed by the Conflict

## Summary of Exhibition Feedback and Responses

This leaflet is a brief summary of the written responses to the **Everyday Objects Exhibition** from 2012 – 2014. Most of the feedback was written on 'luggage tags' offered in the exhibition and then displayed in the feedback area. Some people completed more detailed feedback forms. The exhibition venues included a tour round Northern Ireland and the border counties; Dundalk County Museum; the Gernika/Guernica Peace Museum and the House of Aiete in the Basque Country (a panel version); an empty shop unit in Belfast City Centre (advertised in the *Visit Belfast Centre*). When not in these venues it was displayed in the HTR offices.





# Visitors' Impressions:

# Great

Memory-stirring

Thought-provoking

Moving

educational

reminder

triggers change

Powerful

Space-for-reflection

# Interesting

Balanced/Inclusive

Well-curated

informative

past-made-more-real



"Imaginative,  
Innovative,  
Transformative,  
Humanising!"  
(HTR offices, Belfast)

"Excellent. Especially liked that  
1/2 was on Shankill and 1/2 on  
Falls. Also liked that owner of  
piece wrote their own text.  
Powerful. Inclusive. Forward-  
thinking, while looking back."  
(Spectrum Centre, Shankill Road,  
Belfast)

"Fascinating. I'm  
glad I stopped by.  
The 'everyday'  
connection makes  
it all more real."  
(Queen Street,  
Belfast)

"I think many people of my generation  
have a very  
limited or no concept at all of what it  
is to live constantly in the presence of  
widespread social conflict. We are  
insulated by our things, our social  
media - and we forget that others have  
had to live through so much. This  
exhibit hits home because of its  
mundane simplicity"  
(HTR offices, Belfast)

"Powerful reminder of the  
impact on all the people of  
N.I. - illustrated perfectly  
by the bus tickets: a  
casual reference to great  
horrors."  
(Queen Street,  
Belfast)

"Very well put together  
exhibition - adds the  
personal aspect to a  
history that affected a  
lot of people and doesn't  
always get told."  
(Bell Architects Studio,  
Ballymoney)

"This taught me that we  
have to do more in my  
country in order to  
understand that  
coexistence is possible."  
(Queen Street, Belfast)

"This is an incredibly thought-  
provoking exhibition, not only because  
most of the objects are ones I haven't  
seen anywhere, but also because of  
how personal they are - in conjunction  
with the personally written passages  
- to those who donated them. This is  
the most up-close and personal, real  
museum experience I have ever had."  
(HTR offices, Belfast)

"Thought-provoking ...  
Wonderful to see stories and  
memories from all sides co-  
exist, with each as significant  
and real as the other.  
Excellent concept."  
(First Derry Presbyterian  
Church, Derry-Londonderry)

"Incredible idea - this  
could grow with a large  
project that never ends  
and helps so many people  
to better understand the  
past and live in the  
future."  
(HTR offices, Belfast)

"These reminders  
reinforce  
the fact that we  
NEVER want those  
days to return. Well  
done! Great exhibition."  
(Public Library, Clones)



# Visitors' Emotions:



fascinated  
 smiling  
 disturbed  
 moved  
 disbelief  
 informed  
 positive  
 glad  
 humble  
 relieved  
 nothing-special  
 amazed  
 not-sad  
 excited  
 happy  
 aware  
 overwhelmed  
 good  
 pensive  
 sympathetic  
 old  
 inspired  
 nostalgic  
 hopeful  
 reflective  
 sad

"Makes me feel?  
 Still trying to figure out  
 why everything happened  
 as it did."  
 (First Derry Presbyterian  
 Church,  
 Derry~Londonderry)

"13/08/13.  
 Very moving. Peace can  
 only be possible when you  
 can tell the story of the  
 "other" and walk in their  
 shoes. Mary, England"  
 (Peace Museum,  
 Guernica, Spain)

"The items are  
 evocative in themselves  
 but as significant were  
 the conversations."  
 (Saint Mary's College,  
 Falls Road, Belfast)

"Bin lids. Bullet  
 holes in walls. Army. We used  
 to count the bullet holes in our  
 walls in 1970s. I remember  
 bin lids being used and army  
 sitting on guard in our garden."  
 (Spectrum Centre,  
 Shankill Road, Belfast)

"The exhibition evoked many  
 memories for me. Some unpleasant,  
 some amusing. I started  
 my primary school teaching career in  
 Derry at the beginning of the Troubles.  
 I smile at the memory of a P1 child  
 drawing a picture of one man in a boat  
 because "All the people are shouting  
 'One man, one boat!'"  
 (Strule Arts Centre, Omagh)

"Looking at this exhibition,  
 we realise that we have come  
 a long way. It gives great  
 hope for the future. A great  
 exhibition."  
 (First Derry Presbyterian  
 Church, Derry~Londonderry)

"I feel everyone should see  
 this, it makes it all more need  
 and not just stories of  
 the past. It is a fantastic  
 exhibition, and very, very  
 moving for both sides."  
 (County Museum, Dundalk)

"I feel the exhibition just  
 encapsulated the diversity of the  
 media that was used to make the  
 conflict "normal" as if we carried on  
 normally, when really it was abnormal.  
 That's why it's difficult now to  
 embrace the transition out of conflict  
 because we're not conditioned to  
 recognise "normality".  
 (Strule Arts Centre, Omagh)

"La paix est un grand  
 lac où tout le monde se baigne,  
 pas une oasis, dans le désert, qui  
 s'assèche et que l'on reremplit.  
 Antoine" "Peace is a great lake  
 where everyone can bathe, not an  
 oasis in the desert that dries up  
 and has to be filled again. Antoine"  
 (Peace Museum, Guernica, Spain)

# Background to the Everyday Objects Exhibition

A Living Memorial Museum (LMM) was one of the five mechanisms for dealing with the past that Healing Through Remembering (HTR) identified in its initial 2002 report. Like the other remembering processes, it was about recognition and acknowledgement, promoting better understanding of the causes and impact of the conflict, challenging set views and empowering people by enabling them to reflect on their own experience and that of others.

In 2004 HTR launched an Open Call for Ideas and gathered the numerous community and individual contributions about the idea in the *Without Walls* Report (November 2007). In parallel, HTR in collaboration with the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University commissioned an audit into private and public collections to chart the existing material related with the conflict. The *Artefacts Audit* (2008) identified nearly half a million conflict-related artefacts, available in 79 private and public collections. To further the debate HTR also made several visits to existing collections to inform its reflection.

The Everyday Objects Transformed by the Conflict Exhibition (EOE) is the natural continuation of the previous projects, as a practical implementation building on the suggestions and observations - could the walk be done, not just the talk? The theme was one that most people could relate to and therefore appropriate to prompt memories and reflection. Its mundane simplicity also made it less intimidating than a traditional museum exhibition and, as shown in the visitors' feedback, all the more efficient. Collectors expressed their interest in the project and the details of the exhibition were decided during joint meetings between HTR and the collectors throughout 2011, when a curator/coordination of the exhibition was also recruited.

The temporary exhibition toured Northern Ireland and the border counties between March and August 2012. From September 2012 it was largely based in the HTR offices, from February to April 2013 it was in Dundalk County Museum and from May to November 2014 it was in an empty shop unit on Queen St, Belfast. Between March

and November 2013 a panel version of the exhibition was shown in the Gernika Peace Museum, and then in the Cultural Centre Aiete in San Sebastian in the Basque Country.

The exhibition presented unusual curatorial specificities. In particular, HTR exerted limited curatorial control over the exhibition, as the choice of objects and the wording of the corresponding labels were left to the collectors. HTR had control over the display including the grouping of objects and the introductory panel. The exhibition was deliberately multi-perspective in several ways: by displaying artefacts that belonged to different collections representing different backgrounds and interest groups; by engaging the collectors into the curating process; by trying to reach out to the widest possible audience by selecting mostly non-museum venues; by including visitor feedback as part of the exhibition. In short, the purpose of the exhibition was as much about facilitating social interaction between visitors and collections, between collectors and between venues as it was about informing people about the conflict. The exhibition was to enable further dialogue about the conflict; as part of a wider process rather than an end in itself. HTR also offered workshops to any group of people requesting to view the exhibition.

Two reports, the first evaluating the process and the second the feedback or response from the touring exhibition were published in 2013 - they show the collaborative decision-making at work around the exhibition and how successful it was with visitors as a shared place and a catalyst for further conversations about the conflict.

As well as the website for the exhibition HTR also developed a series of short films with Disruptive Media entitled *Ordinary Objects Extraordinary Times*. These films show individuals discussing personal memories relating to objects - some from the exhibition and some prompted by the exhibition.

Sample feedback for all the venues are overleaf.

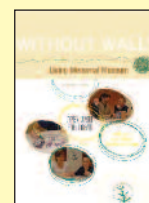
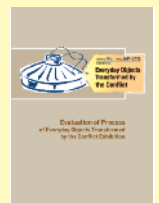
## Further information and links

**Reports** (all available as pdfs from [www.healingthroughremembering.org/resources](http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/resources))

Artefact Audit  
Without Walls report  
Evaluation of Process of EOE  
Evaluation of Response to EOE report  
Summary of Exhibition Feedback and Response

### Websites

Exhibition website: <http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/everydayobjects/>  
Ordinary Objects, Extraordinary Times films <http://www.healingthroughremembering.org/ooet/>  
Artefacts Database <http://cairn.ulst.ac.uk/htr/>



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