

# Conference Entry Form

Conference entry form for participants of the 3rd international conference "Interdisciplinary Cultural Group Research: Youth Subcultures, Worldviews and Lifestyles".

Name \*

Paul Glavey

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Job Title \*

Lecturer in Contextual and Theoretical Studies

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Company or Organization \*

University of the Arts London

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Contry \*

UK

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Short bio

Paul Glavey is a lecturer in Contextual and Theoretical Studies at London College of Communication, teaching across undergraduate courses in the School of Design.

Paul received a BA in History and English from the National University of Ireland, Galway and his MA from the Norwich School of Art and Design, where his research focused on contemporary surveillance culture and spaces of surveillance. He was also awarded a PGCE (PCET) from Thames Valley University, Reading.

Paul's research interests include subculture, social history, nostalgia, and surveillance.

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Email \*

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Proposal Title \*

Flag as inappropriate; a problem with heritage and nostalgia in two vintage scenes.

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**Abstract (500 words). Abstracts will be published on the website before the conference. \***

This paper addresses and analyses symbols and associated markers of two different music-centred subcultural groups, and discusses these in relation to wider national and global debates around (national) identity, history/heritage and multiculturalism. Specifically, the symbols and markers of interest to me are firstly the continued presence of the Confederate battle flag (also referred to as the 'Rebel flag' or the 'Dixie flag') in the UK Rock 'n' Roll / Rockabilly scene, and secondly the decorative bunting that is often used as an identifier of 'vintage' in a very generic and reductive way and how this is often evident in Swing events in the UK.

While not temporally matching or necessarily sharing a significant overlap in participants, I find these spaces of subcultural/scene activity offer a timely opportunity for discussion in light of recent political and social movements in the US and the UK, for example the removal of the Confederate flag on the grounds of the South Carolina Statehouse in 2015 (Holpuch, 2015), the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, and Brexit in the UK.

The Confederate battle flag is a longstanding and continued symbol used in the Rock 'n' Roll / Rockabilly scene. While for many on the scene in the UK the flag is a little more than shorthand for ideas of rebellion and the geographic relevance to the birthplaces of the music, it is for many others inseparable from its historical origins and associated racist connotations.

The decorative bunting that appears at many events has arguably become a signifier for 'vintage' or 'vintagness', and on that basis seems to fit with wider connotations and identifiers of the Swing scene; music, dance, clothing and hairstyles that connect with the 1940s, and some sense of Britishness which seems to embrace a nostalgic and idealised simulation of the period (Hatherly, 2016).

I will address these two examples in relation to ideas of the narrative of tradition, nostalgia and cultural heritage and assess the relevance these themes have in the contemporary British politics and culture. One symbol is overtly tied to a specific set of historical, political and social circumstances that arguably have become more urgent and insistent since the last American presidential election, however, these circumstances are also at the heart of current international debates on national identity and multiculturalism. In the UK, the other symbol, the less overly political context of bunting as decoration, can be suggested to stand for, and connect with, a perhaps more vague but equally contemporary debate about the idea of Britishness, cultural heritage, nationalism and identity, and the significance of these themes (post) Brexit Britain.

Key words: symbol, politics, nostalgia, cultural heritage

Hatherly, O., 2016. *The Ministry of Nostalgia*. 1st ed. London: Verso.

Holpuch, A., 2015. *The Guardian*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/10/confederate-flag-south-](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/10/confederate-flag-south)

carolina-statehouse  
[Accessed 10 3 2017].

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### Session type

Presentation

Panel

Workshop

### Panel Title

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### Short Panel Description

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### Planned Presenters (3-4 people)

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