

# RAINBOW TRAIL

## Take the Rainbow Trail through our exhibitions

Explore artefacts on display in the Museum galleries which have a connection with LGBTI+ histories, including LGBTI+ men and women who were involved in the 1916 Easter Rising and more recently activists involved in the campaigns for equality in Irish law.

**museum**  
National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann





1

## Statue of Guanyin

This porcelain figure is of Guanyin, a Bodhisattva, or enlightened being, from Chinese Buddhism. A Bodhisattva is a figure in Buddhism who can reach nirvana, but instead chooses to stay on Earth and work to eliminate human suffering. Guanyin means one 'who hears the cries of the world' and is the female personification of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteśvara*, who appears in both male and female forms across different cultures and is often connected to gender fluidity. This figure was gifted to the National Museum of Ireland by the San Francisco based Irish collector Albert Bender.

**Location:** A Dubliner's Collection of Asian Art - The Albert Bender Exhibition, Room 13a.

**Museum number:**  
DB:1938.17. Guantin figure, Chinese, 18th Century



2

## Eileen Gray's coat

Architect and designer Eileen Gray was born in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, in 1878. She went on to become a pioneer of modern design and architecture. Gray developed a reputation in France in the 20th Century as a designer in lacquer furniture and interiors, before later beginning to experiment with architectural forms. She was openly bisexual throughout her life, and was connected to the lesbian circles in early 20th century Paris. This French modernist evening coat was worn by Gray.

**Location:** Eileen Gray, Room 11

**Museum number:**  
EG.2000.110. Evening Coat, Paul Poiret (Paris), Eileen Gray, 1900-1910.



3

## King William III's sword

King William III was the King of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1689 until 1702. Often known as William of Orange, he carried this sword at the Battle of the Boyne on 1 July 1690. He later gave the sword to Hans Willem Bentinck, a court favourite of his. They had a very close relationship, and there has been much social and academic debate about whether William and Bentinck were lovers, however this cannot be confirmed.

**Location:** Soldiers and Chiefs – Warfare in Ireland. Room 16

**Museum number:**  
HA:L.693. Sword with carved ivory hilt inlaid with gold and precious stones



4

## Kathleen Lynn's iodine bottles

Dr. Kathleen Lynn was a suffragette and nationalist. During the 1916 Easter Rising, she was Chief Medical Officer for the Irish Citizen Army. In 1919, she co-founded Saint Ultan's Hospital for Infants, which provided medical and educational support for families living in poverty. Lynn lived with her partner Madeleine french-Mullen in Rathmines, Co. Dublin for over 30 years. Both women were imprisoned for their involvement in the Rising. While french-Mullen was in prison Lynn wrote in her diary that she would give £10,000 to be with Madeleine.

**Location:** Soldiers and Chiefs – The Easter Rising, Room 19

**Museum number:**  
HE:1998.259a. Dr. Kathleen Lynn, 1916 Rising, Dublin.



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### 1916 Surrender photograph

Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell served at the GPO during the 1916 Rising with Julia Grenan, her life-long partner. She negotiated the surrender of the rebel forces to the British authorities, and delivered the instruction to surrender to Dublin garrisons. This photograph shows the surrender of Pdraig Pearse, leader of the Rising. O'Farrell is also in the picture. She took a step behind Pearse when she saw the photographer, however her feet can still be seen. O'Farrell and Grenan lived together after the Rising and are buried in the same plot in Glasnevin cemetery.

**Location:** Soldiers and Chiefs – The Easter Rising, Room 19

**Museum number:** HE:EW.1740. Elizabeth O'Farrell, 1916.



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### Dr. Panti Bliss-Cabrera's 'Noble Call' dress

On 1 February 2014, Dr. Panti Bliss-Cabrera, a gay rights activist and drag queen performer, delivered her 'Noble Call' speech at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. The speech, about her experiences of homophobia in Ireland, helped to start the national conversation on same-sex marriage ahead of the Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015. This is the dress worn by Panti on the Abbey stage.

**Location:** Exhibiting the Nation (North Block, Ground Floor)

**Museum number:** CI:2019.15. Dress by James Davod Seaver, Panti Bliss, February, 2014.



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### Katherine Zappone's and Ann Louise Gilligan's wedding dresses

Irish politician Katherine Zappone and her late wife Anne Louise Gilligan wore these dresses during their wedding ceremony at Dublin Castle in 2016. Eight months earlier Dublin Castle had been the site of large celebrations following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Ireland. Ireland was the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote. It was overwhelmingly passed, with 62% of voters in favour of marriage equality.

**Location:** Exhibiting the Nation (North Block, Ground Floor)

**Museum number:** CI:2019.1.1&2. Dublin Castle, January 2016



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### Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow flag is seen worldwide as the symbol of Pride for the LGBTIQ+ community, and dates back to 1978. This flag was donated to the National Museum of Ireland by activist Conor Kelly, who participated in the protests against extreme pro-life groups demonstrating outside Maternity hospitals during the Repeal the 8th Campaign in 2018.

**Location:** Exhibiting the Nation (North Block, Ground Floor)

**Museum number:** CI:2018.18. Activism and protest

# Take the Rainbow Trail through our exhibitions

To learn more about LGBT+ history at the National Museum of Ireland, and access talks, workshops and video relating to our previous OUTing the Past Festival programmes and the Rainbow Revolution exhibition visit our website [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)



Esther & Oscar performance by Denis Kehoe at launch of OTP 2022 at Collins Barracks. Image courtesy of Julian Behal Photography

Collins Barracks,  
Benburb Street, Dublin 7

Sunday & Monday 1pm - 5pm  
Tuesday – Saturday 10am - 5pm

Luas Red Line  
Museum stop

Admission Free  
[www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)

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