Dr Rajguru and her colleague Dr Nicola Ashmore have, as early career researchers, worked alongside historian Dr Louise Purbrick, whose experience working in community projects in post-conflict societies, particularly Belfast, have guided the Remaking Picasso’s Guernica project from its inception. Dr Purbrick’s own scholarship brings an understanding of how gallery spaces are used for political debate, and the recognition of art as practice and process rather than being motivated only by the display of finished objects.

Dr Rajguru’s work investigates intervention projects that revisit works of art framed by art history and reinterprets them to construct new meanings. Through the process of collective making in public spaces using craft methods, the Guernica remaking subverts the iconic painting made by a singular male artist in his studio. It is unsigned and does not claim mastery over sewing techniques. It instead chooses to focus on the universal meanings embodied in the shapes in Guernica, and establishes the stitch as a suitable medium that is also universal, and translates these meanings through the collective making process. Dr Ashmore worked closely with activists on the production of the central figure of the textile piece, the horse, and is developing analysis of other collective recreations of Picasso’s work. Working collectively has created a dialogue that involves an exchange of people’s experiences of sewing, of art, activism, anti-fascism and aerial bombardments of civilian populations. This important dialogue has continued through public sewings involving hundreds of people, recorded in the stitches that hold the banner together.

To reveal these links in the context of protest art, Dr Rajguru has developed a curatorial link with the Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, instigating two public sewings and contributing the Guernica banner for display.

Photograph: Emilia Poisson.