



Dr Ana Laura Zavala Guillen.

May 09, 2024 10:00 BST

Royal Geographical Society honours Northumbria geographer

An Early Career Researcher from Northumbria University has been recognised by the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) with one of 26 medals and annual awards presented to outstanding people and organisations for their notable contributions to geography.

[Dr Ana Laura Zavala Guillen](#) from the University's [Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences](#) has been honoured with an area prize by the Society for her work with Afro-descendent communities in Latin America and

the Caribbean.

Dr Zavala Guillen, from Argentina, has extensive experience as a human rights lawyer and is passionate about historical geography, with much of her research to date facilitating community analysis of colonial and postcolonial records. Her current research, supported by a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, expands on debates about race, Black mobilities, and regime violence during slavery and the last military dictatorship in Uruguay.

An academic paper developed by Dr Zavala Guillen, and published in the Society's academic journal last year, is the subject of the area prize. The article [Feeling/thinking the archive: Participatory mapping Marronage](#) proposes a method of anti-colonial mapping to repair the land dispossession of Maroon communities in Latin America which was developed by working with the community in San Basilio de Palenque, Colombia.

The [Royal Geographical Society \(with IBG\)](#) is the learned society and professional body for geography, formed in 1830. Prestigious medals and awards, including two Royal Medals approved by His Majesty the King, recognise excellence in geographical research and fieldwork, teaching, public engagement, policy and professional practice. They are presented annually to individuals who have made outstanding achievements.

Dr Zavala Guillen said: "I am honoured to receive this award as an Early Career Researcher devoted to furthering decolonial debates in historical geography. The research is always collective so I am particularly grateful to my former mentors, Dr Sam Halvorsen and Professor Miles Ogborn, for their generous guidance in developing this paper.

"A big thank you to the British Academy for making my research and related fieldwork possible. I dedicate this award to the community of Palenque for trusting me with their ancestral knowledge and histories of land resistance, and Colombian historian Professor María Cristina Navarrete-Peláez, whom I had the privilege to call my friend."

A full list of the 2024 awards and medals presented by the Royal Geographical Society can be found online [here](#).

Northumbria's [Centre for Global Development](#) is recognised for impactful, co-

produced research tackling the issues of global poverty and inequality, working with communities and individuals who experience this, and promoting the policies, practices and approaches that seek to address it. Discover more [here](#) about Dr Zavala Guillen's research.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk