ÜberlebensKunst

Konfliktbearbeitung durch textile Bilder

Ausstellungskatalog

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Ausstellung und Workshops, Juli/August 2012

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Assistentin: Breege Doherty

Vorwort

Die Ausstellung **ÜberlebensKunst—Konfliktbearbeitung durch textile Bilder** hat das Ziel, künstlerische Formen der Konfliktbearbeitung mit der wissenschaftlichen Auseinandersetzung zu Themen aus Krieg und Nachkrieg produktiv zu verbinden. Sie zeigt Arpilleras und Quilts aus unterschiedlichen Kriegs- und Krisenregionen. Die Exponate sind Produkt einer persönlichen, künstlerischen Auseinandersetzung mit Repression und Krieg. Ursprünglich in Chile als Antwort auf die gravierenden Menschenrechtsverletzungen unter der Pinochet-Diktatur entstanden, bilden sie heute eine weit verbreitete Form der gesellschaftlichen Aufarbeitung traumatisierter Kriegs- und Konflikterlebnisse von Frauen aus verschiedenen Weltregionen. Die Ausstellung umfasst erste Arbeiten chilenischer Frauen, weitere Werke stammen aus Nordirland und Spanien.

Mit unterschiedlicher Schwerpunktsetzung an den verschiedensten Orten weltweit gezeigt – Derry, Cambridge und London, Dublin, Fürth und Berlin, Genf, Kingston/Jamaica, Osaka, São Paulo, Amherst/ University of Massachusetts –, ist die Ausstellung jetzt in Hamburg zu sehen. Ihre Ausdruckskraft in der Verbindung von künstlerischer Arbeit und politischem Inhalt erschließt sich bei den meisten Exponaten erst auf den zweiten Blick – so bei dem vierteiligen Quilt „Common Loss" der nordirischen Künstlerin Irene Mac William, der die über 3.000 Todesopfer des Nordirlandkonfliktes anhand roter Stofffetzen eindrucksvoll thematisiert. Gerade dieser „zweite Blick" sorgt für die Nachhaltigkeit der Eindrücke beim

Betrachten dieser Exponate und regt zum weiteren Nachdenken über Konfliktursachen und deren Bewältigung an.

Die Exponate werden verbunden mit einschlägigen Literaturbeispielen aus dem Sondersammelgebiet der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg zum Thema Friedens- und Konfliktforschung sowie aus dem Sondersammelgebiet zu Spanien und Portugal. Im Rahmen von Workshops sollen Ursachen, Konfliktverläufe und Konfliktbewältigungsstrategien der in der Ausstellung gezeigten Wandteppiche erläutert und analysiert werden.

Die Kuratorin der Ausstellung, Roberta Bacic, ist Chilenin und lebt seit zehn Jahren in Nordirland. Sie hat u.a. an der Arbeit der Wahrheits- und Versöhnungskommission in Chile mitgewirkt und für die NGO „War Resisters' International" in London gearbeitet. Einen Überblick über die von ihr kuratierten Ausstellungen finden Sie unter www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts.

Ulrike Borchardt , Initiativkreis Friedensbildung/Peacebuilding, Universität Hamburg

Mai 2012

Introduction

In this collection, women narrate in textile form how they have dealt with political violence and its troublesome legacy. ***The Art of Survival – the way societies deal with political violence*** draws examples of arpilleras and quilts from Spain, Chile and Northern Ireland when these countries were under repressive regimes. Stitched by women living in or on the margins of daily conflict and fear, they give us an insight into their struggles and their resilience and courage in resisting, surviving and striving for a better and more peaceful future.

Across these three contexts, the quilts and arpilleras (three dimensional textiles from Latin America, which originated in Chile) tell the story of life during the Pinochet regime in Chile, the Franco regime in Spain and The Troubles in Northern Ireland. The majority are first person testimonies of lived experiences, whilst a number of Northern Ireland quilts envision a different future, express communal grief and loss, and portray the parallels between historical and current conflicts.

Through the simple activity of sewing, women, whether working individually or as a group, remember, bear witness to, resist and denounce the atrocities in these three jurisdictions and beyond. Thus their sewing, a traditional domestic activity, becomes a powerful act of resistance and a mechanism for spreading that message of resistance worldwide.

In the foreword to *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile 1974 – 1994* by Marjorie Agosín (1996), Isabel Allende says: "With leftovers of fabric and simple stitches, the women

embroidered what could not be told in words, and thus the arpilleras became a powerful form of political resistance."

These arpilleras and quilts, many of which have been exhibited in museums, universities and art galleries worldwide, continue to inspire resistance against human rights abuses. Multi layered in meaning and symbolism, they startle us with their intensity and teach us something while also giving us enjoyment. We respond naturally with empathy, but we could also bear witness, support local women's groups to tell their stories through textile pictures – and get involved in human rights campaigns.

Roberta Bacic, Curator

May 2012

www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts

Spain

La mano que les cuidó / The hand that cared for them

Spanish Arpillera by María Bonilla Armada
Women Sewing History Workshop, Badalona, Spain, 2009
Photo Roser Corbera

María grew up during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), which claimed the lives of many of her family. She describes returning to her home village after the war: *"We found that we had no home; we had nowhere to sleep or eat; we had absolutely nothing until we found it ourselves."*

Despite the difficulties of the Franco era, María and her husband built a home in Córdoba and raised their family. The effort and sacrifice required is reflected in her arpillera which shows her home and three children. Her own hand -- the hand that cared for them -- is dominant.

In the economic crisis of the 1950s and 1960s, the family moved from Córdoba to Barcelona in search of a better life. Here María has remained ever since. The rural house, depicted in the arpillera, reflects a nostalgic memory of her previous home in Córdoba.

Making arpilleras has provided María and her companions with the artistic means to recount their experiences. It has also given them the confidence to continue telling their stories.

Courtesy Fundiació Ateneu Sant Roc, Spain

Recuerdos de trabajo y Guerra / Memories of work and war

Spanish Arpillera by Rosa Cortés García
Women Sewing History Workshop, Badalona, Spain, 2009
Photo Roser Corbera

Inspired by her father's memories of the terrible hardship he suffered during the Spanish Civil War, Rosa's arpillera, in the lower section, depicts his imprisonment in a concentration camp in the Andalusia city of Seville.

In the upper part of the arpillera, Rosa portrays her personal experiences from the post-war period. Like many poor and illiterate women, she endured very harsh working conditions: *"I worked wrapping oranges in paper for export. When we weren't doing that, they made us peel the bitter ones and put the skins out in the sun to dry. They were used to make gunpowder. I was paid hardly anything."*

Through these stories and personal experiences we see the human cost of war. On the one hand, via stories passed down from one generation to another, there is the violation of human rights of those who resisted; and, on the other, via the experiences of the maker, the consequences suffered by women in their daily lives in an oppressive state. The struggle for justice, especially for families who lost loved ones during this time, still continues.

Courtesy Fundiació Ateneu Sant Roc, Spain

Mis memorias de la Guerra / My memories of the war

Spanish Arpillera by Rosalía Rodríguez Hernández,
Women Sewing History Workshop, Badalona, Spain, 2009
Photo Roser Corbera

For Rosalía Rodríguez Hernández, stitching this arpillera was akin to writing the words of her story and sharing her sorrow with the rest of the group in the Women Sewing History Workshop.

This arpillera depicts the arrest of her mother during the Spanish Civil War when women were imprisoned and tortured for no other reason than being an anarchist's wife. Rosalía had been beaten by the police, who came to drag her mother away, and had to watch as they cut off her hair and forced her to drink castor oil. Her saddest memories arose from knowing that her mother had suffered torture and, before her arrest, had had an exhausting struggle to maintain and care for her family.

By keeping the stories alive, relatives and civil society pressure groups have played an important role in pressurising the government to recognize, extend rights and establish reparation measures for those who suffered persecution and violence during the civil war and dictatorship.

Today the struggle continues. The recent 11 year suspension of Judge Juez Baltasar Garzón by the Spanish Supreme Court represents a setback. Judge Garzón, who has earned a global reputation for his application of international human rights law against former military regimes in South America, was charged with having knowingly overstepped his judicial competence when investigating the disappearances of people during the Franco dictatorship. His suspension has been strongly condemned by the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica / Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH), which represents victims of the Franco regime.

Courtesy Fundiació Ateneu Sant Roc, Spain

El recuerdo de esta historia / The memory of this story

Spanish Arpillera by Ángela Matamoros Vázquez and Ángela Vázquez González

Women Sewing History Workshop, Badalona, Spain, 2009

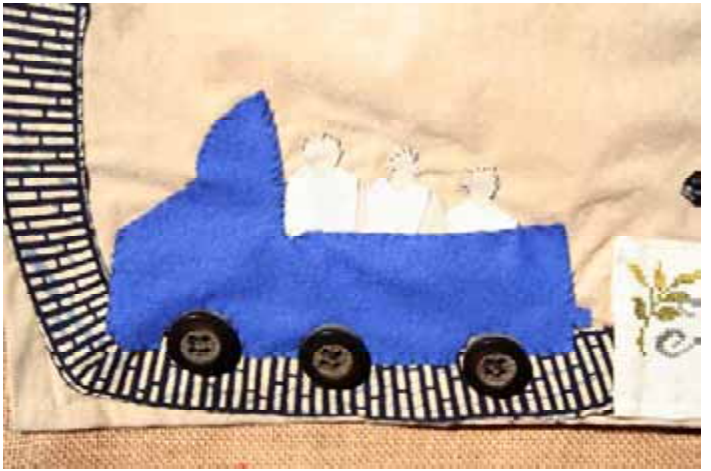
Photo Roser Corbera

This arpillera represents the stories told by Angela Matamoros Vásquez's parents. In this way, 72 year old Angela can share with her daughter the things that happened in her hometown during the Spanish Civil War.

She remembers: "*The truck travelling along the road is carrying men on their way to be executed. The crosses show the graves where they were buried. When the men were rounded up and put on trucks, the women would come against the odds to say goodbye to sons and husbands. They would be in tears because they knew they would never see them again.*"

With this arpillera, the makers were able to contribute to the retrieval of these untold stories from a female perspective, allowing future generations to better understand what happened during this violent period of Spanish history.

The Spanish Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH) / Association for the Historical Memory Recovery estimates that there are 113,000 people who are still in unidentified mass graves.



Courtesy Fundiació Ateneu Sant Roc, Spain

Northern Ireland

This series of quilts and arpilleras from Northern Ireland mainly centres on The Troubles and its aftermath. The Troubles was a 30 year period of ethno-political conflict in Northern Ireland dating from the late 1960s until 1998 which resulted in the deaths of 3,600 people. The conflict, which involved nationalist, republican, loyalist and unionist political groups and paramilitaries and the security forces of Northern Ireland, largely centred on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. The mainly Protestant Unionist community favoured political union with Great Britain and the mainly Catholic Nationalist community sought a united Ireland.

Following a ceasefire in 1994 and ensuing multi-party peace negotiations, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 paved the way for the formation of a devolved government that included the main political parties. Since then huge strides forward have been made at community level in acknowledging the past and building peaceful communities. However, tensions still remain at the interfaces between opposing communities.

Shared Visions

Northern Ireland Quilt, workshops facilitated by Sonia Copeland, 2008
Photo Christopher Keenan

This quilt, the handcrafting of Loyalist, Nationalist, Republican and Unionist women, demonstrates a tentative coming together to express a vision for a new inclusive society in Northern Ireland.

Quaker House Belfast, which funded and co-ordinated the making of the quilt and to whom it was donated on completion, urge us to absorb the messages of this quilt through viewing it with our senses: *"It has been said; 'Listen till ye hear.' As you stand before this quilt today let me suggest to you that 'You look till ye see'."*

As women from four Belfast based women's groups, drawn from diverse communities gathered to stitch, and at times unstitch this piece together, they created a space for peace-weaving/stitching. *"Our women shared spaces together, meals together and conversations as each one explored their own vision for a shared future."*

Courtesy of Quaker House, Belfast


BEECHFIELD P.
EBALTERNATIVES
EVERYONE WELCOME


Hope

No going back

Northern Ireland Arpillera by Sonia Copeland, 2009
Photo Martin Melaugh

This arpillera, the first made by long-time quilter Sonia Copeland, came about when it looked like the hard-won peace in Northern Ireland was threatened by three killings in early 2009.

Sonia explains: *"My piece shows the Belfast City Hall, and in the foreground, a representation of one of the cross-community demonstrations, which followed the murders of Constable Stephen Carroll and Sappers Mark Quinsy and Patrick Asimkar by so called 'Republican terrorists'."* This demonstration of support and solidarity for the victims and their families was important to Sonia, who had served in the Royal Ulster Constabulary during the worst years of The Troubles and had suffered as a result of terrorist attacks on four occasions.

Fear about going back to a time of war strengthened Sonia's resolve for peace: *"It seemed to me that the peace that was won with so much pain and suffering was once again to be snatched away. I resolved that nothing and no one would steal from my children the right to a peaceful life, which was stolen from me and my generation."*

The theme and sentiments depicted by Sonia illustrate the fragility of peace in present day Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, the proliferation of cross community projects promoting a shared understanding and peaceful co-existence between diverse groups augers well for a peaceful future for the next generation.

Courtesy of the artist


Murdered at Massereene Barracks 7th March 2009
Sappers Mark Quinsey Patrick Azimkar
Murdered in Craigavon on 9th March 2009
PC Stephen Carroll PSNI
STOP TO ALL SECTARIAN BEATING
UNISON
NO GOING BACK!
NHSA

Executed at dawn

Northern Ireland Quilt, by Irene MacWilliam, 2009
Photo Martin Melaugh

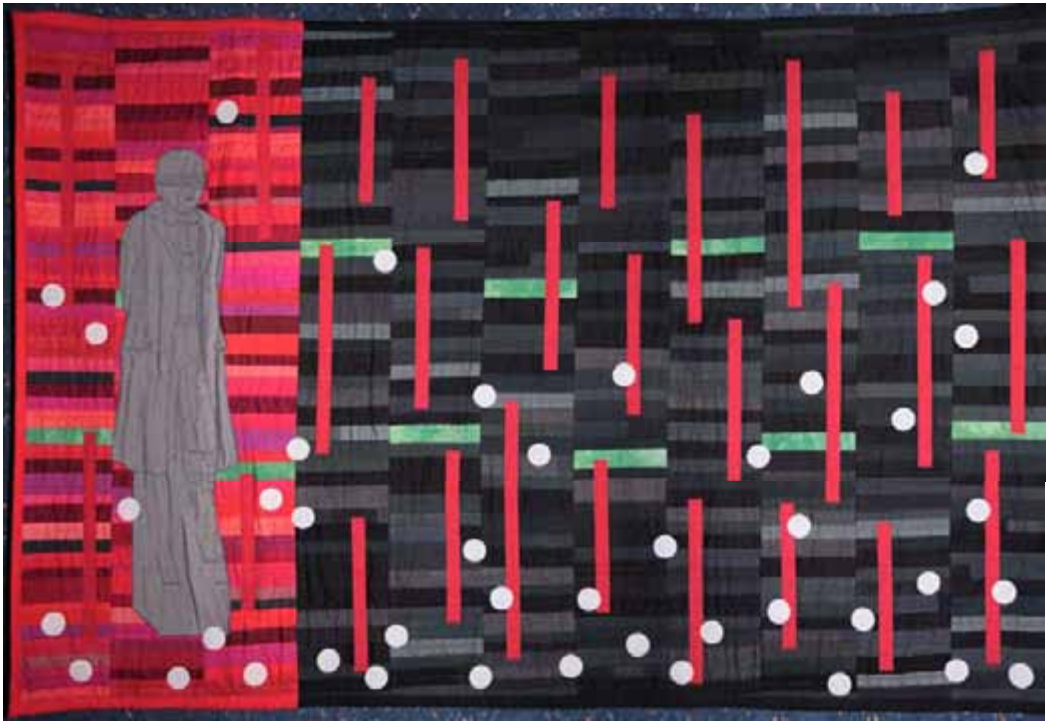
Irene made this quilt as a personal tribute to a group of soldiers who, in 1916, during the First World War, were shot at dawn for alleged cowardice. They were pardoned and exonerated many years later, after much effort by their families and friends.

Irene said: *"When I first read about the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, I was shocked…Many were so very young; some had lied about their age so they could join up. They had no idea what war would be like."*

A campaign for justice was run for decades on behalf of the 306 soldiers shot at dawn, during the battle of the Somme in 1916. Relatives have long argued that many soldiers were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, or shell-shock, as it was known in 1916. When initiating the process of granting a group pardon in 2006, 90 years after the event, the then Defense secretary, Des Brown explained:

"… The circumstances [of the war] were terrible, and I believe it is better to acknowledge that injustices were clearly done in some cases …and to acknowledge that all these men were victims of war" (The Telegraph, 16 Aug 2006). Janet Booth, granddaughter of Private Harry Farr, one of the men shot at dawn, at 23 years of age, speaks of the impact this had on her grandmother: *"My grandmother had to live with the shame and stigma of how her husband*

died, keeping the secret to herself for 80 years…" She describes her own involvement in the campaign: "*With the help of the Shot at Dawn organisation (SAD), MPs, historians and eventually the Farr family taking the Ministry Of Defence to the High Courts we were able to secure a pardon. It had taken 14 years of campaigning but in 2006 all 306 executed soldiers were granted a Conditional Pardon."*



For Janet, whose family lived with the burden of war for 90 years, Irene's arpillera captures the horror and futility of war: "*I personally found Irene's wall hanging to be very moving …[it] represented not only the needless killing of men but also the horrors of subsequent wars that have followed since World War 1."*

Courtesy of the artist

Peace Dove

Northern Ireland Quilt, by Irene MacWilliam, 1987
Photo Gustavo Neves

Made in her very early days of working with fabric, this stunning and colourful wall hanging was inspired, in Irene's words, by: *"the conflicts throughout the world which have been recurring."* Here, we see the traditional image of the peace dove upended.

Mirroring the obstacles to be overcome in campaigning for a peaceful non-violent world, the dove is shown hurtling towards rocks as it flies over turbulent waters, with part of the olive branch missing from its beak. The bright patchwork used in this piece infers a sense of hope. Perhaps the dove will regain the fallen branch and fly above the rocks?

Irene's unorthodox depiction of the peace dove is very apt imagery for the conflict in Northern Ireland in 1987. In that year, the conflict claimed the lives of members of the security forces, paramilitary groups and civilians, with 11 civilians killed during the annual Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, when a bomb planted by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) exploded at the War Memorial. With entrenched views in evidence among the main political parties, a peaceful solution seemed remote at this time.

Courtesy of the curator

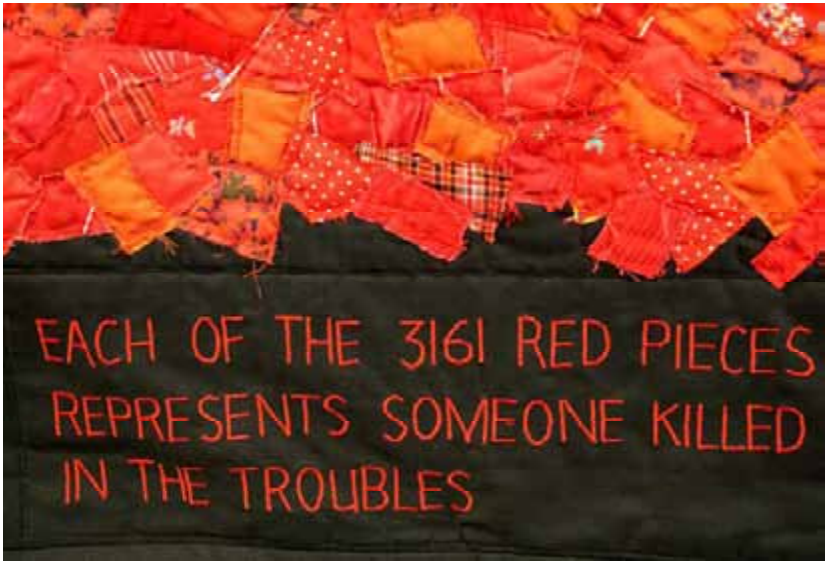
Common loss: 3000+ dead between 1969 and 1994

Northern Ireland Quilt, by Irene MacWilliam, 1996
Photo Colin Peck

In this quilt, Irene MacWilliam expresses her deep concern for the loss of lives in the conflict known as The Troubles in her native Northern Ireland. More than 3,000 people died as a result of the conflict between 1969 and 1994, of which 1855 were civilians. Each piece of red fabric, which is torn for effect, represents a dead person. There is a tiny teddy bear in some, symbolising a dead child.

Although Irene did not suffer any personal tragedy during The Troubles, her sensitivity to the loss of others in all conflicts is boundless and has touched a chord in many people. As the work began to take shape, people from around the world as well as Northern Ireland sent pieces of red fabric to Irene for inclusion. The contributions came from Japan, the USA and England, among other far flung countries.

Whilst the legacy of this 30 year conflict still remains for individuals, community and society as a whole, grass roots community and cross community projects are working tirelessly to address the legacy of the conflict and build a peaceful society for future generations.



Courtesy of the artist


1969
1994


RED PIECES
EONE KILLED


died December 2000

Soldiers back from the wars

English Arpilleras by Linda Adams, 2010
Photo Tony Boyle

In order to make this compelling set of three arpilleras, Linda interviewed local men who had survived war. She then expressed her understanding of the personal cost of war to them, both during the fighting and on their return home, through the medium of her craft.

One arpillera shows the aftermath of an attack next to the barracks. Another depicts fears, nightmares and suicidal behaviour. The third depicts the life of a soldier, back home from the war, living rough in the streets.

Although not directly focused on the Chilean, Northern Ireland or Spanish context, this trilogy of arpilleras, which depicts the horrors of the aftermath of war for ex-soldiers, has resonance in many post conflict zones today. As Linda states: *"Although in these pieces I did focus on the story of the ex-servicemen who have come back and who are living rough in my area, they are meant to tell the story of the hopelessness faced by those coming home from any war. I have read many accounts of what it was like in other countries as well as the stories told to me and they always follow the same pattern."*

The text stitched by Linda at the bottom of the third arpillera is a chilling reminder of the futility of war and the cost in human terms: *"For the veterans and their loved ones, the war was only the start of the nightmare."*

Courtesy of the artist


For the veterans and their loved ones
the war was only the start of the nightmare


For the veterans and their loved ones
the war was only the start of the nightmare

Chile

La cueca sola / Dancing cueca alone, 2009

Chilean Arpillera by Marta Covarrubias
Photo Martin Melaugh

This Chilean arpillera shows women on their own dancing the traditional Cueca, Chile's national dance which represents the different emotions and stages of romance. It is meant to be danced in pairs wearing colourful clothing. Here the women dance alone and in severe black and white, wearing the image of their "disappeared" loved one over their heart, expressing how they reacted when pushed to the limit during the Pinochet regime. The original ***Cueca Sola*** was made in one of the workshops of the Association of Detained and Disappeared in the late 1980s. Since then a number of different versions have been created, with this version by Marta Covarrubias in 2009 being the most recent. Marta is the daughter in law of Violeta Morales, who created the arpillera ***Torture Chamber*** in 1996. The loss portrayed in both of these arpilleras gives us an insight into how the life of this extended family was torn apart by the actions of the Pinochet dictatorship, the legacy of which still remains beyond the family circle.

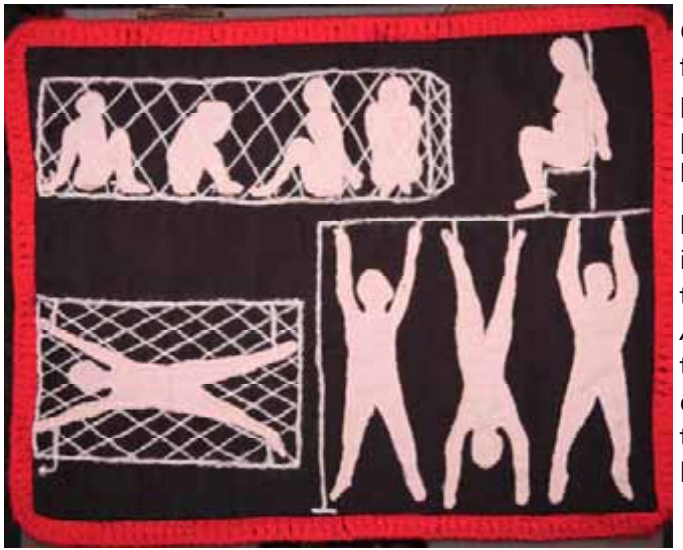
The boldness, determination and creativity of the women who made the original arpilleras have inspired people all over the world. The Sting song "They dance alone" was based on it and was performed by many other singers including Joan Baez and Holly Near. In June 1986 Amnesty International sponsored a tour of six benefit concerts which included the song and such famous performers as Sting, Bryan Adams, Peter Gabriel, Joan Baez and the Neville Brothers.

Courtesy of Marjorie Agosín, Chile / USA

Sala de torturas / Torture Chamber

Chilean Arpillera by Violeta Morales, 1996
Photo Colin Peck

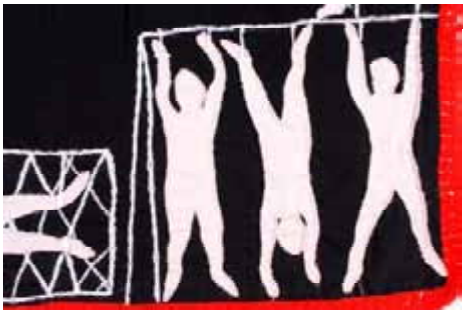
This is a most visually startling piece with its simple black background and stark white figures. It graphically shows people being tortured, portraying them in a dehumanised way with featureless faces, just as torture dehumanises individuals. The symbolic enclosure of the people held in captivity accurately describes life in Chile during those years of the Pinochet regime.

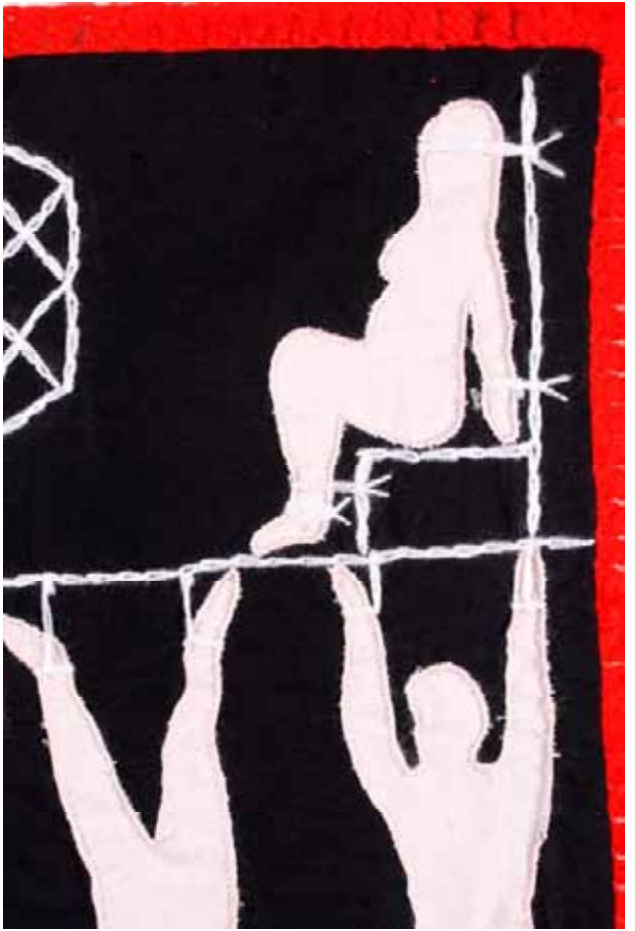


Chile's fourth national Truth Commission Report, which focused on Torture and Political Imprisonment (Valech II) published in August 2011, states that the total number of people officially registered as torture victims, from the Pinochet era, is now 38,254.

In this arpillera, Violeta Morales is outspoken about Chile's infamous history of torture, which was long unknown in the wider world. As Co-ordinator of the group *Sabastián Acevedo,* which was primarily concerned with the issue of torture, she was relentless in ensuring that people everywhere were informed of the widespread use of torture in Chile. She died in 2002, never having found her brother Newton, who disappeared in 1974.

Courtesy Marjorie Agosín, Chile / USA





Hornos de Lonquén / Lime kilns of Lonquén

Chilean Arpillera, anon., ca. 1979
Photo Tony Boyle

This arpillera, vivid in colour, gives us an insight into the overwhelming struggle of the relatives of the disappeared for truth and justice. In spite of police repression they persevered in their struggle to demand the truth, find their disappeared relatives and mourn them.

On 7 October 1973, 15 peasant men, from the town of Isla de Maipo, members of an agricultural co-operative, were taken from their homes and arrested. Every trace of their whereabouts was lost until 1978. For five years, the wives, mothers and daughters of these men went to jails and detention centres, trying in vain to find their relatives. Often they were told that the relative in question had escaped, had never been detained or had no legal existence.

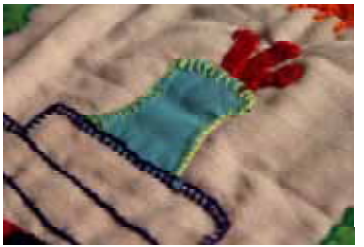
Eventually, a secret testimony was given to the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. Acting on this testimony, the Vicaría searched the disused lime kiln in Lonquén, depicted in the top half of this arpillera. There, on 30 November, 1978, five years after their disappearance, the bodies of the 15 men from Isla de Maipo, who were thrown alive into the lime kiln and died an agonising death, were found.

On 30 Nov 1987, Abraham Santibáñez, deputy director of the magazine "Hoy" chillingly describes the human remains found in Lonquén: "*Pieces of yellowish scalp, with some traces of loose black hair, torn clothes, amongst*

which you can recognise one pair of blue jeans and a man's cardigan." That's what was left of the 15 men detained in different circumstances on 9 Oct 1973 in the rural community of Isla de Maipo, the traces of whom were lost until 1978.

This case shocked the Chilean nation and marked a turning point for relatives of the disappeared, who until then, had held on to the hope that they would eventually find their relatives. The Lonquén case brought home to them the reality that "disappeared" usually meant dead.

Donation from Joanne Sheehan to the curator



Al servicio de la vida / Servicing life

Chilean Arpillera, anon., ca. 1978
Photo Martin Melaugh

This arpillera depicts the areas of support and activities the Catholic Church undertook to assist a substantial part of the population persecuted and abandoned by the Pinochet dictatorship. Here we see the headquarters of the church where problems such as legal defence, exile, political imprisonment, the detained-disappeared, and the presentation of habeas corpus to the courts are being dealt with, on behalf of local people.

This arpillera was made in one of the handicraft workshops in the Santiago suburbs run by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, founded by the Chilean Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez. Marjorie Agosín, describes these first workshops in her book, *Tapestries of hope, threads of love: The Arpillera movement in Chile* (second edition, 2008): *"At the height of despair, approximately fourteen women arrived at the Vicariate…they met as a group, fearfully …away from the dark corridors of death…they began to tell their stories on pieces of cloth…."*

The Vicaría also provided support through its regional offices by offering legal aid, health care, work opportunities and training in human rights. It was active from 1976 to 1992, continuing its work for two years after Pinochet was deposed in 1990.

Courtesy Arpillera collection Kinderhilfe, Chile/Bonn

Paz – Justicia – Libertad / Peace – Justice – Freedom

Chilean Arpillera, anon., late 1970s
Photo Colin Peck

This is a traditional arpillera depicting a protest by women against the Pinochet dictatorship. Some of the women are boldly defiant as they clash cymbals in front of a police car. Others carry leaflets spreading word of a campaign to find their missing loved ones, who have disappeared without trace at the hands of the armed forces.

The material used makes this piece particularly poignant. The dark grey background material is from the trousers of a disappeared man and the road is made from the checked fabric shirt of another. Marjorie Agosín, (*ibid*) informs us that creating arpilleras from the clothing of missing family members was common practice for the early arpilleristas. Moved by the poignancy of this she states: "*They have gathered from the most intimate and private of places a story that is both chilling and beautiful, horrifying and calming.*"

Working on arpilleras could be therapeutic. As the arpillerista Violeta Morales has said: "*I put all my energy into the arpillera workshop. It was sometimes the only thing that kept me balanced emotionally.*"

Courtesy Alba Sanfeliú, Spain

Retorno de los exiliados / Return of the exiles

Chilean Arpillera, anon., 1992
Photo Martin Melaugh

This arpillera shows a joyful reunion of family members who were forced into exile during the Pinochet dictatorship. It was made immediately after the regime ended.

Exile took many different forms. When the military coup toppled Salvador Allende in 1973, many government workers and supporters took refuge in embassies and some managed to leave the country. Others, after imprisonment and often torture, were deported and went to countries that accepted them. A third group were forced to take "economic exile" as they had been dismissed from their jobs and had no income. Some were even deprived of their Chilean nationality.

For the returned exiles, finding the country much changed, resettling in their native country was not always the joy they had anticipated. Furthermore, their children who grew up outside Chile were at a loss to understand their parents' longing to return to a country that had violated their human rights.

To deal with the new problems created by the mass return of exiles, the Oficina Nacional del Retorno (National Office for the Returnees) was created in 1990. It operated until 1994 and considered 52,557 cases. It was revealed that most of the exiles had been taken in by Sweden, Argentina, Canada, France and Germany.

Courtesy Arpillera collection Kinderhilfe, Chile/Bonn

Olla común en una población/ Soup kitchen in a barrio

Chilean Arpillera, Taller Fundación Missio, Santiago, 1982
Photo Martin Melaugh

This arpillera depicts the hunger and poverty that is wrought by conflict and social injustice. Created during the Pinochet dictatorship, it depicts both the desperation of hunger among the poor, forced to seek food from church charities, and also the resilience of those who find ways to ensure that the worst affected are not left hungry.

Soup kitchens, similar to the one portrayed in this arpillera, were a life line for the impoverished during the Pinochet regime. Church charities such as the Vicaría de la Solidaridad and later, the Fundación Solidaridad, were in the forefront in setting them up. María Madariaga, whose husband was unemployed and who wondered how she could provide food for her children, recalls what the soup kitchen meant for her family, even though not all of them could benefit from it: *There was an age limit to abide by…of my three children at the time, only one was able to eat…We thought it was better that one eats than none…"* Agosín (ibid). The need was so great that difficult choices had to be made, both within the family and in the organization, which meant that for Maria and her husband: *"the days were especially long…because there was nothing to eat."* Although different centuries and contexts apply, here we find echoes of the sentiments captured by Alexander Somerville in his *Letters from Ireland During the Famine of 1847*. A father of six children, obviously unable to access the soup kitchen scheme laments: "*We had nothing all day yesterday…sure this hunger will be the death of us."*

Courtesy Arpillera collection Kinderhilfe, Chile/Bonn

Panfleteando en el 1979 en Santiago / Leafleting in Santiago in 1979

Chilean Arpillera, anon., late 1970s
Photo Martin Melaugh

This colourful and somewhat childlike arpillera from the late 1970s, depicts a scene where campaigners are distributing pamphlets to pedestrians and drivers to raise awareness about the "Disappeared."

According to Chile's fourth national Truth Commission Report on Torture and Political Imprisonment (Valech II), published in August 2011, there were a total of 3,216 cases of forced disappearance or political execution.

Again, the traditional style of the mountains is represented here, using a myriad of colourful scraps of cloth. The sun, however, is not visible – perhaps symbolising the dangers that still prevailed. The large houses and trees indicate that this is not a shanty town; here the campaigners have been emboldened to bring their campaign into middle-class areas.

Overall, this arpillera illustrates the relentless attempts made to reveal the unsavoury hidden truths which plagued certain groups within the society during the Pinochet era, truths which others often chose to ignore.

Courtesy of the curator

Encadenamiento / Women Chained to Parliament Gates

Chilean Arpillera, anon., late 1980s
Photo Martin Melaugh

In any war, truth is its first casualty. From 1973 to 1990 Chile lived through a bloody dictatorship, which was brought about by a Junta presided over by General Augusto Pinochet. In the early months of the dictatorship, up to 7,000 people were detained by the junta. And so, women began checking the jails and detention centres, seeking news of their disappeared loved ones, frequently being told that the people in question did not exist.

In this arpillera, women have chained themselves to the gates in front of the congress in public protest at the actions of the Pinochet regime, particularly the disappearance of their loved ones. Here we see women, with their lives in turmoil as a result of the dictatorship, thrust into the public sphere: "*The military dictatorship obligated these women to confront public life, to make their pain and grief visible. They not only created tapestries, but also initiated street protests, obtaining through their own initiative, a power that had been previously denied to women."* (Agosín 2008).

For this act of civil disobedience, all of the women who took part in the protest were detained for five days.

Encadenamiento was made in one of the workshops run by Vicaría de la Solidaridad. Many of the women had never sewn before and found solace in learning the skill and working together. Moreover, supporters encouraged them by selling their work at home and abroad. This gave them badly needed income and made public their plight and actions.

Courtesy Arpillera collection Kinderhilfe, Chile/Bonn

¡Adiós Pinochet! / Good bye Pinochet!

Chilean Arpillera, anon., ca. 1980
Photo Colin Peck

During the Pinochet era men were the main targets for arrest, torture and disappearances. Consequently, women started to play a wider role in public affairs and denounced the actions of the regime in the streets as well as in their arpilleras.

In this arpillera, women have gathered in the streets of a modest neighbourhood to demonstrate their frustration and confront the situation that they see is preventing them, and their community, from having a decent life. We can see that they are impoverished as they have no electricity supply in their little houses and have to steal it by attaching electrical cables to the source. In spite of this, they depict their homes in bright colours and against the backdrop of the mountains and the sun, a classical feature in the majority of arpilleras.

Here the women are protesting in two groups, each carrying a banner. One states: "Out Pinochet!" The other reads: "Good bye Pinochet!" When asked why they took on such a public role the women replied: *"We've been hit by so many blows in life. We might as well be out on the frontlines now because many of us have nothing more to lose."* (Agosín, ibid)

This arpillera was made by one of the workshops run and supported by Vicaría de la Solidaridad. It was acquired by Heidi and Peter in the context of international solidarity against Pinochet's dictatorship.

Courtesy of Heidi & Peter Gessler, Switzerland.

Hermanos Mapuche en huelga de hambre / Mapuche people on hunger strike

Chilean Arpillera, Aurora Ortiz, 2011
Photo Martin Melaugh

This poignant arpillera portrays the most recent repression experienced by the Mapuche people, in Southern Chile, a people who have suffered colonisation for over 500 years. Thirty-four peasant Mapuche prisoners went on hunger strike in protest against being imprisoned for defending their land. They were seeking a fair trial and contested the state's argument that they were terrorists. They demanded that in their case, the anti -terrorist law should not be applied.

In this arpillera, we are brought inside one of the prisons where the hunger strike took place. Women supporters in their traditional dress surround the 10 men languishing on the floor covered by blankets provided by their relatives and friends. On one of the tables, a sign informs us that these men have been 81 days on hunger strike. The date it started and ended is also given.

Through the window, memories of their native homes are visible, volcanoes, monkey-puzzle trees and flowers; the land and home they defend to death.

The Mapuche flag is placed in a prominent place to reinforce their identity. The artist has added her support by embroidering a banner that reads: "Strength Compañeros."

Poesía desde la Cárcel de Temuco

En mi niñez el hambre era una vocecita que

Robaba el pan de mis compañeros de curso. . .

La conciencia me la despertó el hambre de otros. . .

Poem from Temuco's prison

In my childhood hunger was a soft voice

that stole the bread of my classmates . . .

My awareness grew from the hunger of others.

Poem by Mauricio Waikilao, one of the imprisoned hunger strikers, who is now free and back in his community. In ***Lof Sitiado*** *(Besieged group of families living in a determined piece of land*) Chile, LOM Ediciones**,** July 2011(p. 172).

Courtesy of the curator

Ausstellungseröffnung

Mittwoch, 11. Juli 2012, 18 Uhr, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg

Begrüßung: Dr. Marlene Grau, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek
Einführung: Dr. Ulrike Borchardt, Initiativkreis Friedensbildung, Universität Hamburg
Vortrag Roberta Bacic, Kuratorin der Ausstellung: „ÜberlebensKunst – Konfliktbearbeitung durch textile Bilder"
PD Dr. Dr. Horacio Riquelme, Hamburg: „Die Bedeutung der Arpilleras zur Wiederaneignung des Öffentlichen Raumes"

ÜberlebensKunst: Wie Gesellschaften mit politischer Gewalt umgehen

Workshops, 27. – 29. Juli 2012, Universität Hamburg

Der Umgang mit politischer Gewalt steht auch im Mittelpunkt der diesjährigen Sommeruniversität des Initiativkreises Friedensbildung – Peacebuilding. Länder-Workshops zu Chile, Nordirland und Spanien fragen nach den Ursachen, Strukturen und Folgen politischer Gewalt in diesen Gesellschaften. Sie erläutern somit die Hintergründe der auf den Ausstellungsobjekten dargestellten Szenen. Die Workshoparbeit verknüpft einen historischen und sozialwissenschaftlichen Zugang zu der Thematik mit kulturellen Aspekten wie Musik, Bildern und Literatur. Außerdem berichten Zeitzeugen über ihre Erfahrungen. Ziel der Sommeruniversität ist, verschiedene Formen des Umgangs mit politischer Gewalt wissenschaftlich einzuordnen und verstehen zu lernen, welche Faktoren maßgeblich zur Überwindung dieser Gewalt beitrugen.
Die Sommeruniversität ist öffentlich – jede/r Interessierte ist herzlich willkommen.

Anmeldung/Info unter: friedensbildung@uni-hamburg.de (Kennwort: Workshop ÜberlebensKunst)

www.sub.uni-hamburg.de