

## Arpillera Doll Making Workshop

Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017

Event organised by Karen Logan, History Curator, National Museums Northern Ireland

On 1 December 2017, the Ulster Museum hosted an arpillera doll making workshop led by Roberta Bacic, Chilean Curator and Human Rights Advocate, living in Northern Ireland. Participants were introduced to the history of Chilean arpilleras, the way that women came together to tell the story of their family, their community, or their country and the types of fabric used. Karen Nickell, Belfast School of Art at Ulster University, then gave an overview of our local textile traditions, showing examples of lace, patchwork and utility quilts.

During the workshop the group had the opportunity to create their own arpillera doll. Museum visitors and staff were invited to attend as well as members of a local community group from the Markets area of Belfast. The women chatted as they worked and shared the stories associated with the dolls they were making, including stories of relatives and friends who had passed away.



Women cutting, stitching, threading – as they concentrate on the process of making an arpillera doll. (Photo: Karen Logan)



**Adding character to the dolls. (Photo: Karen Logan)**

It was important for the museum to showcase the use of textile language in countries that have experienced conflict and to familiarise staff and visitors with different textile traditions. This provided a useful introduction to the subject, which will be developed further as the Ulster Museum will be exhibiting a quilt and arpillera in the Troubles gallery from spring 2018.



**Completed dolls. (Photo: Karen Logan)**