

1969

Heritage
& Museum
service

The Art of Survival International and Irish Quilts

Exhibition: 8th March - 19th April 2008

Derry City Council Heritage & Museum Service

TALK OF THE SHIRAZ PILLS
REMEMBER! SANDRA TILLY
#4 THE TROUBLES

1994



DERRY
CITY COUNCIL



Foreword

**The Art of Survival International and Irish Quilts
Exhibition: 8th March - 19th April 2008
Derry City Council Heritage & Museum Service**

Quilt making, textiles and fabric have long been entwined in the history of this city.

The task of collecting, preserving and making publicly accessible collections of intrinsic value is vitally important for the city's memory bank. It was with these thoughts in mind that the Heritage and Museum Service of Derry City Council were delighted to have the opportunity to showcase such a significant collection of International and Irish quilts in the city.

Every project has a history and 'The Art of Survival: Fabric Images of Women's Daily Lives' is permanently housed in The Regional and International Museum of Women's Culture in Germany. A substantial part of this exhibition will be displayed at the Tower Museum; 26 quilts from

Detail of *Vida en Nuestra Población / Life in our Poor Neighbourhood* Chilean three dimensional arpillera.
Courtesy of Jürgen & Marta Schaffer (Germany). Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Zimbabwe, Croatia, India and Peru, amongst others. Whilst simultaneously 26 Irish quilts will be on display in venues across the city. The concept of a joint display of quilts is courtesy of guest curator, Roberta Bacic, a Chilean living in Ireland. Chilean arpilleras are on display at the Harbour Museum.

Women have worked with textiles and fabric for centuries. Items were often made to sell in local markets, whilst multinational companies utilised the sewing skills of women. Women also used fabric to tell stories, of conflict, struggle and of survival. The creativity expressed in the handcrafted quilts is testimony to the determination of women across the world.

We hope this exhibition will stimulate an interest and awareness in quilt making but also in preserving memories and understanding the importance of documenting a person's history and heritage.

Bernadette Walsh
Archivist, Heritage & Museum Service, Derry City Council



Our quilts and arpilleras' journey to International Women's Day 2008

Motivated, inspired, triggered, challenged, fascinated and humbled by the Peruvian Arpillera or quilt, "Yesterday – Today", made mostly by indigenous women from the Andean region of Peru, this journey to a collective display of works started. These women, bereaved by both sides of the conflict in Peru, displaced and impoverished, found a way to capture the essence of what their needs were as people affected deeply by the war 1980-2000, a war they did not start. This arpillera came for the first time as part of the West Belfast Festival in August 2006. It travelled all around Ireland, and beyond, wrapped in the hand luggage of the curator so as to share its testimony of creative and common journey.

It has been much more than collecting beautiful or interesting pieces. It has been empowering and insightful to meet quilt makers from all over Ireland. For over a year we have shared the meaning of being involved

Soldiers arriving at the village, a detail of Yesterday - Today, A three dimensional arpillera made by Kuyanaky
Courtesy of Gaby Franger (Germany). Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



making and what this has meant to women's lives as individuals and part of a group, and then extend it beyond their group to the other groups of quilt makers. It has also meant looking beyond Ireland, to becoming part of the wider world and feel and share the universality of being a woman and experiencing adverse situations, be those: wars, poverty, marginalisation, political repression, racism, human rights violations, disempowerment, abuse, etc.

Quilting and textile traditions have been for centuries present in women's daily lives. Jennifer Harris says in her book "5000 YEARS OF TEXTILES, (published in 1993 and reedited in 2006 by the British Museum Press), "Textiles are made to be used primarily as furnishings and dress, and are expected to wear out and eventually be discarded." She also points out that it is through decorated textiles that the history of textiles can be preserved. In the catalogue's preface to the collection "Weavings of war, fabrics of memory", (published in 2005 by the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University) we read: "Textile artists, mostly women, have broken their traditions of non figurative work to use pictorial imagery to communicate their personal experiences of war".



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Brian Stewart
1-10-62 10-10-76

BAN PLASTIC CUPS

In this context it became an imperative to also curate a small collection of Chilean arpilleras. Jorge Semprún in his book, *Literature of Life*, says: "I start to doubt the possibility of telling the story. Not that what we lived through is indescribable. It was unbearable". Chilean arpillera makers communicate, embedded in their daily life, using colorful fabrics what happened to them during the dictatorship, as well as what they did about it.

In this brochure I invite you to introduce yourself to this selection of quilts/arpilleras.

Roberta Bacic

Guest Curator to *The Art of Survival, International and Irish Quilts*,
Curator of "The politics of Chilean Arpilleras"

March 2008



Friendship Quilt

This embroidered quilt represents a visual history of the Waterside Derry/Londonderry.

Detail of Love Across the Wave Patchwork and Painted Quilt made by Arranmore and Tir Boghaine Women's Groups from Donegal. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



"ASOCIACION - KUYANAKUY"

AYER



HOY



Yesterday - Today Prehen House February 2007

A three dimensional arpillera made by Kuyanaky, a collective of displaced Andean women from Peru depicting their life in the present, contrasted with their life in the past. As they themselves say: "Yesterday we lost everything and had to leave it all behind us to save our lives and had to start a new life from scratch." Courtesy of Gaby Franger (Germany)

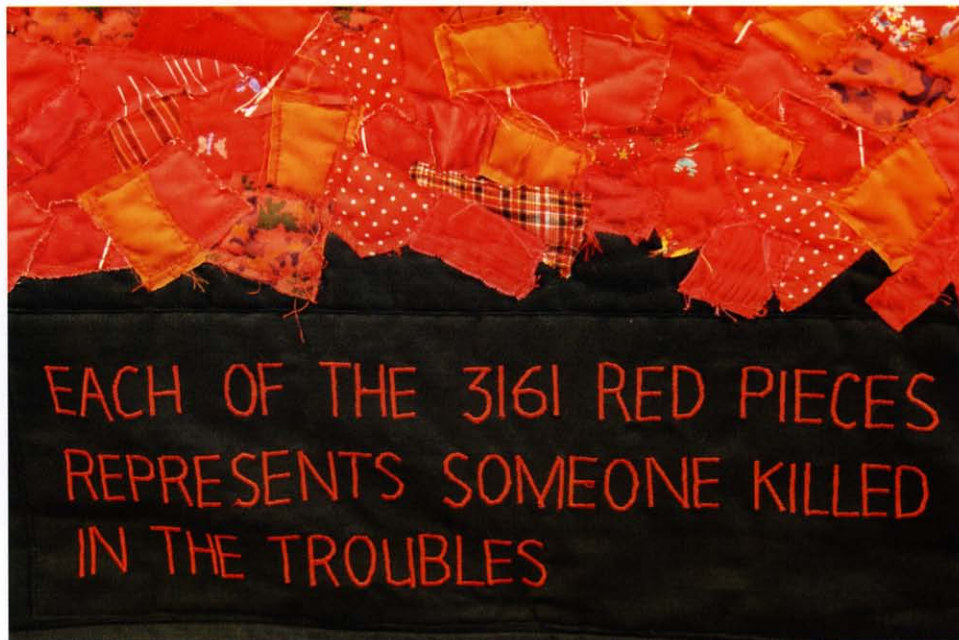
Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic

Detail of Common Loss: 3000+ dead
between 1969 and 1994

Patchwork quilt made by Irene
MacWilliam from Belfast

This powerful quilt has served as a
representation for much of this
project. Each piece of red fabric
represents someone killed in Northern
Ireland's conflict between 1969 and
1994. It represents everybody who
lost his/her life. Women from many
different places, including Japan, sent
red pieces of scrap cloth as a
contribution to this piece of art.

Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic





La Cueca Sola / They Dance Alone

Chilean arpillera. Cueca is Chile's national dance. It is meant to be danced in pairs wearing colourful clothing . Here the women dance alone in black and white clothing. Their husbands, sons, brothers, or lovers have been disappeared or exiled, so they continue the dance, wearing the image of their loved ones over their hearts. Courtesy of Marjorie Agosin's (Chile/USA). Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Detail of *Vida en Nuestra Población / Life in our Poor Neighbourhood*

Chilean three dimensional arpillera.

Courtesy of Jürgen & Marta Schaffer (Germany). Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Vida en Nuestra Población / Life in our Poor Neighbourhood

Chilean three dimensional arpillera. Women are not alone in this arpillera. Men and children play prominent roles. Children's activities dominate the whole of the centre of the arpillera - skipping, jumping on a trampoline, and playing on the swings. It reflects busy, simple and enjoyable everyday life.

Courtesy of Jürgen & Marta Schaffer (Germany)

Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic







Detail of Friendship Quilt

This embroidered quilt represents a visual history of the Waterside Derry/Londonderry. It was planned and co-ordinated by Eileen Hepburn, and stitched by women from cross communities groups. To date the quilt has been hanging in St. Columb's Park House. This Friendship Quilt is made up of 9 panels depicting places, communities, institutions, church, defence points, sporting groups, youth groups, happenings, and events. It was made almost 20 years ago. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic

Dónde están? / Where are They?

This Chilean arpillera rather than portraying an entire village or a particular scene, portrays a single woman, sewing and hoping for justice and the return of her loved ones. "¿Dónde están? Where are they?" was a common theme throughout the dictatorship and the motto of the Association of Detained Disappeared. Chile had over 1000 disappeared by The Junta. Courtesy of Marjorie Agosin (Chile/USA). Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic





Paz Justicia Libertad / Peace Justice Freedom

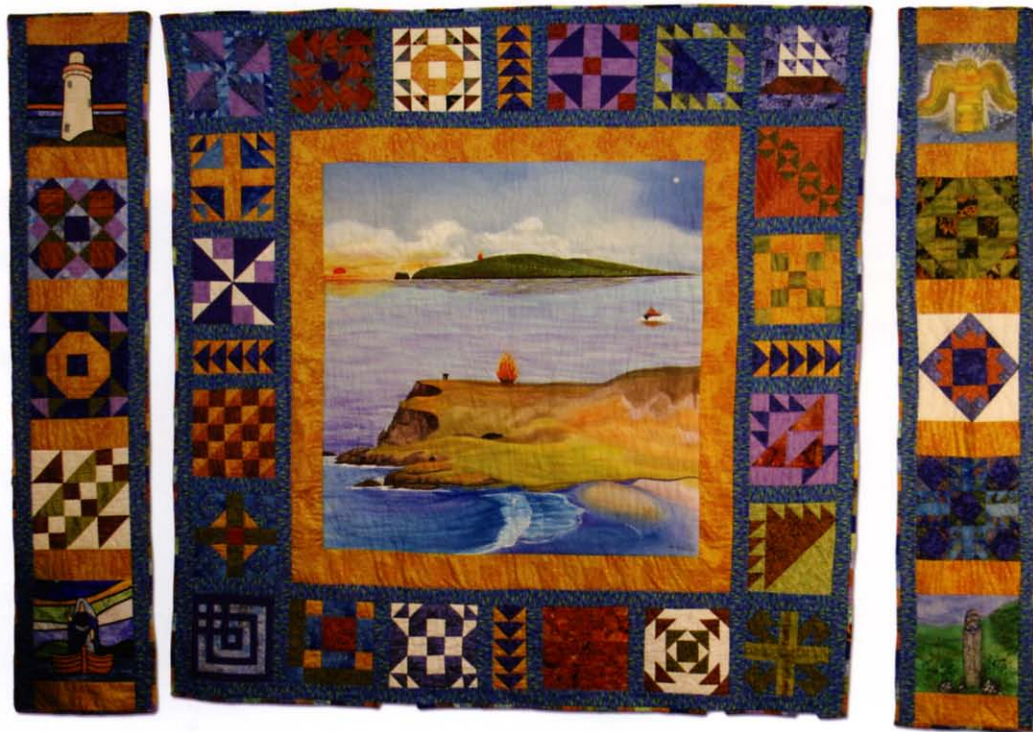
Traditional Chilean arpillera made in the late 1970s. It depicts a protest by women. The material used to create this piece makes it particularly poignant. The dark grey material is made from the trousers of a "disappeared" man. Likewise, the checked fabric "road" comes from a "disappeared" loved one's shirt. Courtesy of Alba Sanfeliu (Spain) Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic

Detail of Love Across the Wave

Patchwork and Painted Quilt made by
Arranmore and Tir Boghaine Women's
Groups from Donegal.

Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic





Love Across the Waves

Patchwork and Painted Quilt made by Arranmore and Tir Boghaine Women's Groups from Donegal. This patchwork piece was developed around the love story from the late 1800's between a merchant from the Tir Boghaine area, whose family was from Teelin in the Parish of Glencolmcille, and a girl from Arranmore. It was launched February 4th 2008 after working together for over 2 years. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic

Pathways of Life

This is a patchwork Quilt crafted by the participants of the "Women into Irish History Group" as part of a Shared City Project between November 2005 and March 2006. Each square represents a significant event or place in the life of the woman who stitched it. These squares are like little snapshots and give us an insight into what influenced the lives of these women all from Derry/Londonderry.

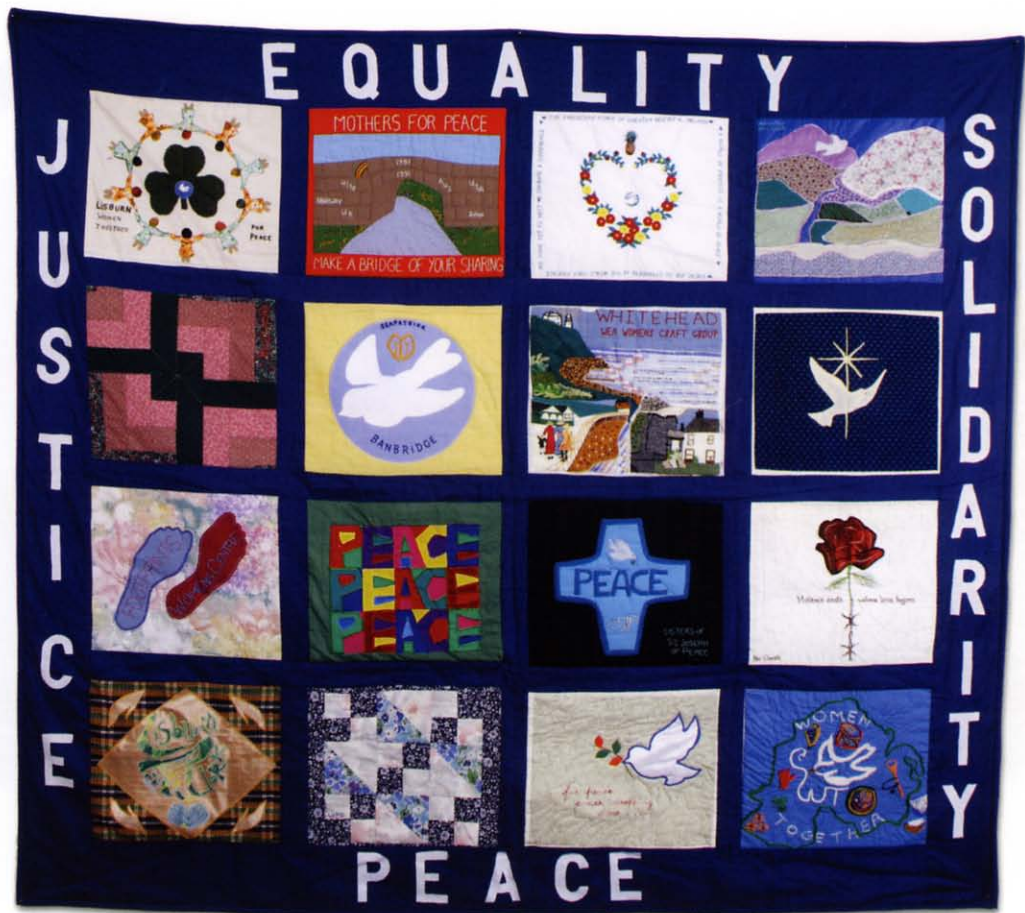
Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic





Details of Pathways of Life

This is a patchwork Quilt crafted by the participants of the "Women into Irish History Group" as part of a Shared City Project between November 2005 and March 2006. Each square represents a significant event or place in the life of the woman who stitched it. These squares are like little snapshots and give us an insight into what influenced the lives of these women all from Derry/Londonderry. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Northern Ireland Peace Quilt

This Patchwork Quilt was made by Women Together, founded in 1970. This quilt is the product of the work of women and women's organisations all over Northern Ireland. Around the edge of the quilt are written the words Peace, Justice, Solidarity, and Equality. The patches on the quilt reflect these words, powerful statements of what is required for there to be peace. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Reflection on Loss—From Darkness to Light

This embroidered and appliquéd quilt was designed and produced by female members of Wave Trauma Centre who have lost either a husband or a child as a direct result of thirty years of conflict in Northern Ireland. The theme relates to the members' personal journeys of grief and despair, from the darkness of bereavement and loss to the light of hope for the future. This journey is depicted symbolically through the lighthouse. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Details of Reflection on Loss—From Darkness to Light

This embroidered and appliquéd quilt was designed and produced by female members of Wave Trauma Centre
Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Detail of Remembering Quilt Panel 3

The Relatives for Justice Remembering Quilt is a project for people who have lost someone as a result of the conflict in Ireland. The quilt is made up of squares which have been dedicated to individuals who have died as a result of the conflict. These squares are designed and made by family members and friends who wish to remember their loved ones in a creative and positive way. There are 8 panels to day. Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



Detail of Remembering Quilt Panel 3

The Relatives for Justice Remembering Quilt
Photo by Colin Peck. © Roberta Bacic



River Foyle

6

Patrick Street

Great James Street

Foyle Embankment

Strand Road

William Street

Little James Street

2

9

Rossville Street

Falan Street

Waterloo Street

1

Guilford St

Bank Place

Foyle Street

Water St

Magazine St

Butchers St

Shipquay Street

8

Orchard St

4

Ferryquay St

7

Artery St

5

Bishop Street

Bishop Street

Artery Rd

Columba Terrace

3

Glendermott Rd

Bonds Hill

Clooney Terrace

Dungiven Rd

R

Venues

Keys to Map



Historic City Walls



Parking



Tourist Information



Bus Station



Railway Station

1

Exhibition Venues

1

Tower Museum
Union Hall Place
Derry

Opening Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
10am-4.30pm
tel: 028 7137 2411

2

Harbour Museum
Harbour Square
Derry

Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday
10am - 4.30pm
tel: 028 7137 7331

3

Workhouse Museum
Glendermott Road
Waterside

Opening Hours:
Monday - Thursday,
Saturday
10am-4.30pm
tel: 028 7131 8328

4

The Junction
Bishop Street
Derry

Opening Hours:
Monday - Friday
10am-5pm
tel: 028 7136 1942

5

The Verbal Arts Centre
Stable Lane & Mall Wall
Bishop Street Within
Derry

Opening Hours:
Monday - Thursday
9am-5.30pm,
Friday 9am-4pm
tel: 028 7126 6946

6

Void Gallery
Patrick Street
Derry

Opening Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
11am-5pm
tel: 028 7130 8080

7

Diocesan Centre
Derry and Raphoe
Diocesan Office
24 London Street
Opening Hours:
Monday - Friday
9am-4pm
tel: 028 7126 2440

8

The Playhouse
St Columb's Hall
Derry
Opening Hours:
Monday-Friday
10am-5pm
tel: 028 7126 8027

9

Museum of Free Derry
Glenfada Park
Derry
Opening Hours:
Monday - Friday
9.30am-4.30pm
tel: 028 7136 0880

Acknowledgements

This exhibition is the result of collaboration between the Heritage and Museum Service of Derry City Council (including the Harbour Museum, Tower Museum and Workhouse Museum) and the Junction, with guest curator Roberta Bacic. Partner institutions also displaying Irish quilts are the Verbal Arts Centre, the Void Gallery, the Playhouse, the Diocesan Centre and the Museum of Free Derry.

Special thanks to all the women involved in this project who worked tirelessly on every aspect of the project without whom this exhibition would not be in the city today.





The Art of Survival

International and Irish Quilts

Guest Curator Roberta Bacic.

Concept and production of the international exhibition by Gaby Franger and Ragnhild von Studnitz (†).

An exhibition of Women In One World.



Diocesan Centre
Derry & Raphoe



This document is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, braille, PDF, audio cassette and minority ethnic languages
email: equality@derrycity.gov.u tel: 028 7136 5151 ext 6705

