

STORY THREADS

Creative Readings



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THE MCCLAY LIBRARY, QUB, UNTIL 5 APRIL 2024

Immerse yourself in the creative world of textiles sewn by students of Latin American Studies @ Queen's University Belfast. Experience how Chilean *arpilleras* converse with Costa Rican short stories.



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Story Threads: Creative Readings

For more than a decade, students in Spanish at QUB have had the opportunity to create textiles, *arpilleras*, as a means of interpreting and re-narrating Costa Rican short stories they have studied in their Latin American literature course. The textiles on display are a small sample of their creative endeavours. Research shows that, in addition to language learning, creative assessments help students become flexible thinkers & problem-solvers. Sewing, in particular, can also encourage valuable mental health benefits. Slowing down, thinking through the story, working with the materials to create a new language of images can all temper the speed and pressure of academic studies.

In collaboration with the *Conflict Textiles* collection - also on exhibition in the McClay library - these textile narratives are informed by the original *arpilleras* created in Chile.

What is an *arpillera*?

They are brightly-colored appliqué or embroidered pictures stitched onto sack cloth/hessian (*arpillera* in Spanish). Originally, they bore witness to the experiences of the oppressed in Chile in the 1970s and 1980s during the totalitarian military regime of General Augusto Pinochet. They served to document and denounce when all normal channels of free expression were closed, particularly to women. As an example of how these textiles now serve as global narratives, a small section of the exhibition highlights the work of the women's collective in Santa María de Fé, Paraguay. This 'hermandad' not only capture the stories of their daily lives, they also record the memory of persecution suffered under the military dictatorship of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, 1954-1989.

Explore this exhibition:

The student textiles on display focus on three short stories from the work of Tatiana Lobo, *Tiempo de Claveles* (The Season of Carnations). To read more about the short stories and explanations for the framed textiles scan the QR code below to follow our guide.



We welcome your responses so do take time to sign the Visitors' Book in the exhibition:

Underpinning research:

To find out more about the benefits of textile making as creative assessments, scan the QR code to read 'Literary Arpilleras: Textiles as Place-based, Creative Pedagogy'

