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Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles

Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles is a North East PEACE III exhibition displaying nearly forty quilts and arpilleras from seven countries to inspire dialogue on the Troubles in the North East area of Northern Ireland. Arpilleras are three dimensional textiles, which originated in Chile. They have now been created by women across the world to share their reactions to experiences of conflict. Running alongside the exhibition are events and workshops which will explore responses to the troubles in this area and create new textile art works.

The exhibition is part of the North East PEACE III Cultural Fusions heritage based project which is being delivered by Causeway Museum Service and Mid-Antrim Museums Service. The project is funded under the European Union's PEACE III Programme and is managed on behalf of the Special EU Programmes Body by the North East PEACE III Partnership.

As part of the "Remembering the Troubles" programme of activities for communities and individuals the **Stitching & Unstitching The Troubles exhibition**, curated by Roberta Bacic, assisted by Breege Doherty, will display quilts and arpilleras from Northern Ireland, England, Ireland, Spain, Colombia, Chile and Peru. Many of these textiles have been exhibited in museums, universities and art galleries worldwide. Multi layered in meaning, symbolism and stories, they are an ideal medium to engage with and challenge viewers of all ages and of different political, ethnic, cultural and

religious backgrounds. The arpilleras and quilts included in this exhibition depict a variety of themes which find parallels in the local context: violence, death, denial, loss, survival, hunger strike, displacement, resistance, the role of the Church during conflict and war, disappearances and post conflict transitional justice.

It is hoped that the opportunity to consider the international experiences of conflict as shared through this extraordinary collection of textiles will inspire similar narratives of The Troubles being revealed across the North East. A programme of events and workshops will give community groups and individuals the chance to explore and share their stories and create new textile art which will be showcased in a second exhibition being held in The Braid in Ballymena next year.

Causeway Museum Service and Mid-Antrim Museums Service are delighted that Roberta Bacic and Breege Doherty have been able to work with them on this project, Roberta has curated exhibitions all over the world and will be on hand to give a guided tour of the exhibition between 11am and 4pm on the 10th and 24th September from 6.30pm to 9.00pm. Visitors will have a chance to take part in a hands-on textile activity.

On the 15th September there will be an opportunity to meet with Irene MacWilliam, whose work includes 'Year Quilts' which have catalogued world events each year since 1986. On the same day community group leaders, teachers, quilters, sewing groups, peace & reconciliation organisations and anyone interested in textiles as an artistic expression are invited to take part in an Arpillera workshop exploring issues and fabrics with celebrated textile artist, Deborah Stockdale.

All events are free, but booking is essential and places may be limited. Free transport for groups can be arranged. Contact John Hamilton on 028 7034 7235 or e-mail john.hamilton@colerainebc.gov.uk.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU structural funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IVA designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG IVA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE III Programme, funded under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is worth €333 million and is aimed primarily at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation. It focuses on helping Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland to reconcile communities and contribute towards a shared society.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu