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WEBSITE TO EXPLORE HISTORY OF CONFLICT TEXTILES

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One of the textile works which forms part of the Arpillera Journeys, exhibition in the Tower Museum. Picture Martin McKeown. Inpresspics.com

A new website charting the development of an international collection of over 270 textile pieces which depict conflict situations around the world is to launch next week at the Tower Museum.

The vibrant collection brings together local and international pieces including textiles, arpilleras, quilts and wall hangings, and will find a permanent home as part of the archive collection of the Tower

Museum.

Working in conjunction with the Ulster University's CAIN project, the website charts the journey of curator Roberta Bacic who has been custodian of the growing collection over the past three decades.

A special event marking the launch will take place in the Museum on November 19th, and Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District, Councillor Elisha McCallion, said she was delighted to see the launch of the new website. "The new website is an excellent resource offering a fascinating insight into the development of the collection, which depicts the experiences and suffering of women affected by conflict across the world.

"It is particularly fitting that the collection will find a home at the Tower Museum given the city's own troubled history and our strong links to the textile industry.

"I would really encourage people to access the new site or come along to see how women have used their creative skills to reflect their life experiences in such a moving way."

Conflict Textiles has its origins in an exhibition **The Art of Survival: International and Irish Quilts** which was held at nine venues across Derry in early 2008.

This exhibition, which also featured Chilean arpilleras (three dimensional textiles from Latin America, which originated in Chile during General Pinochet's reign of oppression) was the result of a collaboration between Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Services and The Junction, with guest curator Roberta Bacic.

Since 2008, over 130 exhibitions, featuring arpilleras, quilts and wall hangings, and related events have been hosted in museums, universities, art galleries, embassies and community spaces worldwide.

Speaking ahead of the website launch, curator and human rights advocate Roberta recalled: “Over the years the journey became much more than collecting beautiful or interesting textile pieces which told such incredible stories.

“Conversations and projects developed as a way to raise awareness, understanding and encourage participation.

“It has been empowering for those involved to meet quilt makers, arpilleras and textile workers and artists from around the world.

“This journey has travelled beyond Ireland, sharing the universality of being a woman dealing with difficult situations such as conflict, poverty, political repression, or human rights violations.”

The website will be regularly updated in the future as the collection grows and travels around the world for exhibition events.

You can find out more about the pieces when the site goes live at cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflictextiles