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Quilts and arpilleras English

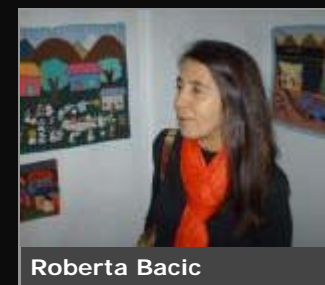


## Quilts and arpilleras

that contest boundaries

Roberta Bacic, 9th May 2009

It is a great inspiration and challenge for me to represent the three curators of the present exhibition **Threads of destiny: Testimonies of violence, hope and survival**, Annita Reim, Gaby Franger and myself. We have known each other for over 20 years, we have collaborated with each other at different points, we have spent time together, we have had fun and now we have curated together. This exhibition is a quilt in itself; we have put together ideas, work, art, pain, joy, worries and much more. Through these arpilleras and quilts done by women from different parts of the world we can hear their voices, we can look into their lives and we can also commit ourselves to keep working for a better world, not avoiding the issues, but confronting them and looking for new insights, approaches and possible solutions.



Roberta Bacic

How do we live our memories of trauma, how do we stick



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**them together into the fabric of life? This has always been one measure of mental health and wellbeing.** But how we do this as a group, how we live daily with other's memories of their suffering, loss and dislocation, making their memory part of our lives is a very different matter.

The making of quilts and arpilleras gives the story teller an inward time and space to work through painful as well as meaningful memories. The well-known arpilleras and quilting bees are vivid examples of women working together and sharing together in solidarity. Their work becomes part of a process, and helps them/us to create a certain level of dealing with the issues that are lived as fundamental and common. It helps them/us to make concrete assertions that are difficult to challenge and – at the same time – it is difficult for them to pull back..

**How do we make these stories – of others – part of our own life and stories? And how do we make our own stories be part of theirs?**

By living with such quilts and arpilleras, pieces of art, we domesticate and internalise the memory-work of others and seem to make it our own

Susan Saphiro, a post holocaust philosopher says:

“At home death and survival was a topic. Home is not a place where you forget the rest of the world. It's not a retreat from the world, but a place where the outside world also lives and exists inside.”

In a similar way home is a place for a quilt, an arpillera. Home is a safe place to reflect on the outside world, and the quilts and arpilleras bring the outside world as it is experienced by the arpilleras & quilters unto our walls, for us to relate to.

**In viewing these pieces can we detach ourselves from the stories they tell and their underlying meaning?**



#### **Directorio**

Datos de contacto de profesionales de habla hispana en Alemania

I would argue that their form can never be fully grasped aesthetically apart from what they show as they are full of content and emotions.

They live in clothing and in household goods where they serve as daily reminders of personal experience of events that have actually happened and – at the same time – they hold and express the experience of stitching the stories into cloth.

**How do women use textile art to keep hope alive and survive under conditions of political violence?** These works show us that war and violence are true. At the same time they show us the result of many hours of sewing. An obstinate persistence in expressing and sharing what has been the actual cost of violence and war, which stirs up the emotions and feelings in others. They seem to cry out:

**What will YOU DO about this? Act, do something!**

They seem to challenge the mainstream's intention of keeping private what actually happens to people as individuals and groups as a consequence of the political context they live. **They are, without any doubt, an expression of social reality.**

**We find it our responsibility to exhibit them. Here they are, for you to enjoy, for you to relate to.**

We invite you to connect, relate and enjoy this exhibition of 42 pieces on display

**DEUTSCH**

Fotos: William Bastidas

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