

# CONFLICT TEXTILES



**PAKT e.V. (Projekte, Aktion, Kunst, Theater), Freiburg, Germany**  
**Preparatory visit, 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**Re exhibition: Poesie des Nähens / The Poetry of Stitching**  
**Jan – March 2020**

## Photo gallery

### Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June

In searing temperatures of 35°C, uncomfortably hot even for locals, Johanna Menzinger, (Pakt eV), picked us up at the Euro Airport - Basel/Mulhouse/**Freiburg**. Once in Freiburg, we proceeded to the Galerie der Volkshochschule (VHS), the exhibition venue, to begin our first series of planning meetings.

There we met Anja Schlager, VHS Arts Department Co-ordinator and Ester Crespin, exhibition team member. After a tour of the exhibition space, Anja, Ester and Johanna had an opportunity to see the arpilleras first hand. A discussion on those pieces related to the exhibition theme followed, as well as the practicalities of hanging particular pieces.



(L-R) Anja Schlager, VHS Arts Department Co-ordinator, Roberta Bacic, exhibition curator, Ester Crespin, exhibition team member and Johanna Menzinger, Pakt eV (commissioning organisation), absorbing the details of [Al Servicio de la vida / Servicing life](#). (Photo: Breege Doherty)



**Anja and Roberta discuss the technical aspects of hanging the textiles.  
(Photo: Breege Doherty)**

Later in the afternoon we were joined by Martin Adelman, Executive Director of the Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut and Daniel Mühl, head of the political department of VHS. Here we explored a range of potential associated activities, such as lectures, film screening and workshops that they could collaborate on and take the lead in; activities which would complement their current programme for students.



**Martin Adelman, Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut (left) and Daniel Mühl, political department of VHS (right) experience the textiles first hand. (Photo: Breege Doherty)**



Later in the evening we were warmly greeted by our host Rosemarie Menzinger, Johanna's Mother in law. Threads of the discussion which we began in the afternoon were later picked up over dinner at Johanna's house, where we also had the privilege of meeting her husband and three children.



**Johanna and Roberta, discussing the detail of the exhibition on a walk along the river Dreisam.  
(Photo: Breege Doherty)**

### **Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June**

Next morning, after a refreshing swim in the outdoor public swimming pool, we began the process of selecting the exhibition textiles in the home of Rosemarie Menzinger. Our selection was guided by:

- the exhibition theme
- the various related strands and threads which had been discussed by the commissioning and collaborating organisations the previous afternoon
- the inclusion of arpilleras from a cross section of countries and jurisdictions
- those not already committed to other exhibitions.

By the end of the morning, we had selected a total of 21 pieces.



**(L-R) Roberta, Diana Rapp, exhibition team member, Breege Doherty, Assistant curator and Johann reviewing the exhibition textiles on the Conflict Textiles website.  
(Photo: Rosemarie Menzinger)**

In the afternoon, suitably replenished, accompanied by Diana and Ester, we regrouped at VHS for our final meetings. There we met Barbara Gebhardt, VHS Co-ordinator, Dagmar Große, head of Eine Welt Forum and Heike Gerlach, Museum für Mensch und Natur. As with the previous day's meeting, we explained the meaning behind the arpilleras and gave an overview of the conflict textiles collection. A rich, animated discussion followed which added to the range of potential associated activities explored on day 1 and broadened the range of contributors.



**Johanna discussing associated activities with Roberta, Ester and Barbara**



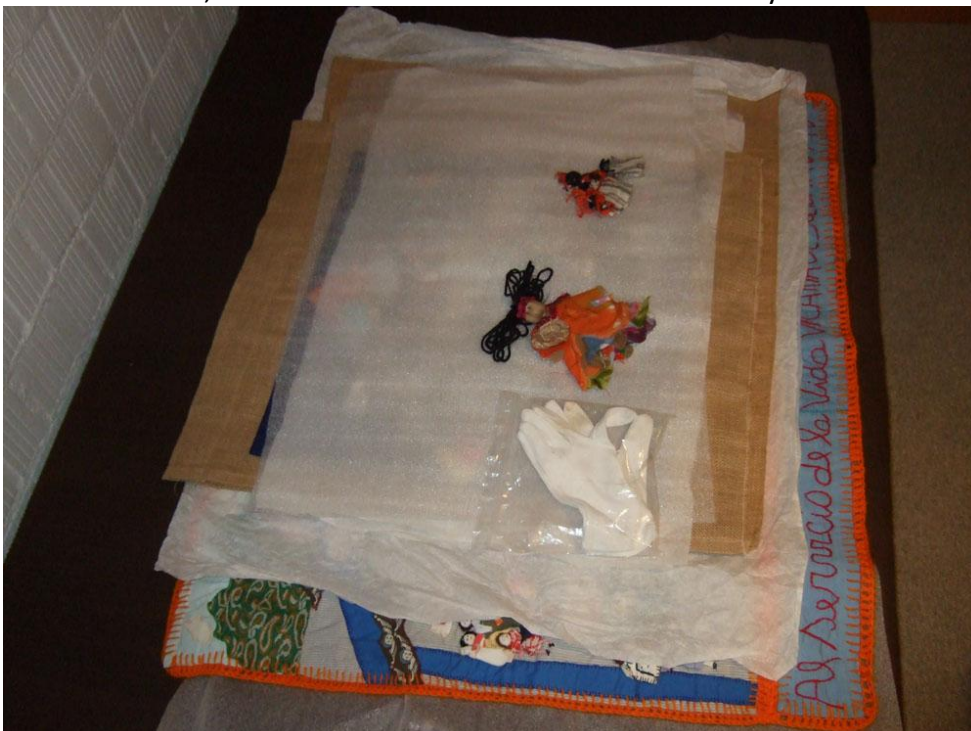
Gebhardt, VHS Co-ordinator. (Photo: Breege Doherty)



(L-R) Dagmar Große, Eine Welt Forum, Ester, Johanna and Heike Gerlach, Museum für Mensch und Natur discussing possible collaborative events. (Photo: Breege Doherty)

After a refreshing walk, we revisited our progress over dinner, concluding our discussions at 10pm, noting what needs to be followed up on in the coming weeks and months.

Next morning, the four arpilleras remaining in Freiburg were left in storage, lying flat, in the care of Johanna, in readiness for the exhibition next January.



**The textiles in storage, in the care of Johanna Menzinger. (Photo: Breege Doherty)**

## **Outcome**

On Thursday morning, following breakfast al-fresco prepared by Rosemarie, Johanna deposited us at the bus station.



**Roberta and Rosemarie having a final discussion over breakfast. (Photo: Breege Doherty)**

As we bade Johanna goodbye we commented on the extremely productive nature of this 1.5 day meeting:

- The exhibition team and collaborating organisation have experienced arpilleras first hand and have an enhanced understanding of the power of textiles in dealing with/unstitching difficult themes
- There is a clear sense of the possibilities of using the exhibition space to its full potential
- An associated programme of activities is evolving.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the face to face nature of these meetings have led to the sharing of insights, the discussion of new possibilities and the building of relationships, all core elements in bringing the exhibition and its associated programme of activities to fruition in January 2020.

Breege Doherty

<http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/>

1st July 2019