



Launch of the exhibition Following the footsteps of the disappeared

Northern Ireland 30th August 2020

Greeting from Roberta Bacic, collector and curator of the Conflict Textiles collection

As the collector and curator of **Conflict Textiles**, and of the present exhibition, I want to welcome you all. The assistance of Breege Doherty in this process has been central and pivotal.

The theme of “journey” is backbone to this exhibition and associated activities that start today 30th August and which will extend until 30th August 2021. Team building has also been central to weave together different disciplines, networks and practices.

All of you are part of this transnational journey; be that transnational in geography and/or language. It is also trans-disciplinary and trans-generational. It involves people from all roads of life and favours a bottom up participatory approach and methodology.

Team building has also been at the centre of this “adventure” using arpilleras and other textiles as a common language. These textiles are used as a medium to narrate, denounce, resist, respond and document human rights violations via the ancient art of sewing.

This journey has its genesis in the start of Conflict Textiles collection which is mainly comprised of arpilleras (251 documented as today), quilts and wall hangings (119). Making visible the struggle for the disappeared; remains at the very core of the collection.

Following the footsteps for the disappeared is a milestone on the journey.

It is about giving recognition/dedication to the relatives and all those people who have joined the struggle for the disappeared; the struggle for truth, justice and the rebuilding of the social tissue.

We at **Conflict Textiles** have documented the circumstances behind each piece in the exhibition and all the individual stories and narratives remembered/represented/pictured on them. We will consider one in depth in this launch and another one is discussed in the short film that

will be premiered at 3 PM UK time. Similar information on the others can be found on our web at CAIN [Conflict Textiles](#).

Using this methodology we believe we are accompanying the process of truth recovery and engaging in rebuilding the broken social tissue from a vacuum left by the disappearances. This is at the very heart of all we do.

We extend gratitude to the arpilleristas, sewers and textile artists who have told us their stories and trust us when exhibiting, discussing and unveiling their experiences, feelings and thoughts about past and current struggles.

Thanks for joining us.

Roberta

Key references to the collection

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

Oxford Research Encyclopedias

Latin American History – Digital Resource: **Conflict Textiles** by Elsie Doolan
Doolan, Elsie. "Digital Resource: Conflict Textiles." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*. Oxford University Press. Article published July 2019.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.796>