

Participatory activity focused on the arpillera

[¿Dónde están los desaparecidos? / Where are the "disappeared"?](#)

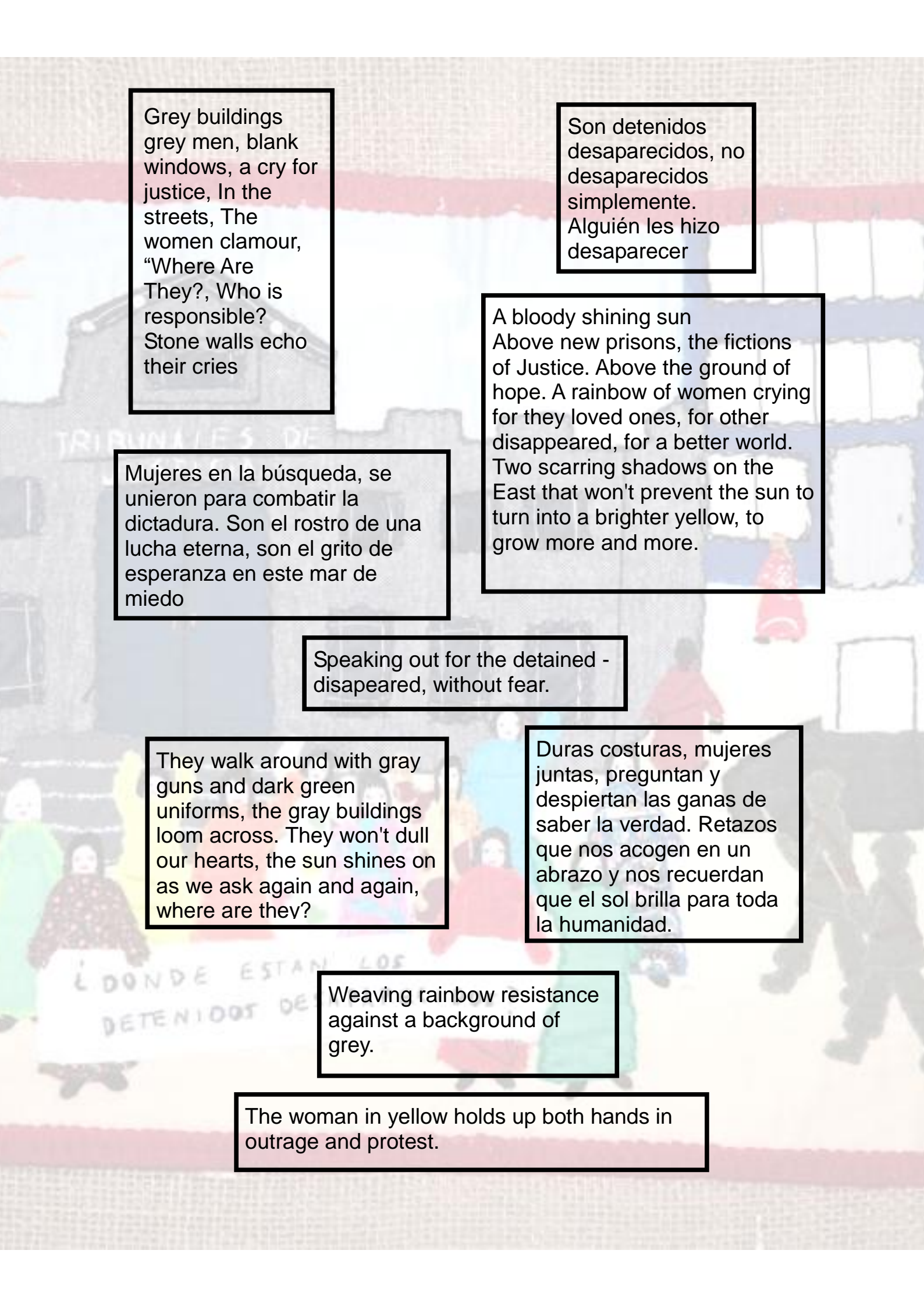


"¿Dónde están los desaparecidos? / Where are the disappeared?", by Irma Müller. (Photo: Martin Melaugh)

This exercise was facilitated by Esther Pardo, Sociologist and Art therapist, Colombia-Catalonia, midway through the workshop "**Following the Footsteps of the Disappeared**", as part of the two day [Virtual Conference: Memory and Representation in Latin America](#) hosted by the [Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Liverpool](#).

Initially, Esther instructed participants to “observe the arpillera, take a deep breath and reflect on what this arpillera is telling us”. She then invited participants to write “what you feel and think” using Padlet.

This resulted in a rich multi-lingual poetry collage, displayed below.



Grey buildings
grey men, blank
windows, a cry for
justice, In the
streets, The
women clamour,
“Where Are
They?, Who is
responsible?
Stone walls echo
their cries

Son detenidos
desaparecidos, no
desaparecidos
simplemente.
Alguién les hizo
desaparecer

A bloody shining sun
Above new prisons, the fictions
of Justice. Above the ground of
hope. A rainbow of women crying
for they loved ones, for other
disappeared, for a better world.
Two scarring shadows on the
East that won't prevent the sun to
turn into a brighter yellow, to
grow more and more.

Mujeres en la búsqueda, se
unieron para combatir la
dictadura. Son el rostro de una
lucha eterna, son el grito de
esperanza en este mar de
miedo

Speaking out for the detained -
disappeared, without fear.

They walk around with gray
guns and dark green
uniforms, the gray buildings
loom across. They won't dull
our hearts, the sun shines on
as we ask again and again,
where are they?

Duras costuras, mujeres
juntas, preguntan y
despiertan las ganas de
saber la verdad. Retazos
que nos acogen en un
abrazo y nos recuerdan
que el sol brilla para toda
la humanidad.

Weaving rainbow resistance
against a background of
grey.

The woman in yellow holds up both hands in
outrage and protest.

"Where are they", they cried. "We want them back", they cried. They were told nothing, so they cried for so many many days, they cried. Though they cried and asked and shouted they were....

#MemoriaLatAm

Parece una paradoja, el sol brillando en tanto infierno

Absence
We see the warmth of the connection between the arpilleristas in the colours of their dresses. We feel the absence in the darkness of the image.

Colours above

Strength,
Repression,
truth

Women searching for the disappeared.
Outside Courts of Justice. Armed guards stand by. Intimidating scene.
As powerful today as 30 years ago

¿dónde están nuestros desaparecidos?
Veo los tribunales de justicia al fondo, un edificio gris, masivo, con las puertas cerradas. Miro a las mujeres, las madres que buscan la vida, sus vestidos coloridos. Gritan, exigen saber dónde están sus desaparecidos. Los militares listos a reprimir. También miro la realidad en mi país, México: aquí también hay madres que buscan, que gritan y preguntan ¿dónde están nuestros desaparecidos?

Las mujeres pusieron el cuerpo para luchar contra la injusticia.
Ellas son ejemplo de lucha v valentía