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## Press Release

### Mayor to open Chilean 'arpilleras' exhibition at the Harbour Museum

**4th February 2008**

From the 8th February the Harbour Museum will host an unusual exhibition of Arpilleras (pronounced 'ar-pee-air-ahs'). Arpilleras are three dimensional appliqué textiles of Latin America and would be more commonly known as 'quilts' or 'wall hangings'.

The exhibition is the first event leading up to the launch of a major exhibition titled 'The Art of Survival, International and Irish Quilts' which will take place in the city from the 8th March 2008, International Women's Day. Quilts already confirmed for this exhibition in March include exhibits from Germany, Palestine, Zimbabwe and Croatia amongst other countries.

Speaking ahead of the opening, the Mayor said,

"These exhibitions will be of keen interest to those who have participated in local textile displays at the Tower Museum over the past number of years, as well as anyone who has an interest in the skill of quilt making. I would

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like to congratulate the staff of the Tower Museum who are continuing to create links with other ethnic groups so that we as a city can learn to appreciate the history of other cultures."

Speaking of her delight in having the opportunity to host this exhibition at the Harbour Museum Bernadette Walsh, Archivist with the Museum Services said;

"The Heritage and Museum Service were approached in May 2007 by Roberta Bacic, a native of Chile now living in Northern Ireland, to display a selection of international and Irish quilts in the city. Ms Bacic was encouraged and motivated by former Mayor Councillor Helen Quigley to put together this display after her attendance at one of her presentations, "Sewing Memories", last February in Prehen House, which expressed community memories and testimonies through the art of arpillera/ quilt making."

"The city has a rich history connected to the textile industry and has been home to a number of quilt exhibitions in the past. This is a unique opportunity to view handcrafted quilts from Chile which archive the trials and tribulations faced by women during this period of history."

The Chilean arpilleras will remain on display at the Harbour Museum until the 19 April 2008. For more information contact the Harbour Museum on (028) 7137 7311.

### **Notes to Editor**

Sewing, knitting and weaving cloth has been one of women's activities from earliest times and in most civilizations. These arpilleras were handcrafted by women in Chile as a way of telling their stories of a struggle for truth and justice during the Pinochet's dictatorship from 1973 to 1990. The arpilleras were often used to camouflage notes to and from prisoners and to send messages to the international (press)

community to let the world know what was happening in Chile.

Many of the quilts depict experiences of the women during troubled times, times of struggle and conflict and relay an extremely powerful and emotive message. An equal number to the international quilts will correspond to quilts done by women from Ireland.

ENDS

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