Creating Textiles in Protecting Paradise
Spanish and Portuguese Studies, School of Arts, English and Languages, Queen's University Belfast

The optional module in Spanish, 'Protecting Paradise', investigates different modes through the arts, broadly titled, can engage with significant issues in society and particularly those relating to environmental issues. We consider examples of Latin American film, textiles, and fiction as part of this exploration and emphasis is on praxis and 'hands-on' engagement! Thanks to the Education Fund in the School of Arts, English, and Languages, we were able to bring Roberta Bacic, curator and specialist in the *arpillera* tradition to be part of our class and to run a workshop. This class links in the Ark/Conflict Textiles exhibition that runs in the McClay Library, QUB, and database hosted by the CAIN archive, Ulster University. Below, Carolyn, one of our students reflects on her experience of the day.
(Dr Fiona Clark)

"On Wednesday 1st November 2023, Chilean *arpillera* specialist, Roberta Bacic, travelled to Queen's University to share her extensive knowledge and experience with craftivism.

Students of the Spanish Level 2 'Protecting Paradise' module have been learning about the emergence of *arpilleras* - textiles initially created with re-cycled, household materials as a form of protest in Chile. Students were privileged to listen to Roberta's first-hand account as they discovered a more genuine appreciation for craftivism and furthermore, to understand the context and stories that come with each *arpillera* made. They were given the opportunity to investigate the artwork in person, engaging in a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the *arpilleras* whilst grasping the significance of specific colour and material choices used. Roberta introduced the room to the basics of *arpillera* making with an exciting hands-on experience, inspiring students for their own *arpillera* to be submitted as part of their module's assessment at the end of term." (Carolyn McDowell, level 2)