

Conflict Textiles Workshop at Slow Memory Conference in Porto

Held 4th July 2025 at ESAD-IDEA as the final conference workshop of the week.

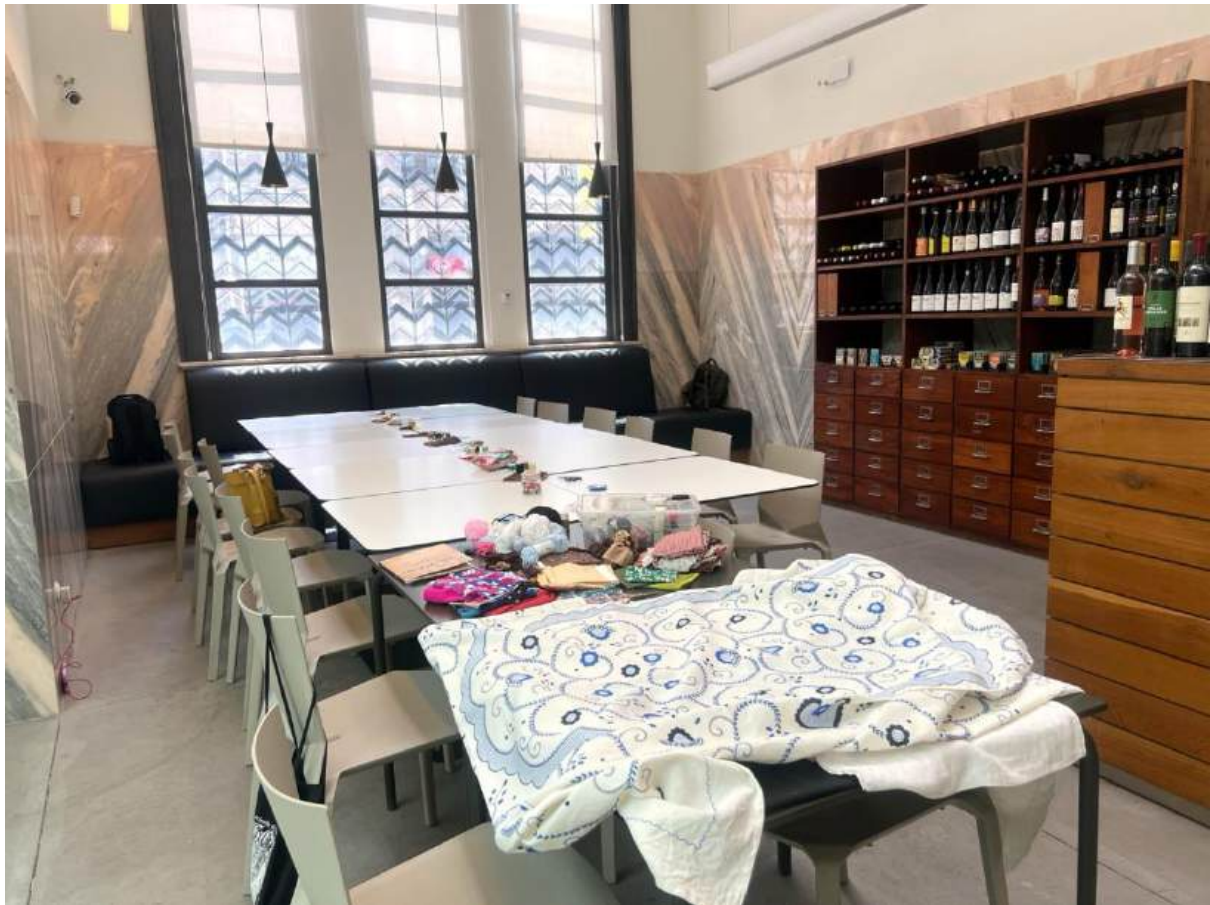
Organised by Alice Semedo and facilitated by Helen Maguire and Roberta Bacic

Photos and photo gallery by Helen Maguire, copyright Conflict Textiles.

This workshop followed a plenary session with Conflict Textiles curator Roberta Bacic, ***Textile Language at Slow Memory***. Participants were given the opportunity to see some arpilleras up close and in the flesh, which were then explained by Roberta.

In this workshop participants produced a collaborative textile artwork inspired by the Conflict Textiles collection. In the spirit of the arpilleristas, attendees each brought a personal small, meaningful piece of fabric to use for their doll. Each was asked to think of a person they knew or had heard or read about who faced conflict and struggled to continue despite it. Through this everyone took time to meditate on the role of textiles in processing of personal and collective traumas, and their lasting impact as a form of testimony without words.

The final textile artwork will be assembled and finished by students of ESAD, the school of design and art in Porto.



Workshop set up: Portuguese tablecloth in the foreground will be used as a backing for the arpillera dolls. This fabric was sourced second hand reflecting Conflict Textiles focus on careful, conscious, and environmentally friendly consumption.



Roberta shows and contextualises four arpilleras (clockwise from Roberta)

- 1) [Minhas memórias da ditadura / My memories of the dictatorship](#)
- 2) [Ausencias - Presencias 2 / Absences – Presences 2](#)
- 3) [Arpilleristas y cartoneros / Arpillerista women and cardboard collectors](#)
- 4) [Los árboles de la memoria / Trees of memory](#)



Participants make and dress their dolls, sharing tools and materials and helping each other in the process.



A preprepared example doll and scraps of tights ready to make another.



Group photograph of workshop participants and facilitators in the inner patio.



Workshop participant's final dolls, ready to be added to the backing.