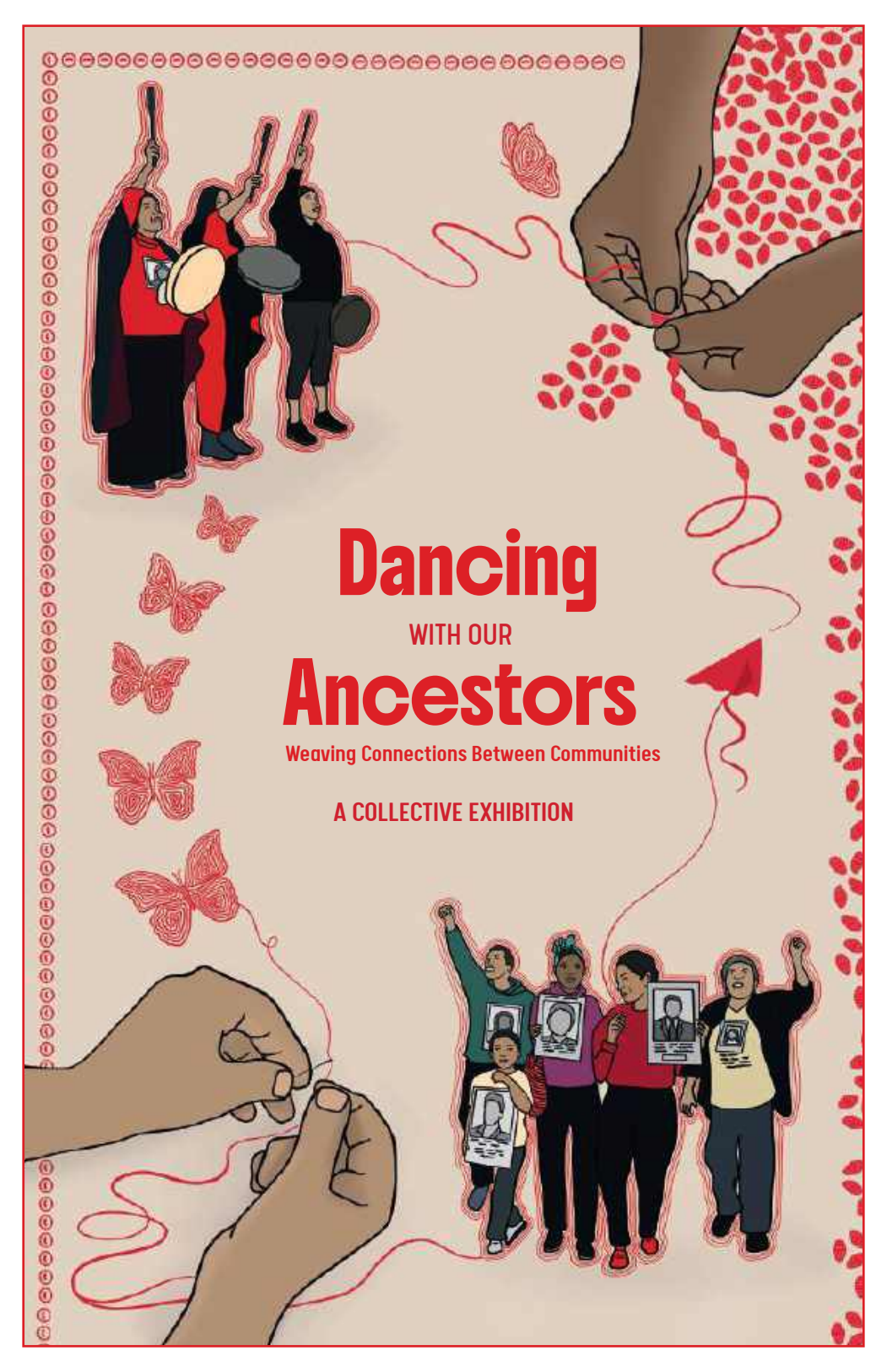




Dancing WITH OUR Ancestors

Weaving Connections Between Communities

A COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION



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Featured Creators

Alit Ambara [Indonesia]
Adriana Contreras [Turtle Island & Colombia]
Butterflies in Spirit [Turtle Island - Canada]
Conflict Textiles: Irene MacWilliam [Northern Ireland]
Erika Diettes [Colombia]
Guayacan's Crafts Group [Bojayá - Colombia]
Luz H Almendra Aranda & Violeta K Rozental Almendra [Misak - Colombia]
Morgan Asoyuf [Ts'msyen Eagle Clan from Ksyen River, BC - Canada]
Movement of Victims of State Crimes - MOVICE [Colombia]
Peter Morin [Tahltan Nation - Canada]
The Families of the Missing [Gulu, Uganda]
The Women's Advocacy Network - WAN [Gulu, Uganda]

Window Installation Creators

Adriana Contreras
Atheana Picha

Exhibition Coordinators

Alejandra Gaviria-Serna
David Ng

Curatorial Team

Alejandra Gaviria-Serna
David Ng
Francisco Gómez
Huuyath [Tabatha Frank]
Judith Colibri
Palexelsiya [Lorelei Williams]

Catalogue

Alejandro Medina [Design and Layout]
Adriana Contreras [Illustrations]

Special Thanks

Ben Siegl
Mary Point
Jada-Gabrielle Pape
Michael Behrmann

Transformative Memory International Network Co-Directors

Pilar Riaño-Alcalá
Erin Baines

Acknowledgments

This exhibition is the 2025 itinerancy of the Transformative Memory International Network's Travelling Exhibit, organized in collaboration with Butterflies in Spirit. Thank you to UBC Robson Square for hosting the exhibit, and to Decolonial Clothing, Butterflies in Spirit, Love Intersections, and the Union Cooperative Initiative for hosting the window installations. Thank you to the TMIN core team for their support: Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, Erin Baines and Nila Utami.

Thank you to the Canada Council for the Arts and the BC Arts Council for their support.



Vancouver Travelling Exhibit

Dancing with our Ancestors: Weaving Connections Between Communities

Dancing with our Ancestors is both a practice and a reflexive metaphor for the creative processes through which communities from different regions in the world engage in memory labour across two dimensions: as a means of reclaiming the knowledge, tools, and teachings of those who have come before, and as a way to rekindle these elements as vital resources in contemporary struggles for social justice and in reimagining and rebuilding our worlds in the wake of violence.

In this multi-site exhibit, *Butterflies in Spirit* and the Transformative Memory International Network stitch different, yet parallel experiences of denunciation, resistance, togetherness, searching for loved ones, and seeking the truth. To reflect upon the aftermath of settler colonialism and prolonged violence, while also illuminating the diverse ways artists and communities can weave spaces to dialogue, contest, and reimagine memory/futurities as a way of collective action.

Dancing with our Ancestors: Weaving Connections Between Communities is a transnational commitment to knit together and recognize the poetics of everyday memories that would otherwise be forgotten by dominant historical narratives. The pieces that comprise this exhibit are expressions of the numerous resourceful, embodied, and intimate ways in which memory, as a creative force, is articulated by people worldwide who have experienced systemic violence.

The exhibit also includes three window installations by local artists at Decolonial Clothing and *Butterflies in Spirit* (Chinatown), Union Cooperative Initiative (Chinatown), and UBC Robson Square.



Alit Ambara

(Indonesia)

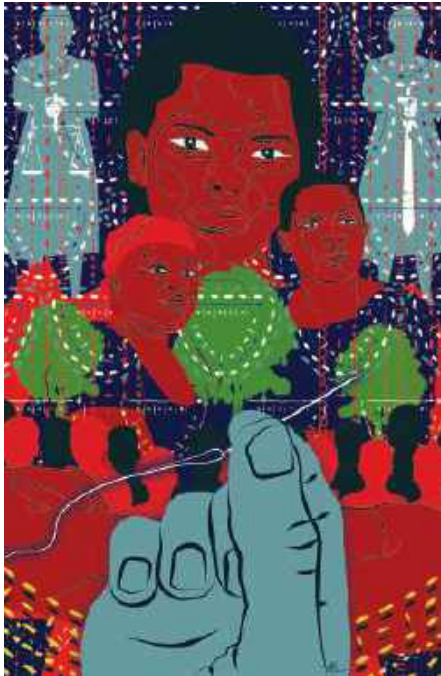


Alit Ambara is a poster artist and human rights activist from Indonesia. He currently holds the position of Creative Director for IndoProgress, an alternative media outlet focusing on sociopolitical issues and people's movements in Indonesia. As part of his human rights activism, Alit participated in various social organizations such as Jurnal Media Kerja Budaya, Fortilos (a solidarity group for East Timor), and the Institute for Indonesian Social History (ISSI). In 1993, shortly after completing his studies in the sculpture department of the Jakarta Art Institute, he established Nobodycorp, a graphic design studio. Nobodycorp can be viewed as a combination of Alit's experience as a human rights activist, his proficiency as an artist, and his sharpness in incorporating the spirit of social media.

Uganda Journal series

Digital Art
Uganda, 2019

A collection of posters from the Transformative Memory International Exchange in Northern Uganda (Gulu). The first poster traces the struggle for justice of women abducted as children by the non-state armed group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda (1986–2008). After the war, they formed a collective, the Women's Advocacy Network, to support one another through tailoring, beadmaking, and small business, and to advocate for reparation. The next poster reflects the experiences of loss and struggle of the Lukodi community in northern Uganda, who endured a large-scale massacre by the LRA on May 19th, 2004.



Thread of Justice
(Uganda Journal series)
Alit Ambara (Indonesia)
Digital Art, 2019.



Together
(Uganda Journal series)
Alit Ambara (Indonesia)
Digital Art, 2019.

Colombia Journal series

Digital Art
Colombia, 2020

A collection of posters from the Transformative Memory International Exchange in Colombia regarding the torture and mass murder of 12 campesinos from the Las Brisas community by paramilitaries on March 10, 2000. The second poster on “Verdad y Justicia” is inspired by the performances from youth at the School of Music Lucho Bermúdez in Carmen de Bolívar.



Las Brisas

(Colombia Journal series)
Alit Ambara (Indonesia)
Digital Art, 2020.



Verdad y Justicia

(Colombia Journal series)
Alit Ambara (Indonesia)
Digital Art, 2020.



Adriana Contreras

(Turtle Island & Colombia)



Adriana Contreras Correal is an Interdisciplinary Artist, Graphic Recorder, and Illustrator born in Bogotá, Colombia, living with respect and gratitude on unceded Coast Salish territories.

Artistic expression has always been a central part of Adriana's life but became an essential tool for navigating the world as a first-generation immigrant. Adriana completed her BFA at SFU School for the Contemporary Arts in 2006 and has worked and volunteered in numerous Arts and grassroots organizations for 20 years.

Adriana's Graphic Recording practice serves as a living memory of time shared in dialogue; it is a form of harvesting and mapping collective wisdom, stories, reflections, questions, and commitments to future action.



Dancing with our Ancestors

Large format digital drawing, vinyl print
Vancouver
2025

Dancing with Our Ancestors is a visual response to the collective vision at the heart of the exhibition. The digital drawing emerges as a versatile piece that can be exhibited in small and large formats. It honours cultural and artistic practices as powerful and necessary forms of resistance that have sustained us for generations. These ancestral technologies, gifts of all those who have come before us, help us connect to ourselves, one another, and our local and global communities in an unwavering commitment to justice, healing and liberation for all. We dance and create with our Ancestors to honour their legacies and reaffirm our commitments to future generations.

In Vancouver, the drawing will be part of a large-format vinyl print display on five windows at the exhibit space at UBC Robson Square. The image in this catalogue is a sketch of the display.



Butterflies in Spirit

(Turtle Island - Canada)

Butterflies in Spirit is a dance group made up of Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people who dance hip hop, contemporary and decolonial Indigenous dance for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+) and the disappeared in Turtle Island and around the world. The majority of the members of Butterflies in Spirit are survivors and family members of MMIWG2S+. The dancers, choreographers and musicians are Indigenous artists who work diligently and tirelessly through community advocacy, dance, music, and art to highlight the injustices Indigenous communities face daily. The performances consist of all original decolonial compositions specifically created to bring awareness of MMIWG2S+, empowering Indigenous women to stand up and speak their truth - that violence needs to end for women and girls around the world. Butterflies in Spirit has been invited to perform nationally and around the world, including collaborations in the United States, Mexico, and Colombia.





We Will Never Forget: Nunca Olvidaremos

Butterflies in Spirit - Lilian Rose Howard
Blanket of missing and murdered people from Canada
Photos displayed on fabric.
2022

This memory blanket, created by Lilian Rose Howard in collaboration with Lorelei Williams and Sayaka Morin-Williams, honours decades of advocacy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+) across Turtle Island. It embodies ancestral connections, healing, and remembrance.

Sewn on red fabric - a sacred color symbolizing Indigenous lifeblood and resistance - the blanket features images of the disappeared. Inspired by memorial traditions in Mexico and Colombia, where families honour their missing loved ones with pictures, candles, and artifacts, this living artwork bridges struggles across Turtle Island and Abya Yala. It evolves as a collective tribute, carried by Butterflies in Spirit at presentations and workshops to raise awareness and support healing.

The eagle in the centre serves as a spiritual messenger, connecting the physical and spiritual worlds. Dragonflies flank its sides, symbolizing transformation, while a butterfly above its head represents ancestral guidance and renewal. Rhombus patterns evoke family ties, protection, and interconnectedness. Crafted with handmade embroidery and tapestry, the blanket embodies both artistic and spiritual significance.

Lilian Rose Howard's Legacy

Lilian Rose Howard (1950–2021), of Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Tlingit ancestry, was a fierce advocate for Indigenous, social, and environmental justice. Her activism spanned Turtle Island and Latin America, supporting grassroots movements and Indigenous families.

Her deep ties to Abya Yala began in the 1980s when she met Mayan K'iche' leader and Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú during Guatemala's military dictatorship and genocide. They remained close throughout Menchú's exile in Mexico. In 2016, she traveled with Butterflies in Spirit to Colombia, meeting with Indigenous leaders from ONIC, the Nasa Nation, and Afro-Colombian communities, as well as mothers of the disappeared. In 2019, she participated in the Second Zapatista Women's Gathering in Chiapas, meeting several Comandantas. Through this living artwork, Lilian's legacy endures, connecting struggles across borders and amplifying the fight against gendered and colonial violence.



Conflict Textiles

(Northern Ireland)

The piece exhibited here is part of an international textiles collection that encompasses over 400 documented arpilleras, quilts and wall hangings, focused on elements of conflict and human rights abuses. Arpilleras (pronounced 'ar-pee-air-ahs') are at the core of the collection. These hand sewn appliquéd picture textiles, stitched onto a hessian/burlap backing, came to prominence during the Pinochet regime in Chile (1973-1990). With scraps of fabric, women came together to share and document their stories of the violence and repression of the dictatorship era.

The art of making arpilleras initially spread to neighbouring countries in central and southern America. Through exhibitions and workshops, the practice was later adopted in Argentina, Catalonia, Basque Country, the UK, Ireland, Germany, Zimbabwe and other countries. Since 2007, Roberta Bacic, collector and curator of the Conflict Textiles collection has curated over 200 international textile exhibition programmes. Several new textiles and partnerships have been seeded in the process. The use of textile language to stimulate ideas and experiences enable difficult conversations.

This has become a key element of Conflict Textiles, in tandem with deepening collaborations with an ever growing transnational network of arpilleristas, textile artists, curators, academics, researchers and followers who engage in our exhibitions and other programmes. Conflict Textiles physical collection is complemented by an online repository developed and hosted by CAIN at Ulster University (UU) making the collection globally accessible.



Disappeared

Irene MacWilliam
Wall hanging: A mixture of natural and synthetic fabrics - free machine stitched
Northern Ireland
2013.

Disappeared, photo Martin Melaugh
© Conflict Textiles.

Irene was invited by curator Roberta Bacic to create a piece for the exhibition *Retazos Testimoniales: Arpilleras de Chile y otras latitudes / Testimonial Scraps: Arpilleras from Chile and other parts of the world* at Park of Memory: Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism, Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2013. Outrage at the scale of forced disappearances during the seven-year military dictatorship led by Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla (1976–1983), seeded this textile. During this period, the number of people believed to have been killed or “disappeared,” depending on the source, range from 7,158 to 30,000.

Initially, Irene free machine stitched figures of people onto black fabric. These images were then cut through, leaving voids to represent their disappearance. Through the apertures, one can read on the red backing cloth words such as “fear,” “denied” and “disappeared”. The length of this piece is deliberate. It stands just over two metres tall, the height of the tallest man tortured to death by the Argentinean Junta, in front of comrades. Overall, this textile is a chilling reminder of the fate of the disappeared in Argentina, in Irene’s native Northern Ireland and on a global basis.

Erika Diettes
(Colombia)



Erika Diettes is a visual artist and social communicator from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, with a master's degree in Social Anthropology from Universidad de los Andes. Her work focuses on mourning and violence, mainly through collaborations with victims of Colombia's armed conflict.

Her artistic career began with *Silencios* (2005), inspired by testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors who sought refuge in Colombia. She later turned her attention to her country's sociopolitical reality, engaging in a continuous process of listening, research, and creation. This led to *Drifting Away* (2008), *Shrouds* (2011), and *Reliquaries* (2011-2016). Her work also includes the books *Silencios* (2005) and *Memento Mori* (2016).

Currently, she is developing *Oratorio*, a new project involving participants from Colombia, Argentina, and Uganda.

Río Abajo #2

Río Abajo / Drifting
Away Series
Erika Diettes
(Colombia)
Digital photography.
Prints on crystal.
25cm x 15cm
2007-2008



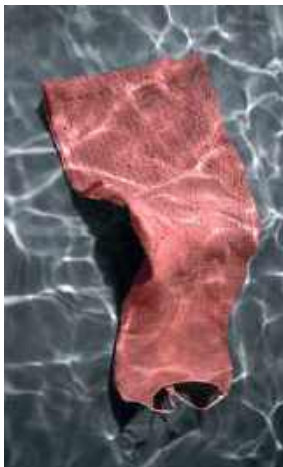
Río Abajo #25

Río Abajo / Drifting
Away Series
Erika Diettes
(Colombia)
Digital photography.
Prints on crystal.
25cm x 15cm
2007-2008



Río Abajo #4

Río Abajo / Drifting
Away Series
Erika Diettes
(Colombia)
Digital photography.
Prints on crystal.
25cm x 15cm
2007-2008



Río Abajo #75

Río Abajo / Drifting
Away Series
Erika Diettes
(Colombia)
Digital photography.
Prints on crystal.
25cm x 15cm
2007-2008



Río Abajo #19

Río Abajo / Drifting
Away Series
Erika Diettes
(Colombia)
Digital photography.
Prints on crystal.
25cm x 15cm
2007-2008



Río Abajo / Drifting Away Series

Digital photography. Prints on crystal.

Colombia

2008

Río Abajo (Drifting Away) (2008) is a photographic series of twenty-six pieces by Erika Diettes, created in response to the profound impact of the Colombian armed conflict. The war, which has shaped Colombia's political, economic, and social landscape, has left countless victims whose suffering extends beyond violence to an interrupted mourning process. Many victims' bodies were thrown into rivers, preventing their families from achieving closure, aligning with Jean Allouch's concept of "infinite mourning."

The project emerged from extensive research and fieldwork, during which Diettes traveled across Colombia, meeting with victims' families, and photographed garments and personal objects that were preserved for the families, as tangible memories of the disappeared. She then photographed these objects immersed in water, evoking serenity while simultaneously confronting viewers with the painful reality that "Colombia's rivers are the largest cemeteries in the world."

By omitting names and dates, the series transcends individual stories, allowing each piece to represent countless victims. Drifting Away thus becomes a symbol of dignity amidst tragedy. First exhibited in conflict-affected areas, the work provided victims' families with a space for recognition and reflection. Since then, it has been showcased in different world cultural spaces. Drifting Away serves as both a tribute and a call to remember those lost to violence.



Guayacan's Crafts Group

(Colombia)



Artesanías Guayacán [Guayacán Crafts Group] was formed 25 years ago with the support of a grassroots ecclesial community. This group of women from Bellavista, Bojayá, first gathered as a prayer group to support the community's pain and fears about the war. They became a collective of artisans who found an economic alternative in embroidery and baking in response to the blockades of trade routes by various armed groups and as a collective care strategy. *Guayacán*, refers to a tree from the Atrato region that is valued for its strong wood used for the construction of houses, a characteristic that the members of the group embody. Like the guayacán, they have had the strength to resist and sustain their communities through creative and spiritual work. Their work has included denouncing war acts, advocating for reparations, and constructing memory, working alongside other groups such as the *Cantadoras de Bojayá* [Bojayá's singers] and the *Comité por los Derechos de las Víctimas de Bojayá* [Committee for the Rights of the Victims of Bojayá].

The dead of Bojayá are our dead. Exhumation, identification, and dignified burial in Bojayá

From the Commemorative Tapestries series
Handmade embroidery and sewing tapestry
Chocó, Colombia
2023



Guayacán Crafts Group: Américo Chanapicama Dogirama, Arisleida Dogirama Mecha, Bernardina Vásquez, Cruzcelina Chalá Perea, Damiana Romaña, Elaine Perea Chalá, Heidy Palacios Conchave, Isabel González Arango, Luz Dary Conchave Dogirama, Luz Marina Cañola, Macaria Allín Chaverra, María Deicy Chanapicama Dogirama, María Hereiza Palomeque Palacio, María Luz Chanapicama Machuca, María Olivia Murillo, Mercedes Valbuena, Natalia Quiceno Toro, Noriz Perea Mosquera, Ramiro Chanapicana Machuca, Rosa de las Nieves Mosquera.

Support for the piece's production: Transformative Memory International Network, Pilar Riaño, University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada; Natalia Quiceno Toro and Isabel González Arango, Universidad de Antioquia (U of A), Colombia.

The tapestry was the result of weekly meetings between Afro and Indigenous members of Artesanías Guayacán of Bellavista between February and April 2023. The textile piece documents the long process of the community's struggle to search, exhume, identify, and bury the victims of the Bojayá massacre that occurred on May 2, 2002. The tapestry interweaves individual experiences and events that, for more than 17 years, traced the path of exhumation and final burial. The visual story is stitched and narrated by many hands and voices, which is read from right to left. The story began in 2002 with the hasty burial without rituals of loved ones in a mass grave after the massacre of Loma Rica, and ended in 2019 with the return of bodies to the families, and a collective wake and burial in Bellavista.

The tapestry is both a textile narrative and a testimonial archive of Bojayá's struggles for truth and justice. It is a living testimony of the struggle in Colombia in which, under the leadership of the Committee for the Rights of the Victims of Bojayá, the state and other institutions took responsibility to search, exhume and identify those who died in the massacre, and to do so according to ancestral mortuary practices.

Each of the events narrated in the textile highlights the community work of care: calling and inviting people from house to house, ancestral mortuary rituals, ceremonies with plants and songs, as well as places and times of meeting and waiting during the exhumations, such as the Bellavista bridge.



This is the audio of Rosa Mosquera where she describes the making of the tapestry (Spanish).



Song for the tapestry by Rosa Mosquera



Luz Helena Almendra Aranda & Violeta Kiwe Rozental Almendra

(Colombia)



Luz Helena Almendra Aranda

is a Misak woman from the Guambia Reservation in Silvia, Cauca, born in the Andean mountains of Colombian. Guided by her parents, she grew up embracing her culture through art and creativity. Her artistic path began at the Guambiana Agricultural Educational Institution and continued at the Academy of Art and Design, where she began designing garments that preserve Misak identity for those within and beyond the territory. She later founded Vestir Misak: Garments with Stories, working alongside Violeta to co-create the two dresses featured in this exhibition.



Violeta Kiwe Rozental Almendra,

10 years old, is a young artist and dancer of Nasa, Misak, Black, and Jewish heritage. She illustrates and narrates women's stories and is a member of "Butterflies in Spirit," raising awareness about violence against Indigenous women. Additionally, she studies ballet, salsa, swimming, and artistic gymnastics. Violeta sketched the initial designs that inspired the two dresses.

Little Colours Flying (Colorcitos Volando)

Luz Helena Almendra Aranda and Violeta Kiwe Rozental Almendra

Hand-embroidered textile with Misak symbolism and denunciation photos

(Misak - Colombia)

2025



Both pieces of the dress represent life and death. On one side, they express the strength and joy of the Misak ancestry, embodied in the *chumbes* and their ancestral symbolism. From childhood, the *chumbes* connect us to Mother Earth, keeping our culture alive. Their symbols speak of family and origin, most notably, the spiral, which represents birth and the return to the earth: life and death. Four harmony symbols appear, honoring the sacred number four in Misak tradition, and children are depicted along the edges. The color red symbolizes the pain of losing loved ones, while the white background signifies the purity of being Misak and the hope that arises from sorrow.

On the other side, the dresses also speak of denunciation and mourning. The faces of girls and women appear: Natalia Tuberquia [4], a campesino girl beheaded by paramilitaries in Antioquia; Julia Morales [16], a Misak girl sexually assaulted and murdered in Cauca; Cristina Bautista [30], a Nasa authority massacred by narco-paramilitaries in Cauca; Marielle Franco [39], a Black feminist and activist murdered in Brazil; and Hind Rajab Hamada [6], a Palestinian girl killed by the Israeli army in Gaza.

Each of them is a victim of the patriarchal system that persists across nations. Silenced in different places, they come to life through these dresses—delicate colors flying, demanding freedom, dignity, and a resounding NEVER AGAIN! for the women of the world.



Morgan Asoyuf

(Ts'msyen Eagle Clan from Ksyeeen River, BC - Canada)



Morgan Asoyuf (née Green) was born March 24, 1984 in Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Morgan is Ts'msyen Eagle Clan from Ksyeeen River (Prince Rupert area). Her Lineage is Lax Giik, XGiik, Gitando (people of the weir net), Githo'on (the salmon eaters). Her artistic career started at the Blanche Macdonald Centre Fashion Design Diploma in 2003, with an interest in painting Ts'msyen Designs.

She studies wood sculpture with Henry Green and Phil Gray and enjoys teaching the art form in varied settings. She is currently an auxiliary goldsmith instructor with Vancouver Community College as well as teaches art at the Kilala Lelum Native Health Centre on Vancouver Downtown Eastside. Morgan has stated that "[Art] is an intimate connection to our history, identity and our community. I am honoured to continue our traditions and to share them."



Cape of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+)

Morgan Asoyuf

Created as a gift to Butterflies in Spirit

Fabric garment

2019

This cape was designed by Ts'msyen multidisciplinary artist Morgan Asoyuf from the Lax Kw'alaams community in Prince Rupert. The red fabric has become a symbol that honours Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people [MMIWG2S+]. It was inspired by the 2010 art installation REDress Project by Métis artist Jaime Black. May 5th is Red Day Dress, which marks the National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S+. The hood incorporates Tsimshian forms and multiple portrayals of Mouse-woman, known as a spirit of a grandmother and protector of youth in Northwest coastal communities. The hands at the bottom of the cape represent the violence and silencing affecting Indigenous women, Girls and Two-Spirit people. Lillian Howard, a former elder who accompanied Butterflies in Spirit since its beginning and who passed away in October 2021, along with her daughter Chéleah and other members of Butterflies in Spirit, also contributed to the finishing touches by sewing the hands onto the cape. It was later gifted to Lorelei Williams, the group's director.

The cape was first worn for a portrait to be displayed at the exhibit "Royal Portrait," [Bill Reid Gallery, Vancouver]. It was part of a collection of decolonial carvings, jewelry, and portraits that honour powerful Indigenous matriarchs and Two-Spirit activists and leaders. In Ts'msyen culture, matriarchs hold a special high-ranking position, and in this exhibit, all pieces were contrasted with the western concept of royalty. The cape symbolizes a higher spiritual connection and is meant to offer physical and spiritual protection for the person wearing it.

Movement of Victims of State Crimes - MOVICE

(Colombia)



The Movement of Victims of State Crimes - MOVICE, is a process in which more than 200 organizations of victims of forced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, selective assassinations, torture, exile and forced displacement, as well as accompanying organizations and human rights defenders, converge. It has been in existence for more than 17 years and has a territorial presence in 14 regions of Colombia.

Movice works to: a) guarantee the rights to truth, justice, integral reparation and non-repetition of the victims of State crimes; b) in the public denunciation of the criminal and paramilitary strategies, methods and models developed by the State; c) in the demand for the dismantling of the structures of war, the demilitarization of civil life; and, in the development of humanitarian agreements that reduce the impact of the armed conflict on the population.

Our work encompasses social mobilization, public and aesthetic memory initiatives and political advocacy and oversight for the generation of legal measures to safeguard mass graves, illegal cemeteries, and memorial sites to advance the identification of victims of enforced disappearance and the preservation of historical memory. Production of policy briefs, public denunciations of human rights violations, exhaustive documentation, the creation and preservation of an archive on state crimes, "Colombia Never Again," and report writing. Our work has made visible the crimes of the State and the systematic impunity that operates and advances the recognition of the rights of the victims of State crimes.

In this sense, Movice is an initiative that plays a central role in the ongoing debate regarding Colombia's transitional justice system, the rights of truth and Memory, as well as the negotiated resolution of armed conflicts and the pursuit of peace from the perspective of victims' rights.

Concocting the life to weave peace

Movement of Victims of State Crimes - MOVICE (Bogotá Chapter)

Handmade bead portraits

Bogotá - Colombia

2024

Designer and project coordinator: Mateo Perea Bernal

Creators: Jenny Alejandra Romero González, Luz Marina Hache Contreras, Pilar Navarrete Urrea, Rosalba Campos Guevara, Teresa SanJuan Arevalo.

These pieces are the result of a collective learning process in bead weaving with Bogotá Chapter members of the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), which began in 2023 under the leadership of Mateo Perea Bernal. In these workshops, weaving becomes a social space for encounters and exchange of experiences, as well as an individual and collective space for redefining the memory of their loved ones through the creation of an artistic piece.

The portraits of state crime victims become pieces of great personal, symbolic and political value that are mobile and can be carried and worn by the families in their struggle to demand truth and memory. The families hang these pieces from their bodies in different ways: they weave them into shirts, they make a necklace-like cord that allows them to hang around their necks, and when the piece is not yet finished, they carry it on their loom.



Portrait of Alirio de Jesús Pedraza

Jenny Alejandra Romero González

Handmade bead portrait

Bogotá-Colombia

2024

Alirio was a human rights lawyer and member of the Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners who were forcibly disappeared in Bogotá on July 4, 1990. He worked tirelessly for the rights of vulnerable communities, prisoners, and peasants. He was a member of the working commission that sought to classify the crime of forced disappearance for the first time in Colombia. His path of resistance remains present in the memory of all the social and human rights organizations that walked alongside him and of all of us who welcomed his tireless struggle with love and hope. This portrait is a tribute to him and his legacy for the defence of human rights.



Portrait of Eduardo Loffsnér Torres

Luz Marina Hache Contreras
Handmade bead portrait
Bogotá-Colombia
2024

"My name is Eduardo Loffsnér Torres. I was born in Bogotá on May 9, 1955. From a very young age, I was aware of social conflicts and convinced myself that my place was on the side of the workers, the dispossessed, and the excluded in this country. I decided to be a word tied to action and discovered a powerful weapon: that together we are stronger, that united voices generate more echo, and that in a pack we spread faster and more confidently."

"I am a politician who defends and loves life and the lives of all people. I walk hand in hand with my people. They are humble, good, hardworking, and, like me, happy and dreamy. I love my partner, my children, my family, and many others. I love my land and its flavours. I love reading so much that I live there. I love good cinema, as well as social and popular music. I love causes, ideals, and actions. I love building new worlds, and I do it with such commitment and passion that one day I became a threat to those who didn't want to see the transformation."

Eduardo was forcibly disappeared on November 20, 1986, in Bogotá. He has never been forgotten: he returns to memory through words, books and stories, the aroma of coffee, his love for simplicity, the color blue, an echo that never ceases because even today we are still waiting.



Portrait of Héctor Jaime Beltrán Fuentes (Yimmy)

Pilar Navarrete Urrea
Handmade bead portrait
Bogotá-Colombia
2024

Yimmy was 28 years old at the time of his disappearance. He was a waiter at the Palace of Justice cafeteria, the father of four daughters and the husband of Pilar Navarrete. He was forcibly disappeared during the takeover of the palace by the M-19 guerrilla group, and the military operations to retake it by state forces on November 6 and 7, 1985. His wife searched for him for 31 years, and some parts of his body were found in the city of Barranquilla. The Colombian State was convicted of the enforced disappearance of Jimmy and eleven other people during the events at the Palace of Justice. "The bead loom with my husband's face is the way I always carry his smile and his eyes with me. They look so alive, and his memory is always with me." Pilar Navarrete Urrea



Portrait of Gustavo Campos Guevara

Rosalba Campos Guevara
Handmade bead portrait
Bogotá-Colombia
2024

Gustavo Campos Guevara was forcibly disappeared on August 23, 1982, as he was leaving his home for the National University, where he was studying systems engineering. Gustavo is part of collective case 82, which involves 13 young people who disappeared during 1982. Eight of these young people were students at the National University, one was a student at the District University, one was a recent high school graduate, three were farmers, and one was a union member. Gustavo was a young man full of dreams, very cheerful, and always playing, whether with his sisters or friends. He enjoyed reading and dancing, and he attended every gathering to which he was invited, accompanied by his sisters. He worked, studied, played sports, helped my mother with household chores, and assisted my father with the home improvements he needed. He was an excellent son, brother, and friend. He was a poet who left us with beautiful poems, in which he expressed the pain he felt at witnessing the widespread injustice and exploitation of the people. He was committed to his community and, along with the Claretian religious, formed a group called Kigueyanta, where they engaged in social work in the neighborhoods.

"We love you, Gustavo, and for that love and the pain that remains in our lives, we continue to fight for truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition. Gustavo Campos Guevara lives in each one of us."



Portrait of Alfredo Rafael Sanjuan Arevalo

Teresa SanJuan Arevalo
Handmade bead portrait
Bogotá-Colombia
2024

"Alfredo was forcibly disappeared on March 8, 1982 along with his brother Humberto. Our beloved Alfredivito was an architecture student at the National University and a cadastral engineering student at the District University. He was born in Ocaña, Colombia, and was the third son of Alfredo Sanjuan and Elcida Arevalo. From a young age, he stood out as an athlete and an excellent student. He attended high school in Ocaña and then moved to Bogotá to continue his university studies. He was peaceful, caring, and sought to resolve conflicts with respect and sound principles. He always helped those who needed it most. It's been 43 years since his disappearance, and we will never stop searching for him. The deepest wound is not knowing the last day we said goodbye without a hug; it was the last day we would see him."



**Portrait of Samuel Humberto
Sanjuan Arevalo**

Teresa SanJuan Arevalo
Handmade bead portrait
Bogotá-Colombia
2024

"Samuel Humberto was forcibly disappeared on March 8, 1982, along with his brother Alfredo. Humberto was the youngest of eight siblings in a home filled with love, smiles, and values. From a young age, he stood out for his cheerful spirit, his passion for sports, and his warmth. He was a studious young man, a tireless reader, and committed to his dreams. He studied Anthropology at the National University of Colombia, a program that reflected his deep interest in understanding human beings. At 22 years old, on March 8, 1982, he left to pursue a document and never returned. Since then, his absence has been a constant pain. Today, 43 years later, we continue to search for him and love him, as if time had stood still."

"For me, weaving the faces of my brothers, Alfredo and Humberto, with beads was more than an artistic or manual act; it was an intimate encounter with their essence. As I placed each tiny bead, I felt their memory become present: their life-filled gaze, their unique gestures, that smile that lit up everything around them, and the tenderness that always surrounded them. It was as if my hands, guided by love and memory, could bring them back for an instant, reshaping them with each thread, every color, and every detail. Weaving them was, ultimately, a way to embrace them once again."



Peter Morin

(Tahltan Nation/French-Canadian)



Peter Morin is a grandson of Tahltan Ancestor Artists. Morin's artistic offerings can be organized around four themes: articulating Land/Knowing, articulating Indigenous Grief/Loss, articulating Community Knowing, and understanding the Creative Agency/Power of the Indigenous body. The work takes place in galleries, in community, in collaboration, and on the land. All of the work is informed by dreams, Ancestors, Family members, and Performance Art as a Research Methodology. Morin began art school in 1997, completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver in 2001 and his Masters in Fine Arts in 2010 at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan. Peter is the son of Janelle Creyke (Crow Clan, Tahltan Nation) and Pierre Morin (French-Canadian). Throughout his exhibition and making history, Morin has focused upon his matrilineal inheritances in homage to the matriarchal structuring of the Tahltan Nation, and prioritizes Cross-Ancestral collaborations. Peter Morin currently holds a tenured appointment in the Faculty of Arts at the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto, and is the Graduate Program Director of the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design program at OCADU.

Surrounded by Cedar Song

Performance in Bucoro-Uganda's video recording
Peter Morin
2019

Written and composed by Chief William Wasden. Commissioned by Sabrina Williams and Peter Morin for the children and youth in the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD)'s care as a way for them to express their belonging.

This song was performed by Peter Morin in Burcoro, Uganda, during the first International Exchange of the Transformative Memory Network in 2019.

Poet and professor Julianne Okot Bitek reflects on memory practices that transcend: "I was part of the group that visited Burcoro, where the community shared stories of two massacres that took place on their land. During the visit, Peter Morin offered to sing two songs. As he did not have his drums with him, he asked that we clap along with him, and he provided the rhythm for us to follow. After he sang, a man stood up, evidently moved by Peter's song, and asked if people remembered that Acholi used to have a similar kind of song. He then sang a song from memory, clapping along, as Peter had just done."



The Families of the Missing

(Gulu - Uganda)



The Families of the Missing is a community-based association of relatives who continue to search and advocate for the right to know what happened to their missing loved ones following the war in northern Uganda (1986–2008). During this time, 54,000 to 75,000 persons were abducted by the armed group, the Lord's Resistance Army, including 25,000 to 38,000 children. The whereabouts of upwards of 10,000 people are still unknown.

These letters, belongings, and photographs of missing loved ones were created by the Families of the Missing in collaboration with Colombian artist Erika Diettes, and Dorcus Atieno, Alice Lakwech and Fatuma Abiya of the Justice and Reconciliation Project in Uganda. The balls, sling shots and otacs were made by the families to represent the belongings of the missing. The objects, photos, and letters were entrusted to the TMIN by the families of the missing to become part of future exhibits.

Kacel pi Nippo | Together in Memory

Belongings, photographs and relatives' handwritten letters to loved ones
Families of the Missing
Gulu - Uganda
2022

Creators: The Families of the Missing in Uganda. Aciro Regina Yusuf, Ayoo Hellen (RIP), Atto Sarafina Lagada, Atimango Jane, Anek Polline Okumu, Oryem David, Aciro Grace, Arach Madelena, Lawmaka Vicky, and Lakot Evelyn.

Project Coordinator and Facilitator: Docus Atyeno, with the assistance of Lakwech Alice and Abiya Fatuma.

Photographs: Sofya Babak

This project was inspired by artist Erika Diettes' and had her advice and support.

Between the 30th of August and the 1st of September 2022 in Gulu City, Northern Uganda, ten family members of missing persons in Northern Uganda met to exchange stories, write letters and share the belongings of their loved ones, including young children, who disappeared during the war with the Lord's Resistance Army. Families and friends still mourn and suffer due to the absence of their people.

This workshop was organized with the intention to:

- Strengthen the bonds of solidarity among family members, build trust and allow the participants to reflect on the issue of resilience and coping, and a way to prevent silence, fear, and grief from taking over the lives of missing person's relatives.
- Give a platform to participants to share their stories, the impacts of war and its consequences on the community's mental health while acknowledging the effects of violence on personal life, family and community.
- Enable family members to communicate with the missing by summoning their absence-presence and honoring their memories or telling what happened in their families in their absent years through letter writing and objects of memory from each family.



Memories of Oweka Richard, abducted at the age of 9 by the Lord's Resistance Army in Kitgum, Uganda.

A photograph, a ball made of banana leaves, a hoop and stick for children's games.

Acirco Grace, Mother to Oweka Richard
Gulu, Uganda
2022

"I was with my child in the house the evening he was abducted by rebels. My little son's friend came and told us that there was a rumour going on that the rebels were on their way to our village. Before we could finish eating, we saw the rebels all over on my compound. They entered our house and forced me to kneel on the embers of the fire I had used to prepare food for dinner. Both my knees and leg were burnt. I cried bitterly like a child and screamed loudly for help after the rebels left and one of my neighbours who was hiding in the bush came. It was that same evening that my son, Oweka, was taken from me. I realised that my son was gone while I was still in the hospital. People reassured me that my son would come back. I waited, and I am still waiting.

My son used to play with that type of ball as well as playing a game called Lawala. Lawala was a very famous game among young boys in the past. They would use a round ring like object with a spear made from sticks."

Memories of Odongpiny Phillip, abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army as a child.

A Bible in Luo-Acholi, a rosary, ground nuts, some photographs.
Lamwaka Vicky, mother to Odong
Gulu, Uganda
2022



"I started to understand the meaning of war when I lost my husband. There was a coup d'état in March, and my husband was shot in August. That night the soldiers came to our house. They spoke in Kiswahili, a language that I did not understand though I understood the fact they were telling us to open the door and get out. My husband kept telling me "Don't go out." He moved to the door to try and protect me, and it was from there he was shot and died. The soldiers forced their way into the hut and demanded I give them all the money my husband had made from his business he was well known for. I did as I was told in fear. Even after that, they still went ahead and fired more bullets at my husband, thinking that he was still alive. I was confused. I just stood there helplessly and the shooting continued, so I decided to run away. It was at this time when I met a certain boy who noticed that I was bleeding. I had been shot, and I didn't even feel it at that moment till the boy told me.

Soon after the death of my husband, I realised that I was pregnant. I gave birth to a baby boy and named him Odongpiny. He reminded me a lot of his father; I loved my son so much and we were happy even though there was a war going on. One day during the month of August, I asked my daughter to help me go harvest groundnuts, but she refused and Odongpiny my son offered to go to the garden for me. He went for the first time and came back with some groundnuts and successfully then went back to collect more, little did we know that the rebels had seen him and were just waiting for him."



Memories of Rose Ayubu, abducted at a young age by the Lord's Resistance Army.

A dress, three photos, an otac (device to carry water from a well), and a handwritten letter. Atto Sawafina Hagadal, elder sister to Rose Ayubu. Gulu, Uganda 2022

"When the war started, I was one of the village leaders and that was a very bad thing for me because leaders were one of the main targets of the rebels. They looked for me and my family continuously. They would ask people about us all the time and because of fear, we were always in the bush hiding together with my children. We kept on hiding to the extent that we left home and shifted to a lonely place called Lapyem where we started our lives, but one day the government soldiers came and found us in our new place, and they brought us back home where the other people were. No sooner had we settled than the rebels came one night and set the hut in which we were sleeping on fire the hut with the intention to kill us all. Fortunately, we forced our way out of the burning hut. We then left our home village and went around the Atoo Mountain till we reached our eldest daughter's place in Pagaye to seek refuge. Some of my children separated from me and went to Gulu town for safety. This really broke me down that I tried to commit suicide while I was at my eldest daughter's place.

My mother died shortly after this and left us with a young sister to look after. One of my brothers who was a soldier requested to take my little sister to stay with our aunt who was barren, and I accepted without consulting my other sisters, thinking that she would be in a safer place. Unfortunately, the child was abducted from my aunt's place and never came back. This caused so much hate between my sisters and me. They claimed that I wanted the child to be abducted and to date, we are not friends at all. Now that you people have come back again, I will call them so that you can talk to them and renew our relationship."



The Women's Advocacy Network - WAN

(Gulu - Uganda)



"We tell our stories so that our children will know what we went through, and so that they will tell their children."

The Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) is an association of women working for a better future after more than two decades of war in northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda (1986-2008). The members were abducted as school girls and forced into marriages with rebel commanders with whom they bore children. Some of them were only 12 years old when we were abducted, and were held in captivity for more than ten years. When they finally returned home, they faced new challenges of how to live together again with our families and communities harmed by the rebels during the war.

WAN initially was formed in 2008 as a support group. The women learned to sew clothing and bags and to make paper beads, fashioning them into necklaces and bracelets to make a living. They helped each other tend gardens and sell produce at the market so they could send our children to school. They looked after each other: when one woman needed something, the rest came to help. They began to share their stories with each other in a project named Ododo Wa (Our stories).

Together with women from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Mali, WAN advocates for reparations and apologies from their governments, and to change international policies so they recognize our experiences, and that of our children. They tell stories as survivors of conflict-related sexual violence so that others will know exactly what happened during the war.



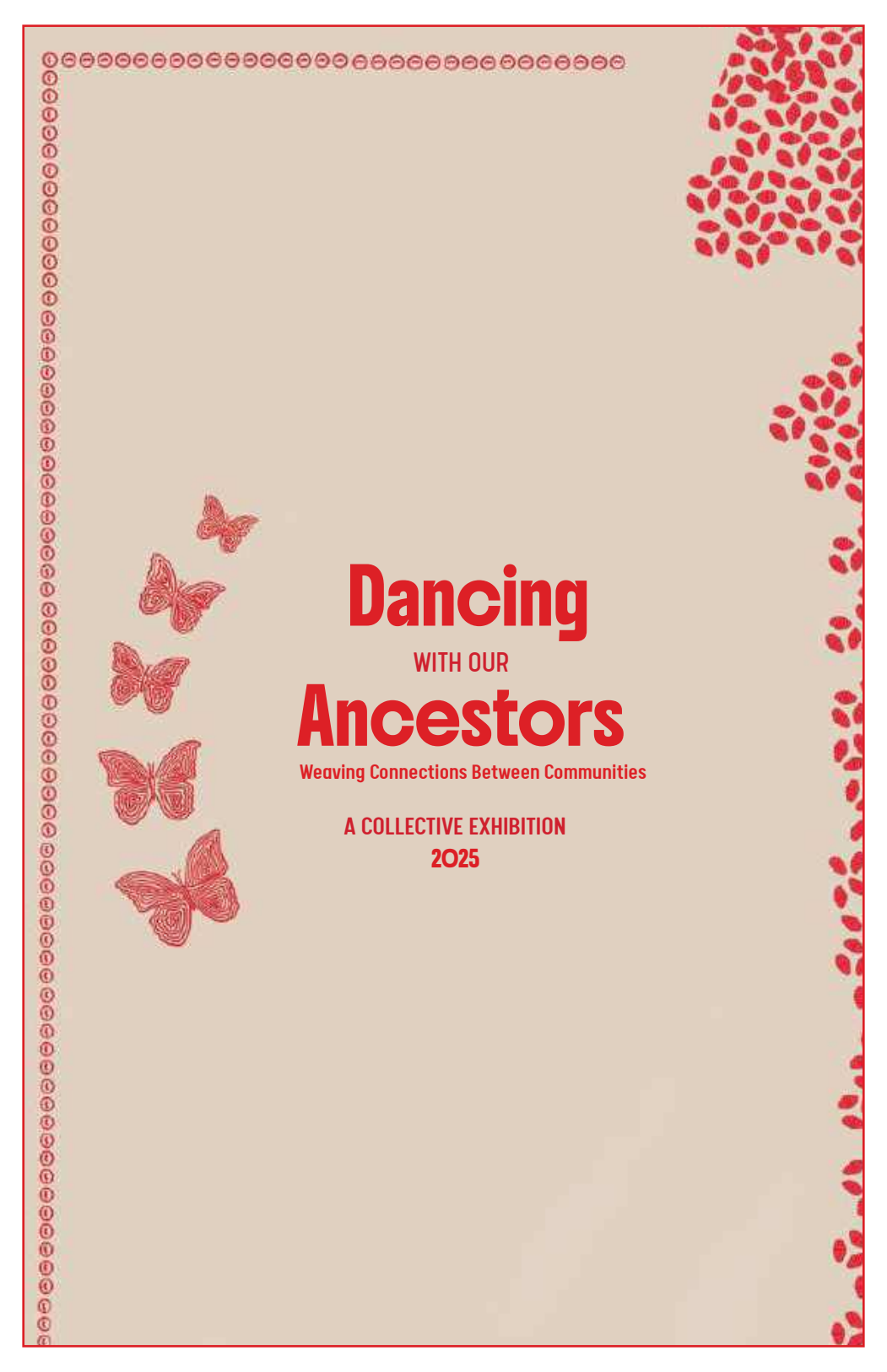
Beading Memory

Handmade bead tapestry
6x8 feet
Gulu, Uganda
2022

Artists: Alimu Janet, Acayo Prossy, Atoo Betty Monica, Modo Florence, Adong Alice, Akongo Nighty, Ajok Pauline, Atek Lilly, Ayoo Florence, Piloya Margaret and Amony Evelyn of the Women's Advocacy Network

Support for the piece's production: Transformative Memory International Network, Erin Baines (UBC) and Juliane Okot Bitek (Queen's University), Moses Komakec and the Youth Advocacy Network (YAN).

The tapestry tells a story of collective memories from members of the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) of the war in northern Uganda (1986–2008). The project follows their journey and experience of being abducted as children by the the Lord's Resistance Army, where they were forced to fight in the war, marry commanders, and bear their children. The tapestry is composed of handmade beads, each cut from long strips of paper, and rolled tightly into different shapes, sizes and colors. They worked collectively to wash, varnish and dry the beads, and then hand-stitched each bead to the tapestry. Sewing this bead piece took a lot of dedication, hard work, technique and concentration. It evoked strong feelings and emotions, but it also fostered unity.



Dancing WITH OUR Ancestors

Weaving Connections Between Communities

A COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION
2025