Queremos Democracia / We want democracy
Chilean arpillera, Anonymous, 1988
Conflict Textiles collection

This arpillera, made in a “Vicaría de la Solidaridad” community workshop, depicts people’s power.

The women here portrayed promote and insist on their rights to a peaceful, non-violent society. The bright colours of the houses and the women’s clothes convey hope; however, the presence of the police car reminds us that overcoming the barriers to poverty and demand peace are not easy; even peaceful demonstrators are under threat.

This arpillera made in 1988’s plebiscite was held to determine if Pinochet’s leadership would continue for another 8 years. Following a 56% NO vote, Pinochet had no option but to step down.

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Digital Death

Republic of Irelandarpillera, Deborah Stockdale, 2014
Conflict Textiles collection

In this arpillera, Deborah Stockdale, who “feel[s] strongly that drone warfare … is soul destroying” graphically depicts the chilling reality of it. She presents an image of drone operators, in a control room monitoring the drone flight, seemingly desensitized to the carnage they wreak in a country unknown to them, side by side with areas devastated by their actions. For Deborah, the image of a child’s face “is symbolic of all the innocent civilians killed by mistake in drone strikes.”

In the process of creating this arpillera, Deborah drew inspiration from the work of an artist collective in the Pukhtoonkhwa region of Pakistan, an area which has suffered high civilian drone casualties, 200 of whom were children.

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Violar es un crimen / Rape is a crime

Peruvianarpillera, MH, Mujeres Creativas workshop, 2008

Conflict Textiles collection

This arpillera depicts a protest by five courageous Lima women. They denounce the rape and forced resettlement of Ayacucho village women during the civil war in Peru from 1980 to 2000.

During this violent period, over 600,000 people were displaced as a result of the armed conflict between the government, self defence groups and insurgent forces of the Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Resistance Movement.

A report by the International Centre for Transitional Justice (2013) states that 2,591 women were registered by the National Reparations Council (NRC) as victims of rape and sexually violent incidents, perpetrated during the civil war.

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Delincuencia debido a pobreza / Stealing as a Consequence of Poverty
Chilean arpillera, anonymous, 1977
Conflict Textiles collection

In this arpillera we follow the Poverty to Prison pipeline in four acts read left to right, top to bottom: (1) young people are unable to find employment at the factory, (2) They return home to their unhappy parents and there is no food on the table, (3) The young man becomes a thief to provide for his family, (4) The young man is imprisoned.

The severe financial hardship left families unable to afford basic necessities, such as food, water, and electricity. It's unsurprising that under these conditions some people, such as the young man depicted here, felt they had no choice but to risk their freedom and resort to crime.

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Y tejimos redes durante covid / And we wove nets during covid times

Argentinean arpillera, Ana Zlatkes, 2021
Conflict Textiles Collection

This arpillera is Ana's reflection on ongoing weekly workshops she facilitates in a Museum in Buenos Aires, Argentina. These workshops "Hilvanando Historias / Stitching Histories" which began in 2019 are "a meeting and learning place for all those who [take] part ...".

In 2019/2020, similar to so many group based activities, these Friday afternoon workshops moved online during the Covid 19 pandemic. These virtual workshops sustained the connections, held the space and allowed participants to continue sharing, building and weaving their stories via textile.

Reflecting on her rationale for making this arpillera, Ana explains "I made [it] because I felt and feel that, in such a difficult moment for all, we were able to "weave nets" and continue looking forward".

CONFLICT TEXTILES