

CONFLICT TEXTILES

Arpillera Voices and Echoes / Voces y ecos arpilleros

Report on exhibition launch and associated events

Introduction

Local schools, community groups, textile artists and interested individuals came together at the Verbal Arts Centre on Friday 14th October to take part in a series of activities framed around the launch of this exhibition, curated by Roberta Bacic.

Reading Rooms 10th - 14th October 2016

As Chilean literature was a major reference point in the preparation of the exhibition, and the work of Gabriela Mistral in particular, many of the Verbal Arts Centre's Reading Rooms across Northern Ireland had a little taster of Mistral's poetry throughout the week so that they could experience this powerful poetry.

On the morning of the launch, Children from Oakgrove Primary School came to visit the exhibition and to hear "Mia's Story" by Michel Foreman, about a young girl called Mia from Santiago, Chile who lived in a small village at the foot of the Andes mountains. The children learnt about the hardships and the resourcefulness of the families who live there. The session finished with a poem by the great Gabriela Mistral translated as "Little Feet". Sinead Devine, Reading Rooms Officer led the session, tying together the poem with the story, helping to create relevance for the children in their lives today.



Children from Oakgrove Primary School listening intently to "Mia's story" read by Sinead Devine, Reading Rooms Officer. (Photo: Rory McCarron)

Arpillera Doll Making Workshop

The children then worked with Textile Artist Deborah Stockdale to make beautiful arpillera doll figures. At the end of the workshop their dolls were mounted on hessian and hung as part of the exhibition, prior to the launch.



Children creating their arpillera doll figures under the guidance of Textile Artist, Deborah Stockdale, assisted by their teachers. (Photo: Rory McCarron)

Launch

Brief addresses were given by a number of speakers:

- Sinead Devine, Verbal Arts Centre Reading Rooms Project Officer-Older People
- Cristián León, Cultural Attaché of the Chilean Embassy in London
- Lady Ballyedmond, Honorary Consul of Chile
- Alderman Hilary McClintock, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Nico Ferguson, a recent graduate from the School of History and Humanities Trinity College, University of Dublin, who completed her dissertation on the impact and legacy of arpilleras
- Music by Victor Henríquez

Verbal School of Journalism

After the launch, young people from the Verbal School of Journalism had the opportunity to interview some of the guest speakers including Cristián León, a former journalist by profession and currently Cultural Attaché of the Chilean Embassy (London).



Students from the Verbal School of Journalism following their interview with Mr. Cristián León (centre), Cultural Attaché of the Chilean Embassy in London. (Photo: Rory McCarron)

Compiled by Breege Doherty and Sinead Devine
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