

CANOLFAN Y CELFYDDYDAU ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

Press Release
Datganiad i'r Wasg

Stitched Voices

Lleisiau wedi eu Pwytho

Gallery 1, Aberystwyth Arts Centre

25 March – 13 May 2017

Saturday 25 March, 6pm: Exhibition launch



Image: Cacerolazo / Women banging their pots, Photo Martin Melaugh, Courtesy Oshima Hakko Museum

© Conflict Textiles collection

Crafted, powerful, vocal – *Stitched Voices*, launching on 25 March, is a new and exclusive exhibition of conflict and protest textiles at Aberystwyth Arts Centre in partnership with Conflict Textiles and the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University. Resistance against injustice and oppression, and remembrance of the dead and disappeared in violent conflicts and dictatorships, are the main themes of the *arpilleras* (three-dimensional textiles), embroidered handkerchiefs and sewn protest banners shown in Gallery 1. Crafted in different parts of the world, the collection includes protest and solidarity banners from Wales, *arpilleras* against torture and dictatorship from Chile, embroidered handkerchiefs remembering the dead and disappeared in Mexico’s current situation of violence and impunity, and textile engagements with the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland.

The curator of *Stitched Voices*, Roberta Bacic, a lecturer, researcher and human rights advocate, says:

*“Using painstaking textile language in arpilleras and quilts, **Stitched Voices** of testimony, resistance, memory and resilience converge in this exhibition to bear witness of conflicts and human rights’ abuses in different parts of the world.”*

Welsh voices of activism and solidarity are represented in the form of protest banners against Apartheid in South Africa, made by the Aberystwyth Anti-Apartheid Group in the 1980s, and against technology in contemporary warfare, sewn by peace activists Thalia and Ian Campbell. The wall hanging “Continuum” by Eileen Harrisson, a PhD student at Aberystwyth’s School of Art, deals with personal and family experiences during the ‘Troubles’ in Belfast and in connection to the two World Wars.

The exhibition is commissioned by a team of researchers at the Department of International Politics, who want to promote crafts as archives of often-marginalized voices. Dr Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, a Reader in Peacebuilding, comments:

*“In academia, there is little space for textiles or crafts. It’s all about written text, documents, reports. Yet seeing **Stitched Voices**, you cannot but realise the power of marginalised voices. These textiles and the stories they tell help us understand politics as everyday experience.”*

The colourful and expressive exhibition of conflict and protest textiles is accompanied by an events programme that includes textile workshops, solidarity embroidering, lectures, roundtable discussions, and music and poetry sessions. The Wales One World film festival, starting on 24 March, has dedicated one stream of films – ‘Voices of Resistance’ – to issues raised in the textiles. A related exhibition, “Footprints of Memory”, takes place at Arthouse/Ty Celf Aberystwyth from 3–8 April.

Below is the schedule of events taking place under the banner of *Stitched Voices*.

24/03/2017, 5.45pm, Arts Centre cinema: Film “The Colours of the Mountain”; start of Wales One World Film Festival “Voices of Resistance” strand.

Programme: www.wowfilmfestival.com/en/nearby/aberystwyth

25/03/2017, Arts Centre, Gallery 1: 11am-1pm: Free workshop “Making an arpillera doll”;
6-8pm: EXHIBITION LAUNCH with Chilean music

Most Fridays (please check online for updates), Arts Centre, outside or Gallery 1 (weather-dependent): “Embroidering for Peace” – solidarity stitching for the Mexican disappeared & victims of violence

Every Saturday, 11:30-12:30, Arts Centre, Gallery 1: Free guided tour of “Stitched Voices” exhibition

03 – 08/04/2017, Arthouse/Ty Celf, Aberystwyth: Exhibition “Footprints of Memory”

07 – 08/04/2017, International Politics Department: Symposium “Absence, Presence, and Embodiment”. For details see Performance and Politics international: www.aber.ac.uk/en/ppi

10/04/2017, 7:15pm Arts Centre, Gallery 1: Frankie Armstrong with Bright Field, acapella concert “The Voice of All Things”

13/04/2017, 1:30-3:30pm, Arts Centre, Gallery 1: Free children’s workshop “Making Easter dolls”

20/04/2017, 8pm, Arts Centre, Gallery 1: “Whatever You Say, Say Something: Creative responses to the Ulster ‘Troubles’”, with Damian Gorman and Eileen Harrisson

02/05/2017, 6-7.30pm, International Politics, Main Hall: Lecture “Human Rights, Human Remains”, Dr Claire Moon (London School of Economics)

05/05/2017, 2.30-4.30pm, Arts Centre, Gallery 1: Free workshop “Sewing a protest banner”
5-6.30pm, International Politics, Main Hall: Roundtable “Stitched Voices: Women’s Activism and Crafting Resistance”

12/05/2017, 10am-4pm, International Politics, Main Hall: Research workshop “Unacknowledged Voices: Arts and Crafts as Political Knowledge Archives”. Please register with: beb14@aber.ac.uk

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Some of the makers as well as the curator will be present at different point during the exhibition and will be available for interviews.

Further information and images are available from Aberystwyth Arts Centre,

Jen Loffman: Tel: 01970 628587 Email: jel24@aber.ac.uk

International Politics Department contact: Dr Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (beb14@aber.ac.uk)

For more information see also the Conflict Textiles website: <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/search-quilts/fullevent/?id=157>"

Stitched Voices is an initiative of Conflict Textiles and the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University, in collaboration with Aberystwyth Arts Centre.