

## **Press Release**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

### **'Events of the Year Quilts and Testimonies of Survival' Exhibition at the Tower Museum**

'Events of the Year Quilts and Testimonies of Survival', an exhibition by Irene MacWilliam will be opened by Mayor Alderman Maurice Devenney on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2012, at the Tower Museum, Derry-Londonderry.

Irene MacWilliam, a well known Northern Ireland artist, will display her Year Quilts spanning over the last 26 years in which she has used her quilting skills to portray her concerns about natural and human disasters in a given year. Guest textile specialist Anne Montgomery will speak at the opening about Irene's prolific and versatile work.

The exhibition will show the artist's Year Quilts since 1986 some of which have been exhibited in solo exhibitions throughout the UK since then. Irene, speaking on her collection, has recognized that she cannot stop the injustices of the world through her Quilts: "I do not think my work will change the world, it is a matter of empathy" she says, "what I do wish to seek through my work is that others can bear witness of the struggles and to be in sympathy."

The exhibition will also feature a collection of Latin American arpilleras' from Chile whose work show, expose and denounce events that have dramatically shaped the lives of women as a result of political and social violence. Arpilleras' (arr-pee-ai-ahs - stitched appliqué wall hangings that tell a story) became prominent with Chilean woman during the 1973-1990 dictatorship as they worked with textiles to tell stories of conflict, struggle and of survival. This expression has continued to engage new audiences throughout the world as similarities can be drawn from women in different communities in today's society as they use art to channel struggles of endurance.

The exhibition has been brought together by guest curator Roberta Bacic, who is Chilean native living in Northern Ireland. She will facilitate a series of guided tours, workshops, and discussions around the exhibition. The commonality between the quilts and arpilleras' within the exhibition resides in the use of the textiles, threads, needles, embroidery and crochet techniques which tell the story depicting human made horrors.

Irene will host a workshop on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February from 10pm-4pm in the Tower Museum Education Room titled: **How to make a memory piece of an event or person**. Places are limited so booking is essential. Tel: 028 71 372411

The exhibition will run from 16<sup>th</sup> February- 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012 (launch at 12.30pm) at the Tower Museum, Derry-Londonderry, and from the 4<sup>th</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at Donegal Country Museum, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

**Ends**

**Further press information can be obtained by contacting Derry City Council's Marketing and Communications Section, Tel. 02871 37 6504**