

The Politics of the Mundane

in Chilean and other arpilleras

Curated by Roberta Bacic for Hanna's House Summer School 2010

For extensive information see: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts/> & <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts/exhibit/followup.html>

Arpilleras (arr-pee-air-ahs) are stitched appliqué textile wall hangings that tell a story. They became prominent in Chile during the times of Pinochet's dictatorship as they portray women's struggles in their everyday lives. The tapestries often have a "relief" quality and are far from two-dimensional pictures. The scrap material and stitching that ultimately create the simple and clear lines and forms of the figures and motifs depicted on these arpilleras allow the viewer to perceive the determination of these Chilean craft women. These arpilleras have served as testimony to the tenacity and strength of these women in their determined struggle for truth and justice and to break the code of silence imposed upon them and upon the country.

At the time they were done they depicted what was actually happening, today they are witnesses to what can not be forgotten and is part of our present past that needs to be dealt with.

The Chilean cultural tradition of the arpillera is celebrated in this collection, in its traditional and politicised form, and in its evolution beyond Chile to Peru, where people used this craft to sew together the concerns and hopes of themselves and their communities and engage new audiences, and its most recent incarnations in England & Ireland where traditional quilting styles have absorbed the arpillera style and made it into something fresh and unique.

List of pieces on display

1. **No contaminar / Do not pollute**

Anon, Chilean Arpillera, Santiago, c.1983

Courtesy of Kinderhilfe Chile-Bonn

2. **Play Today, Pay Tomorrow**

Irene MacWilliam, Northern Ireland arpillera, 2010

Made specially for Berlin Chilean Embassy Exhibition, May 2010

Courtesy of the artist

3. **Fern Woman**

Deborah Stockdale, Ireland, 2005

On display at The **Art of Survival: International and Irish quilts**, International Women's Day/month exhibition, Heritage and Museum Service City Derry Council, 2008

Courtesy of the artist

4. **Mujer Paloma / Dove woman**

Anon, Peruvian arpillera, Lima, 1985

Brought specially for **Cultural Stories in Textiles exhibition**, 25-27 February 2010, Harpur's Hill Community Centre, Coleraine, Northern Ireland

Courtesy of Alicia Villanueva

5. **Violencia doméstica / Domestic Violence**

F. Ch. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima Peru, 1985

Curator's private collection

6. **Violencia en Ayacucho / Violence in Ayacucho**

F.Ch. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima, Peru, 1985

Courtesy of Rebecca Dudley, USA / Northern Ireland

7. **Hogar dulce hogar / Home sweet home**

T.L. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima Peru, 1985

Curator's private collection

8. **Corte de agua / Water cut**

Anon, Chilean Arpillera, Santiago, c.1979

Courtesy of Kinderhilfe Chile-Bonn

9. **Los precios están en las nubes / Prices are sky high**

L.C.C. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima, Peru, 1985

Courtesy of Rebecca Dudley, USA / Northern Ireland

10. **Overdue, Overdrawn, Over-extended: Rural Poverty in Ireland**

Deborah Stockdale, Irish arpillera, 2009

Made specially for Liverpool Irish Festival Exhibition, October 2009

Courtesy of the artist

11. **¿Quién carga con la deuda externa? / Who carries the external debt?**

F. Ch. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima Peru, 1985

Curator's private collection

12. **Lavandería Santa María/ Santa Maria laundrette**

Anon, Chilean Arpillera, Santiago, c.1983

Courtesy of Lala Winkley, London, England

13. *Olla común en la población / Soup kitchen in a población*

Anon, Chilean Arpillera, Santiago, c.1981
Courtesy of Marjorie Agosin, Chile / USA

**14. *Taller de arpilleristas Mujeres Creativas /
'Mujeres Creativas' arpilleristas' workshop***

F. Ch. **Mujeres Creativas** arpilleras workshop, Lima Peru, 1987
Curator's private collection

15. *The pride of new barns*

Linda Adams, English arpillera, 2009
Made specially for Liverpool Irish Festival Exhibition, October 2009
Courtesy of the artist

16. *Ely's farmers market*

Linda Adams, English arpillera, 2010
First exhibited at ***Feminist Art Exhibition: The wars on women: peace works***
Hanna's House Summer School 2010, Belfast 27-29 August 2010
New piece in preparation for solo exhibition in 2011
Courtesy of the artist

Roberta Bacic, 8th August 2010