

CONFLICT TEXTILES

The textiles exhibited here are part of an international textiles collection that encompasses over 400 documented arpilleras, quilts and wall hangings, focused on elements of conflict and human rights abuses. Arpilleras (pronounced 'ar-pee-air-ahs') are at the core of the collection. These hand sewn appliquéd picture textiles, stitched onto a hessian/burlap backing, came to prominence during the Pinochet regime in Chile (1973-1990). With scraps of fabric, women came together to share and document their stories of the violence and repression of the dictatorship era.

The art of making arpilleras initially spread to neighbouring countries in central and southern America. Through exhibitions and workshops, the practice was later adopted in Argentina, Catalonia, Basque Country, the UK, Ireland, Germany, Zimbabwe and other countries. Since 2007, Roberta Bacic, collector and curator of the Conflict Textiles collection has curated over 200 international textile exhibition programmes. Several new textiles and partnerships have been seeded in the process.

The use of textile language to stimulate ideas and experiences enable difficult conversations. This has become a key element of Conflict Textiles, in tandem with deepening collaborations with an ever growing transnational network of arpilleristas, textile artists, curators, academics, researchers and followers who engage in our exhibitions and other programmes.

Conflict Textiles physical collection is complemented by an online repository developed and hosted by CAIN at Ulster University (UU) making the collection globally accessible.

