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Los Angeles Times

How the viral protest ‘A Rapist in Your Path’ became a defiant anthem for 2019

By CAROLINA A. MIRANDA STAFF WRITER

DEC. 10, 2019 9:09 AM

It begins with a group of women, usually blindfolded, and an electronic beat. There is a side-to-side shuffle, chanting and squats. And there is the unforgettable chorus, done to a finger-snapping dance: “Y la culpa no era mía / ni dónde estaba / ni cómo vestía.” (And the fault was not mine / nor where I was / nor how I was dressed.)

The action ends with the group pointing straight ahead and repeating the refrain: “El violador eres tú.” (The rapist is you.)

This stirring performance, titled “Un violador en tu camino” (A Rapist in Your Path), was first brought to life by the feminist art collective called Lastesis at a protest in the port city of Valparaíso, Chile, late last month, as a way of drawing attention to violence against women. Since then, this viral action has materialized in Colombia, Mexico, France, India, the U.S. and Turkey (where an attempt to stage it on Sunday was broken up by police).

Naturally, video of the catchy dance and song is all over the internet — tweeted by none other than Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.).

On Sunday, a group of more than 200 women — old, young and in between, with a few school-age girls and a couple of dogs in the mix — gathered on the sidewalk before Chris Burden’s “Urban Light” at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and performed it again.

For more than an hour, their collective voices, in Spanish, rang clearly amid the din of traffic on Wilshire Boulevard: “Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba, ni cómo vestía.”

“This intervention, it has really turned into a hymn across women,” said Francisca Valenzuela, a Chilean American singer who turned up at LACMA to participate in the action. “It’s a slogan for dignity.”

Certainly, it’s a performance whose defiance resonates profoundly in an era in which a cursory scan of news headlines can feel like an assault on women and their bodies.

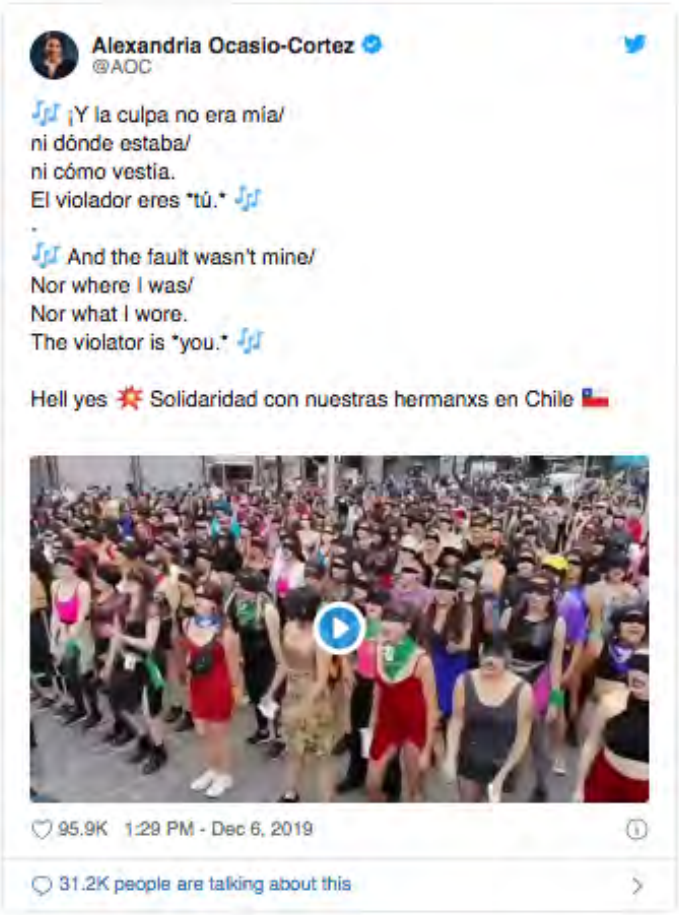
A group of women perform the viral protest “Un Violador en tu camino” by Lastesis at LACMA

Stephanie Clavijo, left, Mariela Nevarez and Liset Contreras join other women in the protest-performance “A Rapist in Your Path” at LACMA on Sunday afternoon. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

In El Salvador, women are tried for suffering miscarriages. In India, violence against women, including high-profile gang rapes and murders, have brought protesters to the streets. In Mexico, over the last seven years, the legal system has added a new offense to the books: femicide, the killing of a woman for gender-specific reasons.

The United States is no exception. In Ohio, state lawmakers recently introduced an abortion bill that includes a provision requiring all ectopic pregnancies to be reimplanted in the uterus — a medical procedure that doesn’t exist. And, of course, there are the relentless headlines about the late financier Jeffrey Epstein‘s grotesque proclivities for young girls.

All of this accounts for why this short and eminently sticky political action from Chile has become a worldwide phenomenon.



“There is a defiance,” said independent curator Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, who helped organize the Hammer Museum exhibition “Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985" in 2017. “It can’t just be ‘turn the other cheek.’ This is a war chant.”

“You just need a body and a voice,” said Inger Flem, a Chilean graduate student in Los Angeles who helped organize the action at LACMA. “It can be repeated anywhere with anyone. It lets itself be part of the people.”

The LACMA performance is not likely to be the last in Los Angeles. Students at Cal State Long Beach planned to perform the piece on campus on Tuesday afternoon.

Inger Flem and Caroline Delgado, who helped organize the performance-protest at LACMA
Inger Flem, left, and Caroline Delgado helped organize the performance-protest “A Rapist in Your Path” at LACMA.(Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

Finding the state complicit

“Un violador en tu camino” was originally devised by four Chilean artists from Valparaíso — Daffne Valdés, Sibila Sotomayor, Paula Cometa Stange and Lea Cáceres — collectively known as Lastesis, a name that nods to the group’s interest in promoting tesis (theses) by important feminist thinkers.

This particular performance drew from work by Argentine feminist anthropologist Rita Segato‘s pioneering studies on rape. It also was inspired by some grim statistics related to sexual assault in Chile, where only 8% of resolved sexual-assault cases in 2018 ended up in some sort of conviction against the perpetrator, according to government statistics compiled by the Chilean Network Against Violence Against Women.

Caroline Delgado, an L.A.-based Chilean business student who was one of the organizers of Sunday’s action at LACMA, said the piece ultimately speaks to the ways in which “women in Chile have been abused, not only by men but by the structure, by the state.”

And that is part of what is so striking about Lastesis’ action. It doesn’t simply call for an end to violence against women. It calls out the state infrastructures that belittle sexual assaults (in India, cops recently asked the parents of a murdered gang-rape victim if she was having an affair) and also regularly fail to prosecute crimes of sexual violence in a meaningful way. (An egregious case in point: Epstein was not only allowed on work release while serving his original jail sentence but may also have arranged additional trysts with girls during that time.)

“It’s the cops / The judges / The state / The president,” goes one memorable line from “Un violador,” as the performers point accusingly. They too are complicit.

“The guilt, the pain, the humiliation and the moral embarrassment should be felt by the abusers and not by women whose bodies have been violated,” the artists told Spanish daily El País in an interview last week. (Lastesis could not be reached for comment.) “That is the most important thing that is being generated.”

Lastesis’ choreography, in a few simple actions, highlights other issues of justice too. Participants blindfold themselves as a nod to the Chilean protesters who have been blinded by police during the recent protest there. They squat as a way of highlighting the demeaning gesture that nude women are required to do while undergoing imprisonment. All of it is far more confrontational than some adorable pink pussy hat.

“It’s so defiant,” said Monica Olivares, a nurse who participated in the LACMA event on Sunday. “This is something that we’ve been missing. We’ve been hit, we’ve been abused, we’ve been raped. I had to come.”

There is a defiance. It can’t just be ‘turn the other cheek.’ This is a war chant.
CECILIA FAJARDO-HILL, INDEPENDENT CURATOR
Rebecca Hernandez, a Mexicali, Mexico-born choreographer who has studied the ways in which protest movements use choreography and other signifiers to send messages, said the protest has spread effectively because it gives women the collective safety of speaking their concerns.

“For women in unison to have this body-based event where they are saying something meaningful,” she said. “Even if you are not a survivor, you know what it means to be walking down a street where you don’t feel safe, so this is very empowering.”

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Carmen Mardonez, center, participates in the performance-protest “A Rapist in Your Path” at LACMA.(Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)
Fajardo-Hill, who has studied feminist art throughout Latin America, says it’s all part of a long tradition of women taking to performance as a way of making a statement, in the process blurring the line between art and politics.

“Think of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo,” she said, referring to the mothers of the disappeared who gathered for vigils in white headscarves in front of the Argentine presidential palace in the 1970s and ’80s. “That image is still ingrained in our minds. Images of them have been used again and again in art exhibitions to show what it means for women to fight and mourn injustice.”

Lastesis have created a new image for 2019: a woman pointing right at the source of her pain.

“That’s the battle for women now,” says Fajardo-Hill. “It’s for our bodies.”

Chilean *Arpillera* Exhibit and Programming 2019

Gibson Gallery, SUNY Potsdam: February 14 to March 30
Richard F. Brush Gallery, St. Lawrence University: March 4 to April 11

A collaboration of faculty, students, and communities in the United States and Chile has emerged to exhibit a collection of sixty-four Chilean patchwork appliques called *arpilleras*. Our project provides a special opportunity to share, in English and in Spanish, the moving stories told by these works of art. Their stories began in 1973.

On September 11, 1973, a military coup led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet—and secretly supported by the Nixon administration—overthrew Chile's democratically elected socialist government. During the years that followed, the Pinochet dictatorship abducted, tortured, and killed thousands of its perceived opponents. In response to this repression, Chilean women handsewed *arpilleras* from scraps of household cloth, sometimes using the clothing left behind by their abducted loved ones. The *arpilleras* dramatically depict the protest, repression, survival skills, and daily life of Chileans after the coup.

Meanwhile in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a fair-trade women's collective called Jubilee Crafts began marketing and exhibiting the *arpilleras* as a way to educate Americans about U.S. foreign policy toward Chile. These Jublilee Crafts women are now donating these *arpilleras* to the permanent collection at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, Chile.

Before they make this trip home, the *arpilleras* will continue their educational work in two bilingual exhibits at SUNY Potsdam and St. Lawrence University (SLU) galleries in spring 2019. Preparation for these exhibits began in spring 2017 and has involved and will continue to involve an interdisciplinary team of faculty members and students from both campuses.

Three SUNY Potsdam professors initiated this project: Dr. Liliana Trevizán and Dr. Oscar Sarmiento are Chileans who lived under the Pinochet regime; Dr. M. J. Heisey directed Jubilee Crafts in the 1970s and 1980s, and has included work on the *arpillera* exhibit in her public history classes.

> Dr. Trevizán and Dr. Sarmiento were both university students and then teachers in Chile during the dictatorship. Their experiences in the fight for democracy and their scholarly knowledge of the context and meanings of the *arpilleras* provide a special opportunity to deepen our understanding of the *arpilleras* as works of art, as historical texts, and as political statements. In addition, their contacts with Chileans across North America and their knowledge of scholarship on Chile and Latin America have made possible the inclusion of significant artists and scholars in programming for the exhibit.

This initial team has been joined by :

> April Vasher-Dean, director of The Art Museum, who is leading work on the exhibit at Potsdam;
> Romi Sebald, collections manager, who has overseen photographing and mounting the *arpilleras*;
> Catherine Tedford, director of The Richard F. Brush Gallery, who is leading exhibit work at SLU;

Dr. Tamara Feinstein, Visiting Assistant Professor of Latin American History, who teaches at both SLU and SUNY Potsdam (Her SLU students in The Cold War in Latin America have begun building a digital timeline and podcasts that will be linked to listening stateions at the SLU exhibit. In fall 2018, her SUNY Potsdam and SLU students in Dictatorship and Democracy in Chile will continue this work. She also won a 2018 summer CIIS Fellows grant to take an SLU student and, with funding, a SUNY Potsdam student to Santiago for two weeks of research on the *arpilleras*.);

Dr. Shiho Imai, Associate Professor of History and department chair, beginning July 2018, who won a BOB grant which allows six students working on the *arpillera* project to travel to Washington DC for a backstage tour on the curating of textiles at the Smithsonian and George Washington University's Textile Museum;

Dr. Marie-Élaine Gagnon, Assistant Professor of Cello, with the support of Dean Michael Sitton, will perform with pianist Angelica Sganga—the Zapateado Duo—music by Chilean and Cuban composers.

Students who have worked on the project to date include:

Carly J. Northup, who in spring 2017 photographed the *arpilleras*, under the direction of Sebald and Prof. Iggy Beerbower;

Charina Medina, who in fall 2017 interviewed Dr. Trevizán in Spanish on the *arpilleras*, and wrote summaries of those interviews;

Mahala Nyberg, who in fall 2017 served as a consultant on oral interviewing and interviewed Jubilee Crafts staff;

Ryan Hutchins, who in spring 2018 is continuing interviews in Spanish of Dr. Trevizán on the *arpilleras*;

Kelsey Newtown, who in spring 2018 is making contact with local public schools to plan curriculum that would encourage class visits to the *arpillera* exhibit.

We are planning interdisciplinary programs to celebrate the opening of the two exhibits and to encourage interest on campus and in the community in visiting the galleries. Most of the programming draws on the expertise and knowledge of local faculty and students.

The February 14 opening of the exhibit at SUNY Potsdam, hosted by The Art Gallery, will include presentations on experiences in the 1970s and 1980s by Dr. Trevizán, Dr. Sarmiento, Dr. Heisey, and Dr. Feinstein. Caramelo Trio, of which Dr. Sarmiento is a part, will perform Chilean folk music, including works by Violeta Parra and Victor Jara.

On March 3, the Zapateado Duo—Marie-Élaine Gagnon and Angelica Sganga—concert will take place in a Crane or PAC venue.

The March 4 opening of the exhibit at SLU will include a symposium with Dr. Trevizán or Dr. Sarmiento; Dr. Katherine Hite, Professor of Political Science at Vassar College and author of *Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain*; and, we hope, a public artist who might engage our community in art as conversation and collaboration.

March 5 will include keynote presentations by Dr. Katherine Hite and an artist at SUNY Potsdam

For further information: contact M. J. Heisey, heiseymj@potsdam.edu, (315) 267-2558.

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1 April 2018

Kuna Mola: Maintaining Tradition Amid Change

Teacher Resource Packet

The Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis
February 19 – May 8, 2010

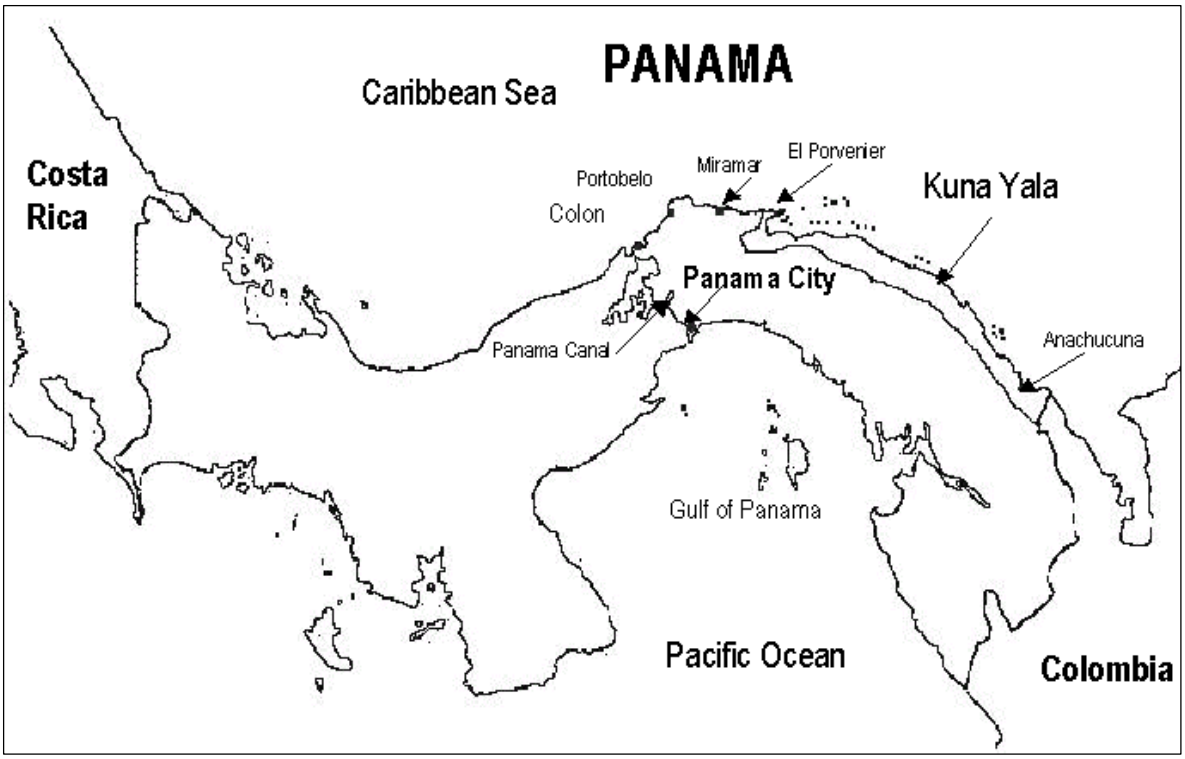
Kuna Mola: Maintaining Tradition Amid Change

The largest of seven indigenous groups in Panama, the approximately 47,000 Kuna population call their homeland Kuna Yala. They inhabit and control the San Blas archipelago, a chain of over 350 islands stretching 140 miles along Panama's Caribbean coast. The Kuna (also spelled Cuna) refer to themselves as both Tule and Dule.

The Kuna Indians of Panama are best known for their molas. The term "mola" generally refers to the hand sewn blouses worn by Kuna woman as well as to the elaborate reverse appliqué panels that make up the front and back of the blouse. Strictly speaking, the term "morro" or "mor" refers to the handwork, and "mola" means the blouse or other finished item. Molas are recognized worldwide as textile folk art. Not only do they provide an important source of cash income, they also act as a vital symbol of cultural identity and independence for the Kuna people.

Molas are a living folk art, and mola sewing techniques, styles, and even the uses of molas are always in flux. While many older women still wear traditional garb, including molas, some younger women dress in more contemporary clothing. Traditions and attitudes also vary from island to island, so some communities embrace Western fashion more wholeheartedly than others.

This exhibition opens a series of small windows on Kuna life though the art of the mola. **The** exhibition explores mola techniques and mola designs, giving the viewer a sense of daily life, spirituality and natural environment, as well as the influences of pop culture and tourism on the Kuna and their ever-evolving folk art form.



Making Molas

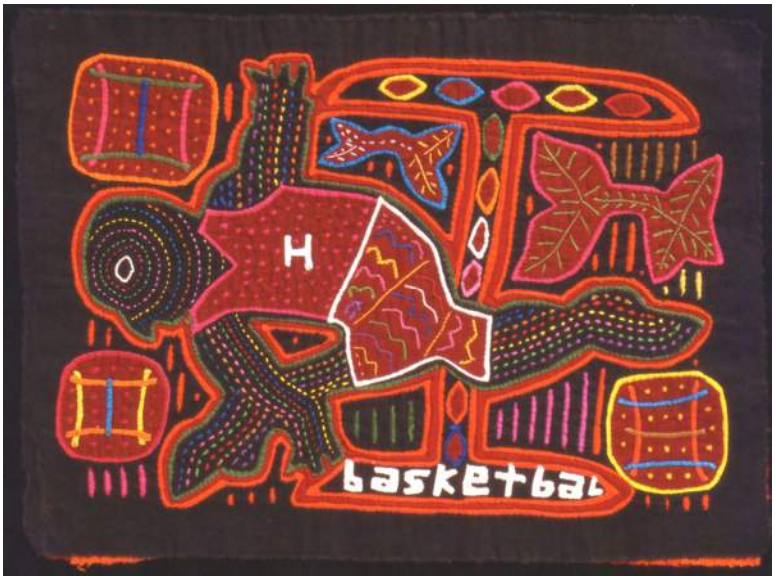
Mola is the word for both the Kuna women's traditional blouse and the blouses' decorated front and back panels. According to the anthropologist Mari Lyn Salvador, mola designs evolved from Kuna body painting, first reported by Lionel Wafer, a 17th- century doctor who lived among the Kuna. By the late 19th century, Kuna women began to wear cotton chemises and painted these undergarments instead of their bodies. As imported cloth became available in the early 20th century, women began sewing the designs onto blouses. Early blouses were loose, with short close-fitting cap sleeves, while today's styles dictate snug bodices and puffed sleeves. Pre-1920s mola panels were large, with rough designs and stitching, but little embroidery. Geometric patterns and one-color designs (one color plus background) were common and are referred to as grandmother molas. A great range of styles can be found in every decade since the 1920s, as seamstresses re-create older patterns.

According to legend, mythical figures brought the earliest designs to Kuna spiritual leaders. Today the meanings of mola designs are a matter of speculation, and mola-makers draw on both traditional designs and more idiosyncratic, personal meaning and inspiration. The eclectic character of Kuna culture suggests that this folk tradition will continue to evolve. Kuna seamstresses take pride in their work, as individuals, as members of an extended family and tribal community, and because the market place demands high quality products. Mola panel quality is judged by criteria such as: sewing technique, layering and visual arrangement, design originality, color, and contrast.

The small size of hand stitching, evenness of cutting and hemming, the complexity of layering, and spacing of design are all essential features of a good mola. There should be no large, solid-color spaces; spaces should be filled with small shapes such as triangles, dots, squares, and zigzags. Traditional mola colors are both intense and saturated, including maroon, black, and orange, some of which relate back to the colors of body paint. Black and maroon are often used as the top and base layers with bright tones layered between, creating a sense of color randomness. Though pastels and pale, muted colors are not usually included in molas for personal use, they are often found in molas made for trade.

Molas arrive in the market place for various reasons. Those made for personal use may be sold when they become worn or go out of fashion or when a family needs cash. Molas are also made directly for sale. In addition, seamstresses mix traditional mola techniques with new colors and designs to create trade items such as pillows, patches, and dresses. While often simpler in design, these trade molas and other items may be as skillfully sewn as those for Kuna use.

Daily Life



Daily life is community and family-based, with extended families sharing home and work. Traditionally, husbands move into the homes of their wives' families. Three or more generations, and a dozen or more people, may hang their hammocks under one roof. The elder male delegates men's work, which includes fishing, maintaining boats, farming, building houses, gathering firewood and weaving baskets. Men are largely responsible for governing, though women are increasingly serving in this arena. Every night, citizens gather in the *Congresso*, a thatch-roofed pavilion, to discuss and act on island issues in a collective manner.

Mola-making, along with household management, is women's chief responsibility. Some women sell their products directly to buyers, while others participate in mola cooperatives. Cooperatives are organized to maintain mola quality or a particular style, share equipment, and coordinate marketing in Panama City and other outlets, including the World Wide Web. Sewing molas is a major and often life-long responsibility for Kuna women, from as early as the age of five, until they loose their eyesight for fine work. While women sew the vast majority of molas, mola-making is not a completed gendered occupation. Largely accepted in Kuna island society, some gay men support their extended families through sewing. As for the children, school is free through sixth grade but it is not required. Some children attend fulltime, while others divide their time between school and family chores.

The Kuna have a rich spiritual tradition that permeates their daily lives, folktales, ceremonies, rituals, and healing traditions, and this is reflected in mola design. The Kuna belief that spirits inhabit all natural things and explain natural phenomenon. The flora and fauna from the Kuna islands and Caribbean, provide a wide variety of subjects for mola design. The Kuna complete various rites to maintain positive spiritual lives, including weddings, funerals, and female initiation ceremonies. While certain islands are closed to missionaries, some Kuna islanders elsewhere have blended Christian beliefs with their own traditions. This blending is explored in Kuna molas.

Many islanders rely solely on traditional practitioners for healing, believing that illness is about spiritual imbalance or possession. Others combine traditional beliefs with western medicine. Islanders may seek the services of herbalists, chanters, or men and women who perform healing rituals and ceremonies. Themes of spiritualism and ritual healing are echoed in mola design.

Outside Influences

From pre-Columbian times to the present, the Kuna culture has been shaped by many influences. Indigenous groups, gold-seekers, pirates, colonists, Christian missionaries, and more recently, pop culture and tourism have all influenced Kuna culture. Indigenous groups and gold-seekers pushed the Kuna from the highlands of Panama to the lowland jungle during the 16th century. Due to epidemics brought to the mainland by colonial settlers, by the mid-1800s the Kuna moved to the San Blas archipelago on Panama's northern coast. They settled on small islands near the mouths of rivers so they could return to the mainland daily to tend to crops and gather water. The Kuna were first exposed to Spanish Catholic missionaries in the 17th century. Today Catholic, Baptist and Mormon missionaries work alongside the Kuna. The introduction of Christianity to the Kuna culture has produced a blending of spiritual traditions for some island communities, while other communities have maintained their own traditional beliefs.

Throughout this complex history, the Kuna have maintained a strong sense of independence. Politically astute, the Kuna allied themselves with French and English pirates against the Spanish colonists. In 1925, just after Panamanian independence, the Kuna rebelled against the newly created government. In doing so they established their own semiautonomous entity, called *La Camarca de Kuna Yala,* and protected their right to wear traditional dress.

As their molas demonstrate, though the Kuna have a large measure of independence, they are not completely isolated. For the last 40 years, increasing numbers of Kuna people have traveled outside Kuna Yala. Today, three out of ten Kuna leave the islands, at least temporarily, for education or cash-based jobs on the mainland. Pop culture comes to the islands, in part, by way of television sets powered by car batteries. Kuna family and community life has been shifting from a more extended family and tribal focus to a more individual and private focus. The Kuna economy has been shifting from an agricultural and fishing livelihood to a cash economy, and the impact of tourism takes increasing precedence in Kuna life.

Kuna opinions are mixed about the increased role of tourism in Kuna Yala. On some islands, elders staunchly oppose tourism, but so far, most Kuna see it as a great economic opportunity. Jeronimo de la Ossa, one of four Kuna representatives in Panama's Congress, said in 1998: "Tourism is the future of the Kuna. Our culture, our customs, we are not changing. We do want tourism, but on our own terms."

Looking at Molas

"Basketball" (Child-Sized Panel), 1980s
Artist Unknown
cotton; 3 layers (black, orange, maroon); reverse and direct appliqué, embroidery (#18)

Basketball is very popular among Kuna men.

Tree of Life, 1, 1980s
Artist Unknown
cotton; 3 layers (maroon, orange, black); reverse and direct appliqué, embroidery (#28)

Artisans worldwide have crafted trees of life designs containing various plants and animals. These Kuna trees of life are filled with monkeys.

RCA Dog, 1970s
Artist Unknown
cotton; 3 layers (black, orange, maroon); reverse and direct appliqué, embroidery (#44)

"Perro (dog) Musica" is the famous RCA advertisement of a dog listening for its master's voice. This mola is a wonderful example of how images from popular culture are incorporated into Kuna mola designs.

Cruise Ship Trade Mola, 1998
Artist: Renelio Robles
cotton, synthetics; direct applique, embroidery

This mola is different from most traditional molas in several ways:
•it was sewn as a single panel for sale to tourists,
•colors were chosen to appeal to tourist tastes,
•it uses only direct appliqué,
•it includes solid areas,
•it was made by a gay man, and
•the subject matter is new.

"Zormay" is probably the name of a ship that cruised the islands in a previous season. The "x" marks the ship's door which lowers into a ramp, allowing passengers to disembark. This mola, which is well-designed and well-made, is a fitting one with which to end, as it is a multifaceted example of the Kuna's mola tradition continuing amid change.

Related Projects

Some reference photos are included in this packet, but there is no substitute for seeing the real thing. You can schedule a visit for your class by calling Rebecca Gunter, Gallery Coordinator and Education Manager at 533-9900 x18.

Art/ Social Studies

Projects:
1. Molas often show the influence of the world outside of Kuna culture. Draw your own "mola" pattern with colorful markers, choosing an image that you connect with from popular culture.

2. Some molas depict traditional myths and legends and others depict aspects of daily life. Draw your own mola design based on an aspect of your own life.

Social Studies/ Language Arts

Project: Research paper / Class presentation
1. Have the students research the attributes of the country of Panama. Using this information, discuss some of the imagery found in the Kuna molas and why they might be using them.

Some Questions:

What do these molas tell us about the people who created them?

Choose one which you think may demonstrate the influence of European culture on the Kuna and discuss why you think it is a good example.

How might the making and wearing of molas relate to clothes you wear? Can you give an example?

Mathematics

Theme: Symmetry

Manatees (sea cows) and Stingray, 1980s
Artist Unknown
cotton; 3 layers (orange, maroon, green); reverse and direct appliqué, embroidery

This mola uses symmetry and negative space to create additional imagery. Inside the two facing manatee forms can be found a stingray. Though the design uses symmetry in the two manatee forms, the artist has varied their design by using different colors on the additional decorations on either side.

Projects:
In the exhibition, find an example of a mola with a "symmetrical" design. Analyze its parts.

Draw a rectangle. Divide the rectangle again into four equal parts. Create a design so that the top left, top right, bottom left and bottom right parts are symmetrical.

Questions:
How many opposites can you find? How are the sides similar? How do they differ?

Can you point out the similarities and differences in the design?

Can you count the different colors in this mola? How many are there?

Kuna Womens' Clothing

The traditionally dressed Kuna woman wears a red *muswe* (scarf) draped untied over her head. She may unfold the muswe and cover her face for privacy or shade. Her *mola* (both the blouse and its decorative panels are called "mola") is a style fashionable in the late 1990s with bright polyester yoke, full sleeves, decorated banding on the sleeves and yoke and elaborately appliquéd and embroidered panels front and back. This is a maternity mola, with a zipper hidden underneath the horizontal white braid across her upper chest. Her *sabured* (skirt) is an unhemmed cotton wrap, often blue with orange, green or yellow designs. Styles of *wini*, (leg and arm beads) have evolved from narrow bands in earlier years to the fuller types shown here. Each segment of beads (two per arm, two per leg), is made from a single strand of beads wound round and round the limb and carefully planned to create patterns which can range from simple stripes to elaborate geometric mazes. Women wear plastic sandals, or go barefoot.

In this picture you will see:

Muswe (*scarf)*
printed cotton

Sabured (*skirt)*
Printed cotton

Wini (arm and leg beads)
Made from commercially made glass beads

Photographs by Barbara Drake Blevens.

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Source for Bibliography: The National Museum of the American Indian:
http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/the_art_of_being_kuna/

Web Resources:

Hood Museum of Art
Learning to Look: Molas Education Packet
http://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/docs/0109teachlearnlookmolas.pdf
This site has examples of early 20th-century molas

Museum of Anthropology, University of Missouri
Molas: Textile Art of Panama
http://anthromuseum.missouri.edu/minigalleries/panamamolas/intro.shtml

Panama Canal Museum Exhibition brochure
http://www.panamacanalmuseum.org/images/MolaExhibitProgram.pdf

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution
The Art of Being Kuna
http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/the_art_of_being_kuna/
This site has examples of early 20th-century molas

Kelly Powell, Master's Thesis
http://kellypowellstudios.com/Kelly_Powell_Studio/[_background_information_]_files/KUNA_PAPER_lowres.pdf
This artist wrote a master's thesis and presents graphic designs inspired by Kuna.molas.

The exhibition is from the collection of Joyce Cheney and was originally traveled by ExhibitsUSA.

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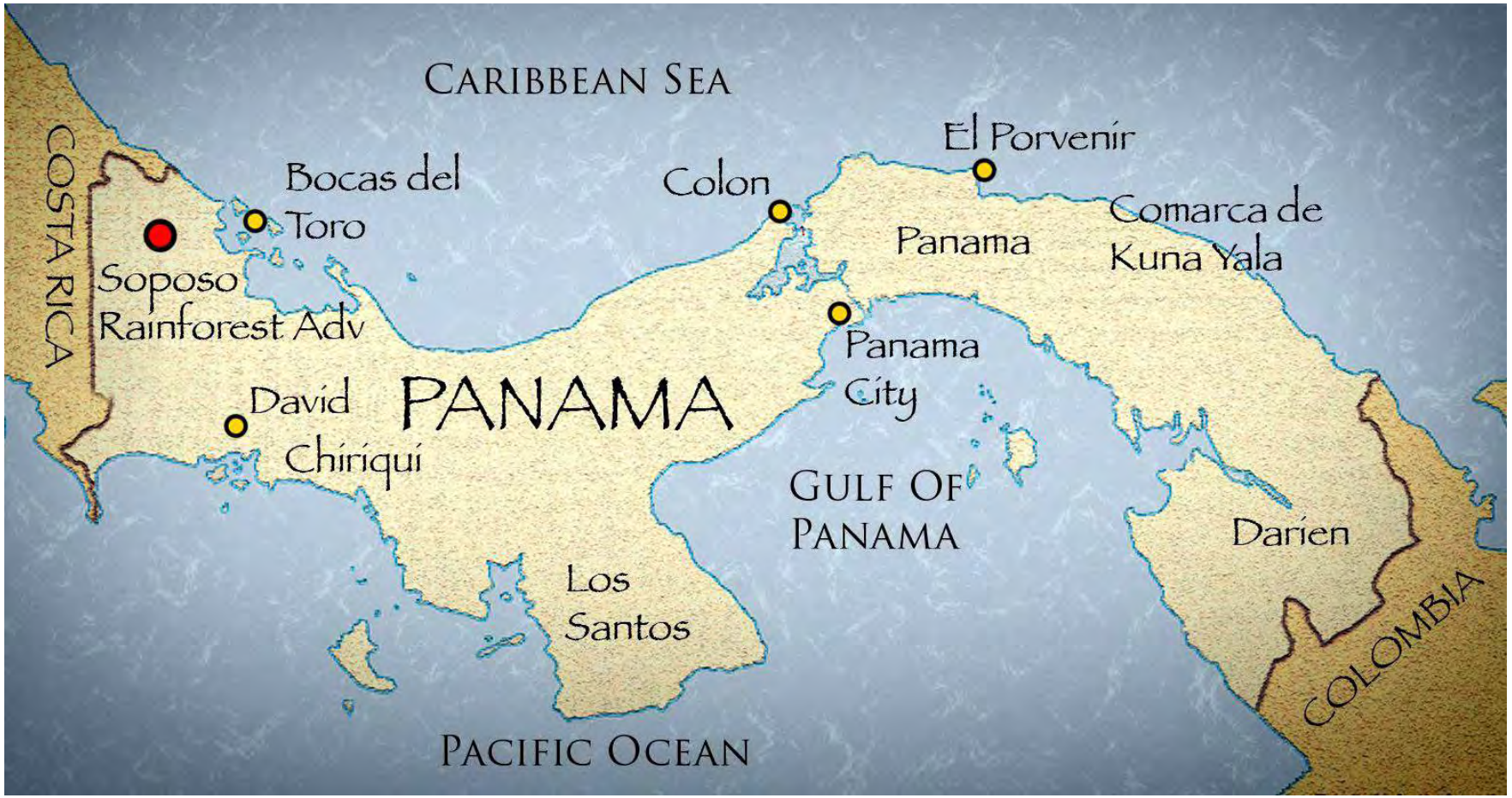


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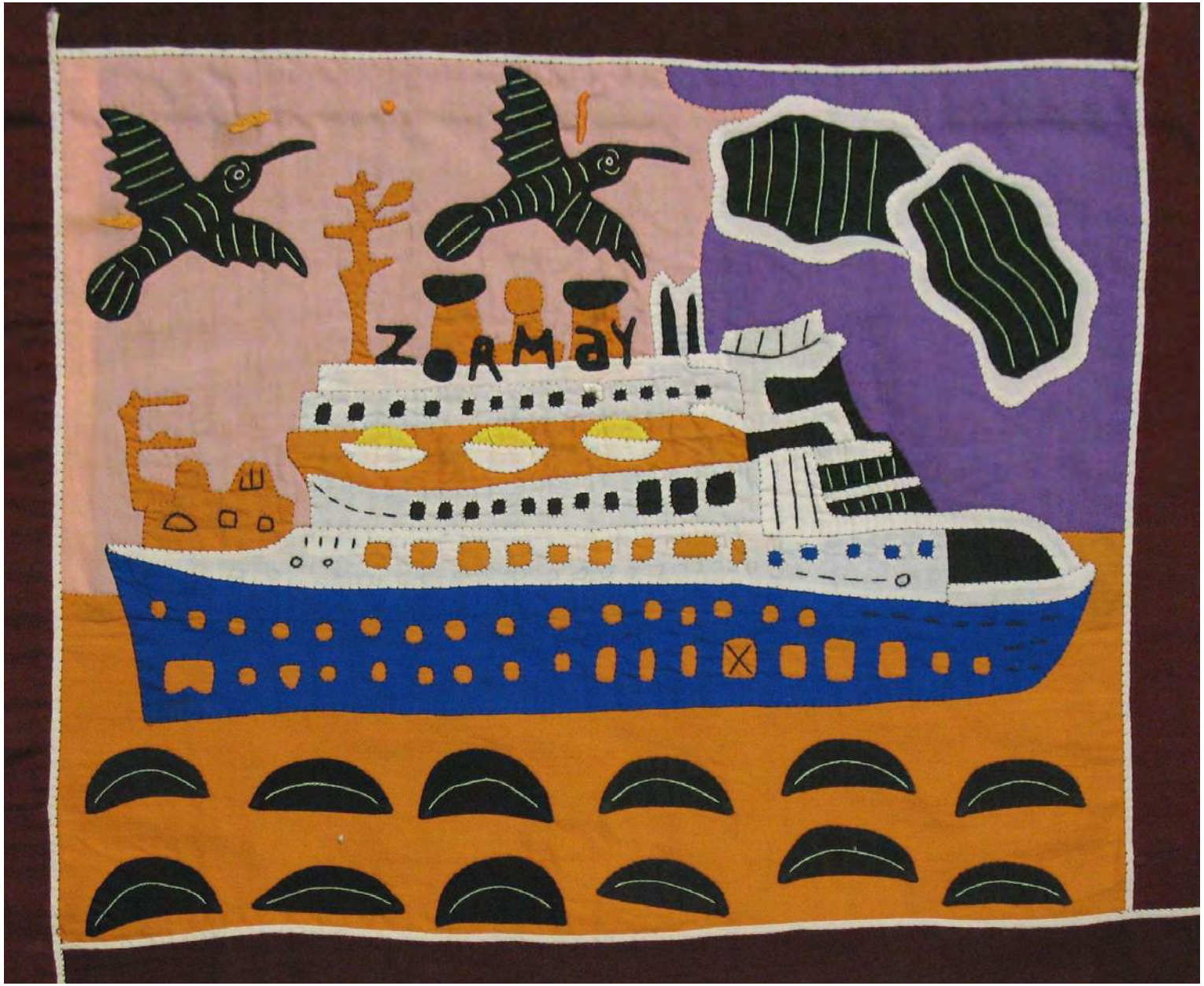
ZARMAY


PERROMUSICA

LA Magazine December 9, 2019

By Liz Ohanesian

As Protests rage in Chile these patchwork pictures are more relevant than ever

During a dark period in Chile's history, colorful hand-sewn pieces called arpilleras told stories of people's struggles

In detailed scenes sewn together with colorful patches of fabric, Chilean women documented the darkest years of the country's history. They told the story of a brutal dictatorship and resistance against it, of families struggling after the disappearance of loved ones and of women working together to ensure that the needs of their communities were met. *Arte, Mujer y Memoria: Arpilleras from Chile*, which opened at the Museum of Latin American Art in late November and runs through March 29, is a powerful visual history of the Pinochet regime as told by the women who witnessed it.

On September 11, 1973, Chile's democratically elected president Salvador Allende was overthrown in a CIA-supported coup that ultimately brought Augusto Pinochet to power. In the years that followed, more than three thousand people were killed. Tens of thousands of Chileans were imprisoned and tortured. Because men were the primary targets, many women were left to support their families with little means to do so. These arpilleras, textile art made with pieces of fabric sewn on burlap, developed as a response to this situation.

"They started putting these together as a form of therapy in a way, dealing with the trauma, and then selling them," Gabriela Martinez, director of education at MOLAA and curator of the exhibition, explains by phone. Through workshops organized by human rights groups, women would gather to sew their pieces, which would then be sold outside of Chile.

"Women gradually moved from the depicting everyday scenes to depicting scenes of the dictatorship," says Alicia del Campo, an anthropologist and Cal State Long Beach professor who is part of Movement for the Emancipation of the Chilean Woman-Los Angeles,

the group that collaborated with MOLAA on this show. “In many ways, the arpilleras that started in the ’80s to the ’90s became a visual memory of the struggle of women against dictatorship.”

While the arpilleras were a means of fundraising, they also informed people outside of Chile of the brutality that the government was trying to deny and of the hardships that people endured as a result. Some of the arpilleras depict horrifying scenes, like the disposal of bodies by helicopter. There are somber reminders of the disappeared, a dinner table with an empty seat and the dance la cueca performed only by women. Protests appear in the works, as do efforts to secure food and electricity.

“In many ways, the arpilleras that started in the ’80s to the ’90s became a visual memory of the struggle **of women against dictatorship.”**

“It was a way of them smuggling news out of the country and making other people aware,” says Martinez.

Making and distributing the arpilleras was covert work, as those known to be critical of the Pinochet regime could be harassed or worse. A number of pieces in the MOLAA show are anonymous. Others are credited only with the initials of the arpilleristas. Finished pieces were smuggled out of the country and sold with the help of diasporan communities throughout the world, including Los Angeles. MEMCH-LA, a local branch of the longtime Chilean women’s rights organization that launched here in the 1980s, was a part of that movement. “MEMCH-LA started receiving shipments of those arpilleras and sold them in solidarity and sent the money to Chile to provide for these

women," says del Campo, who began working with the group after she moved to Southern California in the 1990s.

Although historic, these works also connect to current protests in Chile, where demonstrators have been met with frightening use of force by authorities. *The New York Times* recently reported that at least 285 people have incurred serious eye injuriesas a result of the rubber bullets and tear gas used against protestors. Amnesty International has documented multiple instances of human rights violations, including five deaths. Del Campo, who is originally from Chile and is currently working on a book about the 2011 student protests, was in the country a week before our interview. "On the one hand, there's strong repression," says del Campo of the current protests. "On the other hand, it's absolute certainty and absolute solidarity among people."

The show includes one contemporary arpillera. *For the Right to Live with Dignity* by Victoria Diaz, creates three scenes that speak about environmental degradation and the need for clean water in Chile today. Martinez points out that these contemporary issues are similar to those people face in the U.S. as well.

"I think that this exhibition will hopefully make people more curious for the situation of their fellow human beings," she says, "and [help them] understand how we're so interconnected through politics, economy, and culture."

Figure 1. Photograph by Arthur Rothstein, "Girl at Gees Bend Alabama". Subject is Artelia Bendolph 1937,funded by the Office of War Information/Farm Security Administration--from the Library of Congress, National Archives.

Memory and Spirit: African American Quilting

Museum Connections: Art and Enlightenment/Family and Community

Purpose: Students will learn about how quilts are a part of American folk art. Prior to the 1960's the making of beautiful quilts by Black women was not considered an "art" but just a craft or a "homey" practical activity. This lesson will provide an in-depth education and insight into the rich history and quilting customs of our African American population. Students will be taught how to make a fabric quilted postcard that may be mailed to our soldiers overseas, or some other Afro-centric themed quilting activity as determined by the teacher. Since this lesson delves greatly into the history of African American quilts, it can be adaptable to a large range of quilting lessons.

Course: High School Visual Arts

Time Frame: 5-6 class periods

Correlation to State Standards for Visual Arts:

2.0 Content Standard: Historical, Cultural and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of visual art as a basic aspect of history and human experience.

A. The student will propose ways that the visual arts reflect significant historical, cultural, and social issues.

1. *Critical Response:* The student will determine ways that works of art provide social commentary, document historical events, and reflect the values and beliefs of the society in which they are created.

- Understand how values, beliefs, and customs can be expressed through crafts.
- Create works of art that reflect particular cultures, times, and places.

Objective(s):

Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive and interpret ideas about African American cultural experiences through the study of African American quilts in order to complete a small quilt-making project (i.e., the making of handmade postcards for American soldiers serving overseas), or some other Afro-centric themed quilting activity as determined by the teacher.

Learning Outcomes:

1) Students will demonstrate the ability to create, organize, and produce a quilted postcard with African American components to send to American soldiers abroad or some other quilting activity as determined by the teacher.

2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of African American quilts (textile art) as a clear aspect of American history and be able to describe the importance of preserving Afro-centric quilts as a part of our nation's artistic and domestic heritage.

3) Students will use vocabulary unique to quilters in order to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze and apply criteria for making aesthetic judgments as they create their project from this learning unit.

4) Students will be able to communicate how artworks crossed cultural boundaries and how African cultural ideas, values, and arts became blended with European settlers' cultural ideas, values, and arts in the making of a quilt.

5) Students will learn about the various "eras" in African American quilt history and demonstrate an understanding of the nine basic characteristics that can make a quilt uniquely Afro-centric in composition.

6) Students will be able to describe the importance of building strengths through adversity.

Vocabulary and Concepts:

Quilt	a specific type of bedcovering made of two layers of fabric padded between with cotton, wool, or feathers and firmly stitched together in a pattern, or "tufted" with embroidery thread.
Quilting	the act of making specific bed coverings by piecing fabric together in attractive designs. For centuries African American quilters have created unique and colorful quilts for themselves, for families that either owned or employed them, and for their communities.
Tufting	is the act of pulling a short piece of yarn, or heavy thread, through three layers of fabric with regular spacing and tying it off on one side. Tufting is used to hold the layers of a quilt together in one place and helped to give the bedcovering a particular character.
Quilt patterns	the special way that quilters put together their projects

	usually creates a recognizable quilt pattern. It is believed that the earliest quilts were simply large pieces of fabric sewn together with cotton batting in between them, and they were crude blankets or coverlets to be used against the cold. The "Crazy-Quilt" pattern is made by sewing together any size or shape of pieces of fabric. This is probably the oldest "pattern" for quilting. The "whole cloth," or early raffia/reed quilts, used one type of fabric for both sides of the quilt. After the 1800s, literally thousands of patterns emerged, and they peaked in creativity and popularity in the early to middle part of the 20th century. Early African American quilts looked similar to the woven quilts that American slave ancestors made on the coasts of West Africa from plant fibers and reeds. Later, they borrowed elements from European quilts. Eventually, most quilts looked very similar to all other American quilts. Be that as it may, they usually held some defining characteristics ---like the use of bold color (especially black and red), asymmetric compositions, and the use of certain favored prints on the fabric. Some favorite African American patterns were named "The Spider Web," "The Churn Dash," "The Strippy/String," variations of the "Nine Patch," "The Log Cabin/Courthouse Steps," "The House Top," and "The Crazy Quilt."
Batting	early quilts had raw combed cotton picked from the plants after harvest. The cotton was then worked into a rough "blanket" and then stuffed between the back and front of the quilt. Entire families participated in making the batting by combing out twigs and stems from the fluffy part of the cotton plant.
Hand stitching	before the invention of the treadle sewing machine which was non-electrical and operated by the foot (around 1830), all of mankind's garments were hand sewn. Up until around the time of the American Civil War (1860) most clothing was hand sewn together with needle and thread. Most quilters could not afford a sewing machine, so thousands of tiny stitches were made to hold the fabric in quilts together. Until Isaac Singer invented a sewing machine that was inexpensive enough to manufacture, all

	sewing was "one-push-of-the-needle-through-the-fabric" at a time. Better quilts have more than seven stitches per inch. In fact, the "value" of the quilt is sometimes partially gauged by how many stitches there are in an inch of sewing (SPI means stitches per inch). More stitches were better as it meant the tailor/seamstress was skilled and the cloth held together for longer during washings and use.
Underground Railway	the Underground Railway consisted of a system of "safe houses" and people who helped slaves run away from their owners—usually from the South to areas well past the Mason-Dixon Line to the North. It is a controversial subject as to whether there was a "code" using quilts exposed at windows and hanging on fences for slaves to use in order to get messages about whether it was safe to move on, or to use a certain road/pathway to escape.
Historic preservation	quilts are made of textiles (cloth) and use a number of different substances (sheep wool and a number of plant products) to make the threads that are woven together as fabrics. All cloth before about 1930 was made from "organic" or living substances. As a result, they do not hold together forever like metals, stone, or even wood. Harsh washings, sunshine, and constant use cause the fabric to fall apart or to "rot" in many quilts. African American quilts, for the most part, were created to be used to keep families warm. Unlike the "fancier" quilts that were made for show, they were washed often and used daily. Many quilts have been stored improperly and the threads have been eaten by insects, or have had the material "shatter" from age. Therefore, because there are fewer and fewer historic quilts each year, it is important we rigorously find, catalogue, cherish, and care for these pieces of textile history.

Materials:

For the Teacher:

- Extensive Historical Background is included in this lesson.
- Computer access for patchwork postcard project, or other Afro-centric themed quilting activity, as determined by the teacher.
- Publications and web sites listed in this lesson.
- Afro-centric themed quilting fabric.
- Heavy postcard paper (not corrugated), sharp scissors, rubber cement, cotton-covered polyester thread, medium sized needles, and straight pins to hold your quilt together before you sew or glue them.

For the Student:

- Student Resource Sheet 1: Outstanding Characteristics of the African American Quilt
- Student Resource Sheet 2: Group Report Topics
- Materials needed to complete postcards, such as sections and pieces of memorable family's textiles, i.e. shirts, dresses, skirts, etc., with Afro-centric characteristics (colors, prints, textures) as described in the section on "African American quilt characteristics." If this will not work, scraps of material from home or the purchase of fabric from a store.
- Book/Reading List for Young Adults about Quilts below:

Alycon, Clara. Hearts and Gizzards; Motherhood in Motion. Danbury, CT, Rutledge Press, 1998. (short stories about quilting and motherhood)

Atwood, Margaret E. Alias Grace. New York, Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996. (Servant girl accused of murder based on true story—quilts woven into story)

Brown, Hallie Q. Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction. Xenia, OH: Aldine Publishing Co., 1926.

Beecher Stowe, Harriet. The Minister's Wooing. New York" Derby and Jackson, 1859. (Chapter 30, "Quilting")

Chiaverini, Jennifer. Round Robin: an Elm Creek quilts novel. New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000. (romance around a quilting group).

Dallas, Sandra. Alice's Tulips; a novel. New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000. (Civil War era America with quilting details).

Hall, Eliza Calvert. Aunt Jane of Kentucky. Boston, Little, Brown, 1907. (Masterworks of Literature series)

Hamilton, Betsy. "The Quiltin' at Old Mrs. Robertson's." Harper's Weekly, February 18984.Mitchell, Felicia, ed. Words and Quilts: A Selection of Quilt Poems. Quilt Digest Press, 11296.

Hicks, Kyra E., Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria, Dallas, TX: Brown Books Publishing Group, 2006.

House, Silas. Clay's Quilt. New York: Algonquin Books, 2001. (male quiltmaker)

Hubalek, Linda K. Aurora, CO., Butterfield Books, mid 1990s. (Trail of Thread series with many books about Kansas pioneer women).

Irvine, Robert R. Called home. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1991. (Mystery)

Kaufman, Margaret. Aunt Sallie's Lament. West Burke, VT., Janus Press, 1988. (book accordion to make a quilt—about a quilter).

Mitchell, Felicia, ed., Words and Quilts: A Selection of Quilt Poems. Quilt Digest Press, 1996. (poems and pictures of quilts).

Macheski, Cecilia, Quilt Stories. Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1994. (25 stories, poems and plays featuring the making of quilts).

McCrumb, Sharyn The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter. New York, Scribner, 1992. (Mystery in Tennessee where a quilt foretells deaths).

Michaels, Barbara. New York, HarperCollins. (Trilogy begun by Ammie, Come Home (1968) about a vintage quilt with magic in it)

Otto, Whitney. How to Make an American Quilt. New York: Villard Books, 1991. (about friendships in a quilting circle).

Porter, Connie, Addy's Wedding Quilt. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Co. Publications, 2001. (Addy makes a quilt for her parent's church wedding even though they have "jumped the broom while slaves).

Ringgold, Faith. "The Street Story and Quilt." Shooting Star Review vol. 2, no. 2 Summer 1988. (short story).

Rosales, Meloye. "Twas the Night B'fore Christmas: An African-American Version. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1996. (retold classic with quilt illustrations).

Rutberg, Becky. Mary Lincoln's Dressmaker: Elizabeth Keckley's Remarkable Rise from Slave to White House Confidante. New York: Walker & Co., 1995.

Sinnott, Susan. Welcome to Addy's World: 1864. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Co. Publications, 1999. (condition of AA in US–North and South–right after Civil War).

Walker, Margaret. Jubilee. Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1966. (Slave narrative novel about Walker's own family history).

Resources

Publications:

Allen, Gloria S. "Bed Coverings in Kent County, Maryland: 1710-1820". *Quiltmaking in America: Beyond the Myth*. Nashville: Rutledge Hill, 1994.

Bales, Judy. "Fractal Geometry in African American Quilt Traditions". 4th Biennial Symposium of the International Quilt Study Center & Museum, University of Nebraska: Lincoln, 2009.

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Benberry, Cuestra, *A Piece of MySsoul: Quilts by Black Arkansans*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000.

Brackman, Barbara, *Facts and Fabrications: Unraveling the History of Quilts and Slavery*. Lafayette, CA: C&T Publishing, 2006.

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Ferrero, Pat, *Hearts and Hands : The Influence of Women & Quilts on American Society.* San Francisco: Quilt Digest Press, 1987.

Freeman, Roland L., *A Communion of the Spirits: African-American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories.* Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1996.

Fry, Gladys-Marie, *Stitched From the Soul : Slave Quilts From the Ante-Bellum South.* New York : Dutton Studio Books in association with the Museum of American Folk Art, 1990.

Haders, Phyllis, *Sunshine and Shadow: the Amish and Their Quilts*. New York: Universe Books, 1976.

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Horton, Laurel, ed., *Quiltmaking in America: Beyond the Myths*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994.

Houck, Carter, *The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated*. New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Museum of American Folk Art, 1991.

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Lyons, Mary E., *Stitching Stars: The Story Quilts of Harriet Powers*. New York: Scribners, 1993.

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Watts, Katherine and Elizabeth Walker, "Joyful Improvisations: The Quiltmaking of Anna Williams." *American Quilter*, Winter 1997, 36-40.

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Web Sites:

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http://www.historyofquilts.com/colonial.html

Cargo, Robert, African American Quilts of Alabama: Flowers without Roots?,
http://www.quiltstudy.org/includes/downloads/cargopdfforweb.pdf

"Civil War Quilts", *Quilting 101.com*,

http://www.quilting101.com/styles/civil-war-quilts.html

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http://faculty.culver.org/~foleyd/Teacher_files/craftingfreedom/diatribe110304.pdf

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http://www.carolynlmazloomi.com/publications.html

Meeske, Susan, "Quilt Me a Story", Rutgers University Professional Development Dept., 1996.

http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/professional-evelopment/childlit/books/MEESKE.pdf

Ringgold, Faith, "Painted Folk Art Quilts"

http://www.artincontext.com/artist/ringgold

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Historical Background:

Introduction

Interest in African American quilts and quilters goes back almost as far as the concept of "America." When a Dutch ship exchanged Africans for food in 1619 at Jamestown, Virginia, the door was opened to a shameful institution, chattel slavery. It would survive for centuries and take a civil war to end it.

Change rarely brings only sorrow; suffering can manifest itself into tremendous drive to overcome obstacles and can birth new opportunities. As harsh and grievous as their new lives were, the first Africans who came to America gathered about them their native abilities and forged a new identity. Blending the spiritual beliefs and native traditions brought with them, they melded the resources and challenges of the New World and brought forth a unique culture: the African American identity. This chrysalis provided for artistic inspiration and produced the African American quilt as a renowned folk art form. Quilting was a tool and a social endeavor that produced bonding among African American women in families, church groups, social clubs and entire communities. Quilting is one of the oldest forms of visual artistic expression used by African Americans. What

began as a woman's utilitarian necessity and duty would eventually evolve into the personal, exquisite expression of a skilled artist.

What exactly is a quilt? What particularly makes a quilt "Afro-centric?" A quilt is a form of needlework with three layers of fabric stitched together usually to form a pattern—the actual "quilting" part of the process is usually designed to enhance its beauty. Quilts were (and still are) made from a wide variety of discarded scraps, old clothing, and worn-out bedding. Even men's suits with the seams opened and flattened served for batting! Many quilts were created from whatever the family could spare to make warm and comfortable bedding. Most Southern quilts were made of cotton and had cotton batting; Northern quilts were sometimes stuffed with flax and wool material called "linsey-woolsey."

African Americans and indentured servants of many nationalities (such as the Irish, German, English, Scot, etc.) performed long hours of labor at least six days a week and often ended the day with one or more family members working on making bedding. In the South, children and other family members literally "combed" cotton to get out dirt, twigs, and leaves from the raw plant. Afterwards, they would press the cotton into rough "sheets." They also roughly filled the quilt with whatever rags or stuffing they could find. Often times children would thread needles, hold the light to sew by, or run errands while their mother and older sisters stitched.

Quilts were also made for the families of their owners or people for whom they worked. From documents like diaries and journals, researchers have discovered there were some family quilts passed down as heirlooms that were actually made by their servants, sewing women, or slaves and not by the direct relatives. Sometimes quilts were made to provide extra income. Quilting "bees" were social gatherings to share in the work of sewing. When held by slaves, they were one of the few social events sanctioned by their owners.

Colonial Slaves and Early Bedding

The earliest bedding in America protected everyone from the cold and enfolded infants, the infirmed, and elderly in warmth and comfort. The early American forms of bedding not only warmed them, but also, covered the drafty windows and doors. Much of colonial bedding looked more like rugs than what modern people think of as bedcovers. It is a myth that early colonials (1620 - 1780) made "quilts" in the form contemporary people visualize. Until "ready-made" fabric was available to the masses (in about 1840), only those with slaves or servants could afford to have someone create anything other than what we would consider crude bedding. Fabric had to either be brought from other countries across the Atlantic

or hand-woven on local groups. For the most part, it was not quilts they were creating in colonial times, but blankets, shaggy "bed-ruggs" and coverlets.

Since bedding was such a utilitarian item, it was used until it was worn out and was very rarely mentioned in any colonial writing. George Washington had listed in his inheritance from his mother a blue and white quilt. However, owning or making a piece of bedding like a finely sewn, appliquéd fancy coverlet would have been the last thing on the mind of the average colonial woman and her hard-working family.

Historically, African Americans have been expressing their diligence and artistic abilities by creating colorful, rhythmically patterned bedding called "quilts" for about two centuries. When American manufactured textiles became widely available in around 1840-50, fabric was readily available to most Americans, even servants and slaves. Only then, as stated in *The Myth of Colonial Quilting* (1620-1780), "did quilting become an occupation of the everyday woman." No record of these utilitarian covers for beds and hangings for doors exists in any document or journal from Colonial American times.

A History of African Influences in American Quilting

The forced migration of people from the West and Central coast of Africa to the major towns in America engendered the creation of a unique cultural heritage. These displaced Africans struggled to adapt to their new surroundings and to chattel slavery. Chattel slavery is the outright ownership of a human for the duration of their natural life.

To the credit of these displaced peoples, with the new materials and experiences in America, they reconstructed themselves within the confines of a repressed and restricted environment. They taught their young about their African heritage and linked the art of quilt making to their artistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. As slaves, they had been required to leave everything behind, yet their textile artwork preserved traditions and preferences from their Motherland. Many of the patterns, colors, and techniques used in Africa to create textiles have survived to have presence in modern quilts.

As to the early African history of this unique type of bedding, "quilt-like" assemblages in specific tribal textiles were formed from repairing and putting together old pieces of cloth the family had used. Later, the appearance created by piecing these together became a tradition in African American patterns.

Some cloth patterns particularly linked to American African textiles are the Kente, The Bogolanfini and the Kuba. The Kente textiles are basically from "Ivory Coast"

tribes where the patterns were derived from tribal "sayings," famous royalty, and stories of their ancestors.

The Bogolanfini textiles are also well-known. Many designs find echoes of favored patterns such as the "Four Leaf," "Flower," "Panther Skin" and others. Many patterns in the famous "Dashiki" shirt popular in the 1960s came from the ancient Mali Bamana tribe who created Bogolanfini cloth.

Kuba textiles are famous because of their "appliquéd" and embroidered patterns generously decorated with cowrie shells. The Ngeende, Bushoong and Ngongo tribes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo developed patterns used in rhythmic geometrics of their heritage. This valued textile produced some of the patterns still found today in favored Afro-centric fabric.

Mid-1800s Up to The War Between the States

There was little to say about the quilts before about 1850. The Oblate Sisters of Providence (Black Catholic nuns still in service today) was founded in Baltimore, Maryland and opened an early school for African American girls. They taught sewing and embroidery. A star patchwork baby quilt was shown at a Boston Anti-Slavery Society Ladies Fair in 1836, attributed to a "negro-mother." Harriet (Ross) Tubman sewed a patchwork quilt anticipating her marriage to John Tubman in 1843; and in 1850, Mary Jane Batson, a Virginia slave, stitched the "Couples Quilt" exhibited at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Before about 1800, cloth was made locally. Big cotton harvests, the steam engine, railways, inventions contributed to the burgeoning of American millhouses producing cloth which were staffed primarily by women. Cheap cloth had become available to everyone by the middle of the 1800s. Steeped in tradition, the African American quilt came solidly into being because material became more available to poor families. It is unfortunate that continuous use and frequent washing with harsh lye soaps weakened fibers and most bedding just plain "wore out." When this happened, the old quilts were used as "batting" (stuffing) for the next generation of quilts.

The War Between the States

By the mid-1800s American quilts were distinctive and the African American quilt had melded into European and African traditions. There is no disputing that quilting offered women of all races the opportunity to develop a unique opportunity that did not compete with the fine arts of the predominate male population.

Figure 16. Barbara Pietila, "They Sold Nettie Down South", used with permission of the artist and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture.

Barbara Pietila is a Baltimore, Maryland, quilter whose work draws its themes from African American history and from her own family stories. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture has acquired "They Sold Nettie Down South," the above quilt art, for their permanent collection. When she sent the work of art to the museum she stated, "In this quilt, as loved ones leave, the slave prepares for her revenge using the knowledge learned from the ancestors and plants from the fields she has worked and hated." During a telephone interview with Ms. Pietila she stated "choice of color, pattern and construction techniques have often been unique, however, traditional styles have been used just as often in making African American quilts."

As The Civil War progressed there was a desperate need for clothing and bedding for both the Union and Confederate troops. Many soldiers were buried in their quilts that family had sent with them. It was said that these quilts gave comfort to soldiers in knowing that something of their family was with them and often times, was buried with them in the many unmarked graves of the fallen. Back in the 1850s, the government did not supply necessities like they do now (particularly the Confederacy as the conflict continued). It was often up to the women to provide their men folk with blankets and quilts. The soldier's quilts were sewn quickly and crudely of old clothing, feed and fertilizer sacks, and sometimes even the clothing of the men who had died in combat. Particularly in the South, money and material became very scarce. Basic and simple patterns and sometimes with inspiring words to encourage the soldiers, the quilts were cut to fit the small cot of the enlisted man or the hospital bed.

Elizabeth Hobbs Keckly, a dressmaker and confidante to Abraham Lincoln's wife Mary Todd, wrote, "I was born a slave—was the child of slave parents—therefore I came upon the earth free in God-like thought, but fettered in action." This quote is from her book, *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave, Four Years in the White House*. Born in 1818, on a plantation in Virginia--with the "Master" as her

father--she learned to be a seamstress from her enslaved mother. Elizabeth's road to freedom came through her sewing abilities. As a result, she eventually bought her son and her own freedom. She became the "modiste" or dress designer and maker for Mary Todd Lincoln during her stay in the White House. She had also sewn for Mrs. Jefferson Davis and Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas. The quilt, pieced with various silks embroidered with raised eagles and floral motifs, shown below, was made by Elizabeth and resides in the Kent State Museum where it can be seen with one of the Mrs. Lincoln's inaugural ball dresses.

Figure 17.Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, "The Elizabeth H. Keckley/Mary Todd Lincoln Quilt" Pieced quilt of various silks embroidered with raised eagles and floral motifs. Photograph by David M. Thum, Courtesy/permission of the Kent State University Museum.

Another story taken from this period had to do with a presently controversial topic. *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* is based on the memories and testimony of Ozella McDaniel Williams. Ozella contended that there had been a "secret code" never revealed before that provided runaway slaves with directions and information. According to this secret code freedom could be found in the messages in quilts hung out of windows, fence posts and cloths lines. According to Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond Dobard, in their late 1990s book, slaves that were on the "Freedom Trail" could memorize the blocks and understand the local layout for shelter, safety and assistance. Ozella gave detailed information about what each type of pattern or block conveyed.

This publication, *Hidden in Plain View*, has been a source of conflict in the quilting community. It has been alarming to academic and quilt historians that the story of this secret code was presented as "fact" without further research to support Ms. William's narrative. However, the fact that there is so little directly written by Black citizens contributes to the possibility of a code to assist slaves to freedom.

Stitched from the Soul Slave Quilts of the Antebellum South by Gladys-Marie Fry offers proof of a few slave-made quilts survivial. The makers of many quilts made during this period did not get credit for their work. Sometimes the owners of slaves kept or made gifts of quilts without revealing their creators. Cuesta Ray

Benberry, the author of *Always There: The African-American Presence in American Quilts*, suggested the work of many slaves was made "invisible" to the larger world and this included many pieces of folk art such as quilts.

In 1861, The Civil War began and advertisements for dresses, shirts and quilting began showing up in certain magazines placed by Black women. Thomas Elkins, an African American inventor, received a patent for a combination ironing and eating table which converted to a quilting frame. "Aunt Pattie Earthman," age 103, of Nashville, Tennessee was still quilting without wearing glasses.

The Late 19th Century through the Beginning of the 20th Century

After the Civil War both formerly free and newly emancipated Black women moved from general all-inclusive labor into domestic or small farm work. Life, for women of color, had not changed much. They had few civil rights and worked from the "crack of dawn until late at night." Although material/fabric was more readily available and was much cheaper with big cotton harvests and American textile mills, many African American quilters still used discarded clothing, ticking (mattress fabric), fertilizer and grain sacks, burlap, and scraps in the composition of their quilt creations. Necessity dictated the bedding of those days was plain, easily sewn, and stuffed with anything from corn husks to worn out quilts. There are even quilts that have men's suits opened at the seams and used as the middle layer for warmth!

It was during this time that many women of all heritages started to "swap" general quilting patterns more than earlier times. The seamstresses of European background were starting to heavily influence the quilters of African descent and as a result, they shared commonly favored patterns.

At this time, "African American quilt makers' backgrounds, living conditions, needs, access to materials, aesthetic sensibilities, creative impulses and technical skills were vastly divergent," Mrs. Questa Benberry wrote in a modern exhibit brochure, arguing that no single style represented them. "Thus it is a simplistic notion that legions of black quilt makers produced works displaying a single aesthetic orientation." This quote is from the obituary dated September 3, 2007, in the *Washington Post* about Cuesta Benberry, a legendary quilt historian. She also was quoted in her eulogy as saying, "I soon realized that any investigation of quilt history, a female-dominated narrative, would also be closely allied to women's history."

With freedom came the freedom of choice and the right to choose any pattern available on the market. Many more traditional symbols, structure, and textures changed with the availability of common fabrics. Barriers were breaking down as

slavery and all its inhibitors slowly moved toward the homogenizing of stylish clothing, house wares, and some social conditions.

Favored and uncomplicated patterns of this period were the block and/or strip, the patchwork, the 'crazy quilt,' the nine-patch (and variations of it), and the log cabin. The log cabin pattern is one of interest because it represents a philosophy about life. Usually there is a red or yellow center block that represents the hearth and fire. Around it is built narrow strips representing the logs of a cabin. One side traditionally has light colored fabric, and the other half has dark fabrics representing joyful and sorrowful aspect of living.

The Quilting Boom: Two World Wars

There were many influences upon Americans of African descent during this period. A broader and more opportunistic world was in place for women of color. In 1909, Nannie H. Burroughs opened the National Training School in Washington, D.C. for Women and Girls based on the "Three B's"—the Bible, the Bathtub and the Broom. The curriculum included sewing and very probably quilting. The first exhibition (called "The Negro Historical and Industrial Exposition") included "all kinds of sewing" and was held in Richmond, Virginia. The "Practical Patchwork Company," founded by African American seamstress, Marie D. Webster, had patterns for quilts in such magazines as *Ladies Home Journal* just before WWI. In 1934, Ruth Clement Bond designed a set of quilts that are now called the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) quilts. TVA was one of the first agencies in the Federal Government to hire African American managers with the same pay as their white counterparts. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) started to gather American slave narratives in 1936.

During the Great Depression, the WPA was created to employ the unemployed, and hire down-and-out writers to record stories of American families. It was of interest to the writers to interview people who actually had been former slaves during the Great Depression. Talking of quilting came up for many women as it was a major source of socializing as well as comfort and income for their families. In *Voices from Slavery*, published in 1970, on page 60, Martha Colquitt was interviewed and remembered, "Our beds had big homemade posties and frames, and we used ropes for spring. Grandma….used to piece up a heap of quilts out of our old clothes and any kind of scraps she could get aholt (sic) of."

The following quilts are dated from around 1920 to 1940 and are representative of many African American quilts from this period.

Figure 18. "Nosegay in Blocks", 1940s, Louisiana, maker unknown. Photograph by owner, Willow M. Pittman

Figure 19. Inset of quilt of figure 18

Figure 20. "The Montgomery, Alabama "Shore Fowl" Feedsack Abstract". Izzy Johnson, maker, 1920 and 1935.

Figure 21.An enhanced view of the ink stamping on the feedsack backing. Photography by Willow M. Pittman, author and owner

Several factors contributed to the large number of African American quilts created from about 1915 to about 1960. The first contributor had to do with barrels and sacks, the second was about sewing machines, and the last had to do with a pattern company and a newspaper.

Before 1900, all grains were transported in wooden barrels. Around 1910, consumers and farmers alike were getting their animal feed, sugar, and flour mostly in huge rough cotton sacks with the name of the company inked on it. Many Americans, especially minorities, were facing starvation. Free cloth was an important commodity. One sack equaled an apron; three sacks equaled a dress. The Great Depression of the 1930s produced a great deal of "chicken linen" quilts and as a result, feedsack became a major fabric source.

The sewing machine was actually invented early in the 19th century but was not "perfected" or widely available until the late 1880s. Most machines were out of the question for African American seamstresses and quilters. The sewing machine did become more available as the income of minorities improved. Hand stitched quilts are, however, of more "value" to many in the quilting world because they can represent hundreds of hours of work.

The last contribution made to the production of African American quilts had to do with two resources that quilters started to use. McCalls was one of the first companies to produce old and new patterns for quilts. African American quilters used patterns like the Dresden Plate, The Wedding Ring, and others to create their own versions of them. The second resource was patterns reproduced in newspapers like the *Kansas City Star*. Each week women would clip out and save quilt patterns. The first patterns came out in the 1920s and ended in 1961. Fanciful names and patterns were used by many African Americans to create quilts named "Pickle Dish," "Black-Eyed Susan" and "Sunbonnet Sue." These patterns are available today thanks to quilt historians.

In early twentieth Century America, many women had little or no opportunity to express their artistic abilities except through some domestic chores. Quiltmaking, because women in general were limited in their means to engage in the "outside world," was a way to share personal, social, and even political expressions. Quilting provided a medium for many women who may not have had the chance to shine in their communities, churches, or society as a whole. "Women embraced quilts as not only a medium for expression, but also as a means to exhibit their power," said Sara Pendergast in *Quilts: A Female Perspective on American Culture*. Also, she included, "Quilts were desired and marketable commodities which brought needed income to the household, revenue for their places of worship, and support for the military."

The collecting and displaying of quilts as American folk art is important for it gives a "voice" to everyday women. African American women did not had many opportunities or choices in the past to give expression to innate talents. Quilting, over two centuries, gave them an outlet for their creativity. Elizabeth Scott has a quilt in the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. Along with her quilt is this reflection in exhibit 25 of the **Things Holds, Line Connect: African American Families and Communities in Maryland Gallery,** "It's important to me to use art in a manner that invites people to look and then carry something home—even if it is subliminal—that might make a change in them. Imagine a piece of art that will let you sleep under it! Art that comforts on so many different levels is exceptional."

Contemporary Quilting: 1960 to the Present

"I think we get so emotional about quilts because they're such an integral part of many people's lives," Mrs. Benberry told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in 1998. "They're on the bed. They're there at birth. They're there at death. They're part of the marriage bed. They're part of our lives, and they give us so many memories…

You'd call a quilt like you would a child. [Her mother-in-law would] lift up a trunk lid and say, 'Come see my Sugar Bowl;' she didn't say, 'Come see my blue-and-white quilt.'"

Quilting in 2010 America estimates there are over 21 million quilters in the U.S. and at least a million or more are Black. Sewing together has been an activity that has brought women of color together for centuries of family life and it has resurged over the last decades.

Traveling quilting shows such as Roland Freeman's "A Communion of the Spirits" toured nine museums in 1997. Carolyn Mazloomi's "Spirits of the Cloth," in 1998, opened at the American Crafts Museums in New York. These were only the beginning of many national showings of African American quilts.

As tours, displays, fairs, and museum showings began to take place, a specific mention should be made of the Gee's Bend quilting community. The isolated, rural area has produced eight generations of stellar quilters. The Quilts of Gee's Bend: exhibition started in the early 2000s at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. In 2003, the Gee's Bend Quilters Collective of about fifty women, was formed to continue to produce their quilts and exclusively sell them. The Internet site about the group states, "The town's women developed a distinctive, bold, and sophisticated quilting style based on traditional American (and African American) quilts, but with a geometric simplicity reminiscent of Amish quilts and modern art."

Their work, collectively and individually, is amazing, "jazzy" and free-style. Martin Luther King came to Gee's Bend during the civil rights era and told them, "I came over here to Gee's Bend to tell you, 'You are somebody.'" This quote came from "Fabric of Their Lives" in the October, 2006, issue of the *Smithsonian Magazine*. These women rose from the backwater of Alabama to international fame with unique and dramatic creations using old shirts, polyester dresses, pants, strips, and blocks of used clothing. When collector William Arnett came to town looking for a quilt he had seen in a photograph in 1998, and purchased several from the quilt's maker, word soon "spread through Gee's Bend that there was a crazy white man in town paying good money for raggedy old quilts" (same issue of the *Smithsonian* as above).

By improvising their percussive colors and geometric but simple patterns, these women and their ancestors created startling works of art. They did not have simple comforts for much of their lives-- such as electricity, indoor plumbing, heat or running water—but they created beautiful art work from scraps and rags.

Overall, African American quilters have chosen to include varying levels of their African heritage into their contemporary work.

When reviewing the characteristics of Afro-centric quilts that are stated and shown earlier in this body of work, many of these qualities are found in the make-up of African American quilts. Of course, there are quilters of all colors following traditional European styles. African American quilt historians recognize Faith Ringgold, Cuesta R. Benberry, Gussie Wells, Carolyn Mazloom, LaQuita Tummings, Nora Ezell, Elizabeth T. Scott, Mary Albertha Green, and Hystercine Rankin as just a few of the nationally recognized artists using quilts as their medium.

Within Maryland there are many quilting societies, guilds and groups that support traditional and contemporary African American quilting. Groups such as the African American Quilters of Baltimore still bring women together to bond over their stitching.

By improvising their percussive colors and geometric but simple patterns, as mentioned earlier, these women and their ancestors created startling works of art. They did not have simple comforts for much of their lives-- such as electricity, indoor plumbing, heat or running water—but they created beautiful art work from old clothing.

Figure 22. "**Sewing a Quilt**," Jennie Pettway and another girl with the quilter Jorena Pettway, Gees Bend, Alabama, Arthur Rothstein, photographer, 1937. This image is from the National Archives, Library of Congress. http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(fsa+8b35946))+@field(COLLID+fsa)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf

One in three of Gee's Bend residents is named "Pettway," the surname of one of the original owners of the Gee's Bend antebellum plantation. The "eye-popping" quilts below are just a few created by the "Benders" community.

Fiqure 23, Mary L. Bennett, "Housetop," variation, 1965, with permission from Tinwood Media

Figure 24. Essie Bendolph Pettway, "Roman Stripes" variation, 1997, with permission from Tinwood Media for figures 23-25

(Please check on Figure 25 – this one could not be located under the artist's name or by this name in the collection.)

Overall, African American quilters have chosen to include much of their heritage into their contemporary work. Many of these qualities that are traditional are still found, along with African influence cloth, in the make-up of African American quilts.

Within Maryland there are many renowned quilting artists. In a late spring, 2010, during a telephone conversation with Sandra Smith, it was discovered that several of her works of quilting art were inspired by the Gee's Bend Exhibition in Baltimore some years ago. She worked on one quilt, "Gees Four" for over a year. Most of her work is two-sided (fairly unusual). The quilt pictured below is called "The Conversation." Her work can be described as a blend of contemporary and traditional styles with a "jazzy, modern-art" outcome.

Figure 26. "A Conversation", 1994, by Sandra Smith is taken from her gallery of works and used with her kind permission. It can be found at http://www.sandrasmithquilts.com/docs/gallery.html. Photographer: Jose Sanchez of Baltimore, MD.

In conclusion, studying the history of African American quilts has confirmed that quilts, as a folk art form, have been under-explored and appreciated. While a 19th century quilt recently sold at a Sotheby's auction for about $13,000 (and there have been others that went for much more), many collectors are active today. It is believed that we must strive to find and preserve the history and actual quilts of the past and present.

One hundred years from now will our descendants visit the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore and see the legacy our African American quilters left us? Will they go to exhibits like the Elizabeth Scott's display and leave with America's legacy of responsibility, vitality, generosity and tenacity firmly fixed in their hearts and minds? Will they understand the price our ancestor's paid for their freedom—for America's freedom? Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the foreword of *Saving America's Treasures* said, "…the greatest danger facing our historic legacy today comes from…indifference, neglect, the much needed resources and the ravages of time." Willow Pittman, the author of this lesson states, "That passing the knowledge of how deeply African American quilts have impacted many people, will help to educate our young and develop their appreciation of the quilt on many different levels." This lesson plan is derived from the many resources available to the questing public and represents many years of research and collecting by the author. Review the information, view the pictures, and feel the passion and vitality that comes from them.

African American quilts have been a source of family history, an expression of creativity and love and also a pervasive inspiration to all women. It connects African American women to others in their community and re-establishes our relatedness to our mothers, grandmothers and "foremothers" through quilting and its history. Through this lesson plan, the author hopes to have explored the diverse contributions African American quilts have made for over two centuries and to remind all women of the value in connecting to our roots and heritage. Historical material included in this lesson connects African Americans back to their roots in Africa—to tribal artwork, traditions and spiritual inheritances. Documented evidence of quilting traditions from Africa re-establish ties to the African continent and connects many to knowledge of their cultural ties in West and South Africa.

An understanding of the African American experience is gleaned by viewing examples of historical records about quilting. It is an integral part of Maryland and America's history--both domestically and artistically. Knowing the basic characteristics of traditional African American quilt composition is a window into having a background in ethnic arts. This knowledge would also include current compositions by contemporary artists who quilt.

"Memory and Spirit: A History of African American Quilting" by no means exhausts coverage of the amazing presence and history of quilts by Black women. Actually, it barely covers the "tip of the iceberg" in substantiating the rich and varied experience afforded by this topic. The most moving aspect of this research is the realization that quilts very probably have given "voice" to the artistic talent of more minority women than any other medium. It was not "romantic" to sit up late at night and stitch on bedding to keep your family warm; women did not tell their friends the next morning of their "artistic endeavors." Most African American women did not even recognize their own talent in the creation of these wonderful pieces of textile folk art until someone else "in the art world" discovered them. The author hopes the students and teachers using this lesson plan as a tool will recognize that African American quilts are a part of our treasured national heritage.

Lesson Development:

Motivation:

1. Introduction

Teachers should share the following information with students:

It is good for students of all cultures to learn an appreciation for other social groups. We need not just "tolerate" but celebrate our differences. African American quilts are the expression of the rise of an integral part of American culture. Black Americans contributed to the American language, economy, art and literature. Quilting is a multi-layered topic vested deeply in family life and the arts. The appreciation and preservation of quilts can teach students many things about the African American experience in helping raise our nation. There is a kinship between all women who have sewn these articles of comfort, memory, and beauty that crosses cultural lines. Having said this, an appreciation for the quilt as an Afro-centric folk form generates recognition of artistic skill and creativity in all art forms.

African American quilts are improvisational, deeply spiritual and unique in their tradition.

Preserving the past and providing for the future, of this art form, is a worthy endeavor. As Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "Irreplaceable symbols of our history need to be recognized as a form of documentation of our nation's struggle for freedom. For our female forebears, for ourselves and the women who come after

us, we need to make sure the art form of the common woman is saved and perpetuated."

This project is to have each student make a fabric postcard. This lesson is about the African American quilt and has detailed descriptions of their characteristics. The typical cards are about 4"X 6" however it can be any size, shape, color or design.

Note: As previously mentioned, this lesson is adaptable to a large range of Afro-centric quilting lessons as determined by the teacher.

2. Lesson Plan Project

Before you begin:

- Teachers will make a visual that will demonstrate each step in the making of a quilted postcard, or any other type of quilting activity, that will include different types of quilting designs and stitches.
- Teachers are encouraged to include visual representations of various quilts used throughout this lesson.
- Teachers may decide to develop a resource sheet for students to use while the lesson is being modeled by the teacher.

Step One:

- Students will be given and instructed to read **Student Resource Sheet 1: Outstanding Characteristics of the African American Quilt.** They are to be instructed to take notes on the historical information and pay particular attention to the pictorial representations as they read the information.
- Students will sketch the design they wish to use in making their quilts. If teachers should decide that students will make a quilted postcard, a lot of detail in their designs will not work, because it is a small project. American flags are popular but any design, particularly associated with a holiday, will be fine.

Step Two

If you should decide that students will make a quilted post card, the following steps should be taken:

- Students will gather fabric from old clothing that have some type of special memory for them. For example, the shirt they wore for their 6th grade class

picture, the skirt Mom was wearing when she came home with their little brother or sister, or some article of clothing that was/is important to them. Using discarded material (big shirts, skirts and dresses) that are Afro-centric in pattern and texture, will help make their postcards very special. Also, their selection in fabric will help in demonstrating that they have absorbed what African American quilts might look like.

- Students will decide the pattern they want to use. Use their "math hat" to figure out how many pieces they need and what size to fit onto the postcard. Cut out blocks, triangles, rectangles OR the pattern they would like to reproduce. See the website for examples on more "artsy" or holiday themed cards. Remember to keep things colorful and be creative!
- Students will SKETCH their designs onto piece of paper the same size of your postcard. Remind students not to make their designs too LARGE as it must fit onto your postcard and scaling down is difficult.
- Students will transfer their designs onto a piece of cardboard the size of the postcard you plan to send.

Step Three:

- Students will need the following materials in order to make their quilted postcard: a pair of scissors, heavy paper for making a "pattern," paper that is the size of a postcard , needle, thread and/or glue.

Step Four:

- Students will baste together the pieces (to sew fabric with long loose stitches in order to hold pieces of material together temporarily). Leave ¼ inch extra on each piece if you are going to sew them together, OR use appropriate craft glue/rubber cement to assemble the pieces of fabric onto the postcard. When you glue your pieces onto the card, make sure they are dry before handling. Cards look better if you baste stitch them together before gluing onto your card but either way is fine.

Step Five:

- Students will compose affirming, upbeat and encouraging notes to the soldiers. Be sure to follow all the instructions and suggestions on the website. Encourage students to be mindful of the content and grammar used.

Step Six:

- The teacher will mail postcards to Diane Malaznik at 14215 Westmore Street, Livonia, MI 48154 for her to forward to our U.S. soldiers overseas. Check for deadline dates for the next holiday!

  If you have any questions, email Penny Halgren, Fabric Postcard Posse, at http://fabric-postcards.com. Your finished postcards are not sent to her; however, they should be sent directly to Diane Malaznik whose address is above.

  Following are examples of postcards that have been sent to Penny's Postcard Posse:

Figure 27. Postcard by Feldman. http://www.fabric-postcards.com/images/ChristmasPics/feldman10.jpg/ Used with the express permission of Penny Halgren, creator of Penny's Postcard Posse.

Figure 28. Postcards by Bonnie. http://www.fabric-postcards.com/images/ChristmasPics/bonnie001-1.JPG Used with the kind permission of Penny Halgren, creator of Penny's Postcard Posse.

These images were taken with permission from the website of Penny Halgren, well-known quilting "guru," from California. Penny wanted to do something to let our soldiers serving away from home know that there are people who think of them.

Penny Halgren
7925 Pasadena Ave
La Mesa, CA 91941

These are her websites for those interested:
http://www.How-to-Quilt.com
http://www.TheQuiltingCoach.com
http://www.QuiltBlockLibrary.com
http://www.AskPennyHalgren.com

Email address: halgren@cox.net

Since 2006, people from around the U. S. have been creating postcard size quilts to send to our troops.

Assessment:

1. Divide students into groups of three to six persons (the number of students in this cooperative learning strategy will depend on the size of your class).
2. Have students select a lead person, recorder, and spokesperson for the group.
3. Pass out **Student Resource Sheet 2: Group Report Topics.** Give each group a topic on which to work from the list in order for them to discuss and write a three to four page essay (computers will be needed for question #4 and books will be needed for question #5).
4. Provide time for each groups' spokesperson to give his/her group report.
5. Allow class to discuss each report giving constructive criticism based on the objective established for this project.
6. Grade student reports and quilts based on a teacher made rubric given and discussed prior and during the assessment.

Closure:

While hand making quilted postcards and sending them to American soldiers in service to our nation, there should be some reflection on what our foremothers created when they sat by candle, fire and electric lights until late at night, sacrificing a portion of their life for their family's comfort. Sending the quilted card to servicemen and women will remind them of their own womenfolk at home. Also, the brief messages should remind them that they are not forgotten as they serve us….we, the people.

Please note:

As long as teachers stick with the Afro-centric quilting theme, teachers may decide to substitute some materials for those that will work with different visual arts classes. For example: Art and Design students may use scraps of fabric and glue them to a piece of thick drawing paper. Students in a Drawing and Painting class

may paint their quilt designs in a 5”x7” grid drawn on watercolor paper. Students in Photography may cut out photographs to tell a story.

Since lesson plans may be changed, teachers may decide to use the information in this lesson for another purpose other than making postcards sent to soldiers. For example, teachers may decide to have each student create a hand sewn quilted square and then have students piece them together in order to create a large class quilt.

Thoughtful Application:

Our nation’s gender and racial issues are deeply rooted in the development and production of quilts. The history of the African American quilt is tied to our cultural heritage in all its glories and shames. It should be very obvious this lesson can closely tied into many subjects like social studies, women’s studies, United States History, and labor issues.

Math is an integral part of making a quilt. Cutting pieces to scale and size requires arithmetic.

Quilting is an art form. Some of the most amazing pieces of folk art are quilts. It is the “ordinary and extraordinary” expression by women of their talents.

Lesson Extensions:

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum offers the work and words of several African American quilters. Quilts offer a visual statement for many issues the Museum puts forth to its visitors about race, history and gender. Teachers who incorporate the lesson about African American quilts into other lessons, can strengthen and inform their students about how life was experienced for African American women in the United States. It also connects cultural ties to African heritage.

Teachers may decide to use this lesson before or after visiting the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. Either way, it will make your students’ experiences richer. It will be easier to make curricular connections to many exhibits and increase their capacity to understand Maryland African American history, culture, and especially the arts. By “humanizing” this ordinary, daily life “chore”, i.e. quilting, into a real and artistic expression by womenfolk, many of the exhibitions offered by the Reginald F. Lewis Museum make clear ties to the past and the future for people of African heritage.

Credit Line for Photographs

"The "Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley/Mary Todd Lincoln Quilt." Photograph by David M. Thum, Courtesy of the Kent State University Museum, gift of The Ross Trump Collection, Medina, Ohio, 1994.79.1. With kind permission of the Kent State University Museum.

- Gees Bend quilts images used with permission from Tinwood Media, Inc., Matt Arnett, Director of Exhibitions. 512 Means Street NW, #305, Atlanta, Georgia, 30318.
- Library of Congress, National Archives—Print and Photograph Division. "Girl at Window Gees Bend, Alabama. Photographer, Arthur Rothstein of the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection. {The U.S. Copyright Office information says that "Works by the U.S. Government are not eligible for U.S. copyright protection." (Circular 1 [pdf], "Copyright Basics," page 5.)}

Sandra Smith granted written permission to use her quilt image.

Jose Sanchez was the photographer. His studio was in Baltimore, MD.
The quilt is called *A Conversation,* "You have my permission to use a picture of the quilt from my website."

Willow M. Pittman, (author and writer of this lesson) gives permission to use images of African American quilts from her personal collection. Photographed by Willow M. Pittman.

Penny Halgren, gave permission to use anything needed from her websites to use in this "Memory and Spirit: African American Quilt History" project.

Jean Druesedow gave permission to use image of the Elizabeth Keckly/Mary Todd Lincoln Quilt.

> "Pieced quilt of various silks embroidered with raised eagles and floral motifs."
>
> Credit line: gift of The Ross Trump Collection, Medina, Ohio, 1994.79.1
> This quilt is known as the "Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley/Mary Todd Lincoln Quilt." It is said to have been made by Mrs. Keckley, a former slave who worked in the White House for the Lincolns, and it is thought to contain scraps from Mrs. Lincoln's dresses. Mrs. Keckley was a well known dressmaker in Washington D.C. and had sewn for Mrs. Jefferson Davis, Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas and Mrs. John McLean as well as Mrs. Lincoln. She bought herself and her son out of slavery with the extra money she made as a seamstress. She later established the Home Economics Department at Wilberforce College in Ohio.

Student Resource Sheet 1

Outstanding Characteristics of the African American Quilt

What makes a quilt particularly Afro-centric? *Signs and Symbols: African Images in African-American Quilts* by Maude Southwell Wahlman gives examples of common themes and patterns found in historical and contemporary African American quilts.

1) The African Weave Pattern

The "African Weave" pattern was originally created by the male in Africa. Men usually wove the fabric and the women decorated. This changed in America, where the male (patriarchal society) did not do "household" chores. However, the use of strips of cloth and woven patterns echoed the original "weaved" look from Africa that was so desirable for royalty and higher caste members of the tribe (Wahlman, p. 26). The simplistic example of this type of characteristic can be seen in Florine Smith's quilt composition created ca. 1975. She is a member of the Gee's Bend consortium.

Figure 2. Florine Smith's "Strips," 1975, is used with permission from Tinwood Media

2) The Use of large shapes of whole cloth/ single colored fabric

Wahlman stated, "In Africa, the need to be able to recognize people from far distances was crucial for warring tribes and traveling hunting parties" (Wahlman, p. 33). The use of large shapes is still reflected in the Gee's Bend, of Alabama contemporary quilters. This particular quilt below was made by Amelia Bennett around 1950 and is built of blocks and strips of a variety of fabrics. It is 80 X 74 inches, a typical size for quilts for most of the 20th century.

Figure 3. Amerlia Bennett's "Blocks and Strips," 1950's, is used with permission from Tinwood Media

3) Strong Visuals of "Percussive" Color

Color preferences were associated with religious and cultural beliefs. Many of the lively and almost "aggressive color patterns are used in traditional African American quilts. After being influenced by European patterns at the turn of the 20th century, sometimes this was the only expression of Afro-centrism appearing in their make-up. These color predilections primarily came from use in Kente textiles, however, they are widely accepted and represented in African American color palette.

Figure 4. Lucy T. Pettway, 1981, "Birds in the Air" used with permission of Tinwood Media
Figure 5. Maker Unknown, 1948, "Starfish Blocks" embroidered from author's collection
Figure 6. Close-up of Figure 2; single block from author's collection

There is a story to be told based on African traditional colors. Using Lucy T. Pettway's "Birds in the Air" quilt (figure 4) as an example, black is a very common color found in most Afro-American quilts. It represents maturity and the expression of intense spiritual energy. Pink and purple are feminine colors and are usually worn by women. (Is it possible this is where we got the use of pink for baby girls?) Red is associated with blood as in many cultures. It also is the color of death and sacrifice. Yellow can be associated with fecundities and high-value. The white border usually is a color of celebration, hence, the use of white clothing when attending a funeral—to celebrate and honor the person's life.

Figure 7. Helen McCloud, ca. 1965, "Blocks and Strips, Tied With Yarn" with permission of Tinwood Media.
Figure 8. Unknown maker, "Strips in Blue and Rose", Alabama, ca. 1930, photographed and owned by author

4) Asymmetry

The above quilt (figure 7) by Helen McCloud of the Gee's Bend group in Alabama represents the artful "balancing" of color and texture reflects the traditional African weave. Repeating patterns were not "normal" in some African cultures for reasons both religious and superstitious. Breaks in patterns were meant to protect the wearer from "evil spirits." The creator was free to shift the fabric into separate weaves at any time based on their artistic judgment. In fact, the number of patterns or changes in a cloth usually correlated to the owner's higher value in their society. Irregularity also gave the maker a "mark" of ownership that prohibited others from copying it.

5) Recordkeeping/storytelling

Keeping track of history on cloth is an age-old tradition in many cultures. It was a way to keep records of historical events, unusual natural occurrences (such as eclipses of the sun), important dates in the personal or tribal history and were a way to appeal to the deities (gods). It provided a medium that could be handed down for generations to interpret.

Susan Meeske in the article, "Quilt Me a Story" discusses in a conversational, yet knowledgeable manner, the use of quilts as a medium for storytelling. She also puts forth the studied opinion that women used their patterns as running commentaries on their "lifestyle, artistic talents, political views, and even ….her emotions" (Meeske).

Harriet Powers is perhaps the best known "story-quilter" in African American textile history. Born in Georgia, Harriet was a slave revealed in the 1870 U.S. Census as having no ability to read or write. Two of her appliquéd quilts are in nationally-recognized museums. Being deeply religious, her first quilt depicted scenes from the Bible. Squares like "The Last Supper," "Satan amidst the Seven

Stars" and "Paradise with Eve" were part of eleven panels that captured the imagination of participants in the Athens, Georgia "Cotton Fair" in 1886. Roots of Harriet's impressionistic and primitive/naïve style have been traced by historians to West Africa. Out of necessity, she sold her famous quilt to an admirer for $5.00 several years after its first showing at the Cotton Fair. Today it is considered a national treasure. African American quilts in the Smithsonian's collection are: Frances Jolly's quilt top, Ann's Quilt (slave-made) and Betty West's quilt.

Figures 9 and 10. Harriet Power's "Bible Quilt" and the smaller insert are used with kind permission for educational uses by the National Museum of American History.

6) Religious Symbols

Many spiritual marks are used world-wide to provide the participant with spiritual expression, protection and sacred knowledge. The above quilt by Harriet Powers, the "Bible Quilt," provides universal symbols for the viewer to interpret. In quilting, sometimes there was writing in native language on the quilts and almost always, some form of symbolic representation for major concerns in the life cycle such as birth, mating and death. Diamond, circles, totems, or tracks of animals were frequently represented. Many interpretations were not written down but transmitted verbally within the family or sometimes known by whole communities. Over time their meanings were lost. Some African Americans and most Americans in general, are unaware of much of the significance of African art and tradition. The true meanings of many of the symbols on quilts were lost to succeeding generations, yet they were carried on through a sense of tradition and an emotional appeal.

At this point, the readers/students can help the author with a mystery! In early 2006, a quilt top was purchased with what the quilt deal said was a "Flying F" symbol within each of the blocks on the colorful piece. An avid collector herself,

she had no information about what the symbol meant. Look at the picture of the "Flying F" below. The author of this lesson, Willow Pittman, collector and student of African American quilts has not been able to discover what this symbol represents. Does anyone think they can find the original meaning of this symbol? If you do, please contact Rose Wiggins, the Maryland State Department of Education's Liaison to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and she will get in touch with the author. Her email address is rwiggins@msde.state.md.us.



Figure 11. Views of the "Flying F" quilt top, ca. 1930, owned and photographed by Willow M. Pittman
Figure 12. inset of larger quilt top
Figure 13. single "Flying F"

"The Flying F" top has an unknown maker and was purchased from the Piney Woods area of Texas. It is cotton and has 9 blocks. Two of the "Flying F's are of different color and slightly different design in keeping with the "imperfection" belief in some African American quilting. This is a mystery! For the author, at least, the interpretation is unknown.

7) Protective "Charms" and Patterns

Specific threats to the users of quilts were addressed by sewing "charms" onto the quilt itself. Many African Americans had similar belief systems that "perfect" patterns invited the god's anger. They believed that only the gods were able to create perfection, hence, they sewed uneven or irregular patterns until around 1930. At that time, many African American women sewed quilt patterns "of the day" from patterns in the newspaper such as *The Kansas Star*. This particular quilt by Nettie Young is an "H" variation and is titled "Milky Way." It was made in about 1971, and it embodies many of the traditions of African American quilts, including the geometric "protective" shapes of circles, squares and diamonds.

Figure 14. Nettie Young's "Milky Way" image is used with permission of Tinwood Media. This quilt was created in 1971, pattern is the "H" variation and is part of the Gee's Bend collection. (Please check on this one – could not be located under the artist's name or by this name in the collection.)

8) Strip or "String"

This type of quilt has its roots in western Africa. The use of strips of cloth torn or cut to create warm bedding produced a durable and inexpensive quilt. "Strippy" quilts have patterns that have many rhythms and a certain "unpredictability" about them. Contrasting colors and textures, improvisational patterns, and large scale pieces of cloth produced a good solution for long-lasting everyday bed coverings.

Figure 15. Gee's Bend quilter Jessie T. Pettway, born 1929. Bars and string-pieced columns, ca. 1950, cotton fabric. Use with permission of Tinwood Media, Gee's Bend community representative

9) Improvisation

Creating and changing old patterns is a major factor in the development of the ethno-aesthetic of this type of bedding and folk art. Breaking a pattern was important to African belief systems as it averted "evil spirits" and the wrath of gods who wanted to keep "perfection" to themselves. Later on it simply became a general manner of expression. Many European-type quilts were copied with the inclusion of the tradition of improvising new patterns and colors of the African American heritage, when textiles and patterns from many sources became available.

Student Resource Sheet 2

Group Report Topics

1. Challenges that occur when a population is uprooted or displaced. What do the people lose when this happens? Are there any advantages?
2. Name traditional characteristics of the African American quilt. How do you see these aspects surviving in today's Black American art and/or culture?
3. Women have had the traditional task of homemaking and the role of domestic provider in American culture. How did this role differ between other women in American during our history? How was it similar? Compare and contrast African American women's roles to that of European women.
4. Sandra Smith at http://tinyurl.com/mkmhrt3 has had her quilts described as modern art. She has also been labeled "jazzy" in her expression. How do these two ideas, "modern art" and "jazz" relate to her quilt art?
5. Student Resources Section has a list of books to read that are in some way related to quilting. The teacher or students are to select from the list books for students to read. Read a selection and write 3-5 paragraphs on how the use of quilts and/or sewing them relate to the book's story line? Provide an opportunity for students discuss and answer the question given to their group.

Note: Teachers may add questions relating to the lesson to this list.


no Guns
NO
DREAM
NO

The Star Quilt on the Northern Plains:

A Symbol of American Indian Identity

By Birgit Hans

Courtesy of the North Dakota Council on the Arts

Agnes Yellow Wolf piecing a quilt at her home on Spirit Lake Reservation, November 1986.

The colorful, intricately pieced star quilt has become synonymous with American Indian celebrations and identity on the northern plains. Visitors to American Indian communities can admire star quilts when they are placed around the shoulders of someone being honored at a powwow, in colorful stacks waiting to be distributed at giveaways, and in many other contexts. They are displayed on the walls of tribal council chambers, used as backdrops in official photographs, used in people's houses, and wrapped around newborns. Star quilts serve utilitarian as well as ceremonial purposes and, as an important commodity within American Indian communities, they also play a role in the reservation economy, especially for women.

Quilting

Quilting came to America with colonists from Europe, where quilting has a long history. Early examples of quilting can be found in museums throughout the world. The first quilted clothing in England was brought by returning crusaders, who had seen Arabs wear quilted jackets with padding that protected them from arrows. Quilted articles were mentioned in various inventories of British households over the years, and the earliest surviving English example, a bed cover, dates back to 1708.[1] Joining together layers of fabric and stuffing with stitching, then, looks back on a long tradition, and those traditions were brought to this country with English and other European emigrants.

However, as quilt historian Roderick Kiracofe points out in his work *The American Quilt: A History of Cloth and Comfort, 1750-1950,* contrary to popular misconceptions, colonial women settlers were often too busy providing for the necessities of everyday life to make quilts. While some women did make them, the process was too time consuming and the available fabrics too expensive to appeal to the majority of women. "The few quilts that remain from this period were probably made as showpieces, which explains why they have survived at all."[2] Quilting did not gain momentum until after the Revolutionary War, when fabric was produced and printed in America as well as imported from Europe. As the settlers moved westward from the east coast, the women brought their quilting traditions with them to their new homes. Three different kinds of quilts emerged, as Kiracofe points out:

> In this early period of quiltmaking in America, there are three basic types of quilts: the whole-cloth quilt; the high-style central medallion appliqué quilt, which was strongly influenced by Indian quilts and palampores; and the mosaic piecework style referred to by one source as a "repeat block jammed together with others of its kind and arranged helter skelter." There were no true block quilts until the early nineteenth century.[3]

The "block" quilt was firmly established as the dominant quilt pattern during the second half of the nineteenth century and, as Kiracofe states, became the American quilt pattern.[4]

In the nineteenth century the hands of civilized women were never supposed to be idle, a strong tenet of the Cult of Domesticity. Approved needlework included all types, among them knitting, embroidery, and sewing of all types, including quilting. Small quilt pieces made it easy for women to carry their work with them, and they could work on their quilt tops at any time, no matter whether they had much or little time at their disposal. Quilts were utilitarian objects that were a necessity of life, even survival, but also fulfilled many other needs for women. First, they quilted for economic reasons. By using scraps and pieces salvaged from worn-out clothing, women reused resources available to them. However, the aesthetic sense of the quilters still demanded that pieces were arranged in pleasing patterns even when they used available resources exclusively.

Women who had monetary resources or enough leisure time created art quilts, such as the Baltimore albums and later the crazy quilts. Those quilts were not meant for everyday use but were status symbols and used for display or as "company" quilts. The crazy quilts sometimes contained materials from a favored dress, for example debut dresses, wedding gowns, a deceased relative's gown. These quilts were sentimental and symbolic.

Quilting also had a social dimension; women and girls within families worked together on their quilts, but, when possible, they also participated in quilting bees where neighboring women from a usually rural community came together to do the quilting which involves stitching together the three layers that make up quilts (quilt top, batting, and backing). Quilting bees established women's social networks and, in many cases, not only gave them the opportunity to socialize but also to establish an identity apart from their husbands. While their husbands might accompany them to the house where the quilting bee took place, the actual quilting was usually an all-female event. They were particularly important to women since wives did not often have the opportunity to attend gatherings without their husbands in the nineteenth century.

By the mid-twentieth century, however, the popularity of quilt had begun to wane, and quilting among the American people had almost disappeared before its renewed popularity in the 1960s and 1970s. In a recent article in the monthly magazine *Quilters Newsletter*, author John Flynn estimates that there are no fewer than approximately twenty-seven million quilters in America today.[5] Among this number are the American Indian quilters of the northern plains.

Quilting on the Northern Plains

By the late nineteenth century America Indian girls on the northern plains were learning to quilt in day schools, in on-reservation boarding schools, and in off-reservation boarding schools. Women generally learned to quilt in missionary societies. By 1900 Christian missions were well established on the northern plains reservations and had attained some success. There was fierce competition among the various Christian denominations for Native souls; for example, the Catholic missionaries tried to "keep the women away from the Episcopalian sewing societies by involving them in the St. Mary Societies."[6] Sewing and, by extension, quilting were domestic arts that Native women had to learn in order to become productive members of non-Native society, according to Anglo-American, middle-class ideas of proper nineteenth-century womanhood.

Mary Collins, a Congregational minister on the Standing Rock Reservation from 1885 to 1910, certainly echoed these convictions in her writings: "One woman had learned to iron well. The wife of Yellow Hawk, and Yellow Hawk himself is trying to become a Christian," and "We can also hire the women to sew for us now if we cut and baste the work and such beautiful sewing as

The Language of Quilting

The Quilt:

A quilt usually consists of three layers: the top, the batting, and the back. The various fabric pieces for the top are arranged in a pattern; in the case of the star quilt the diamond-shaped pieces are arranged into eight blades. The space between the blades is filled in with background fabric, most often a solid color. The batting is almost always a thin layer of polyester today. Traditionally, it could be cotton or wool fleece, an old and torn quilt, even newspapers. The backing is a piece of fabric or several pieces of fabric sewn together. The batting is sandwiched between the top and the backing, and the three layers are pinned together for quilting. After the quilting, the raw edges of the quilt are bound.

Quilt pattern

The first step of making a quilt is to choose a quilt pattern. There are hundreds of different patterns and some patterns have different names. Here on the northern plains, American Indian women usually choose to make the eight-pointed star in its many variations.

Piecing

The basic unit of the quilt is the quilt block. The quilter will cut the necessary pieces and sew them together for the block; he or she is piecing the block. The star quilt does not have blocks, but consists of eight blades that are made of diamond-shaped pieces. The spaces between the blades are filled in with fabric triangles, the background fabric.

Quilting

After the three layers of the quilt have been pinned together (some quilters use fabric spray to adhere the layers together) the quilting begins. Traditionally this was done by hand and often at so-called quilting bees. Many American Indian women continue to hand quilt; a very common pattern consists of half circles. The quilting stitches show the skill of the quilter, since stitches ideally should be small and even. Today quilts are sometimes quilted on sewing machines or given to businesses that specialize in that task. Another way of holding the layers together is by tying, in which thread or yarn is stitched through all three layers and tied in a knot.

The hands of Christine Boyer, Belcourt, North Dakota.

Courtesy of the North Dakota Council on the Arts

Binding

The raw edges of a finished quilt must be bound. The quilter sews together strips of fabric until the strip is long enough to edge the entire quilt. Then the strip is sewn to the quilt, turned over the raw edge, and the other side sewn to the quilt to cover the raw edge.

SHSND 970.637 T641 1913 p37

The girls sewing class at the Fort Totten Indian School in 1913.

they do would surprise you."[7] In an 1886 letter Collins wrote:

> The homes are feeling the influence of the lessons taught in school. We find fathers building houses of logs in order to make the children content to stay at home when they return from the school. Mothers make quilts of bright bits of calico and curtains of scarlet or blue for the windows and so our little ones leave a home where there is no sign of home comfort and often return to a home that has much to make their lives more pleasant---while the teachers are laboring in season and out-of-season for the training of the children, the missionaries are laboring also in the homes.[8]

Mary Collins, like other missionaries and teachers, subscribed to the middle-class social standard that the proper role of the woman was in the home, providing for the physical comfort of her family. Sewing was very much a part of a woman's work. The federal government, of course, reflected these ideas in its policy making, entirely oblivious to the fact that American Indian women had always been in charge of the private sphere of their lives.[9] In fact, the ideals of Anglo-American middle-class womanhood that were being imposed on them curtailed their traditional decision-making powers and their social status.

American Indian women learned to piece a great variety of quilting patterns in schools and in missionary sewing societies. Frank Fiske started his career as a photographer in Fort Yates on the Standing Rock Reservation in 1900, and his photographs document many aspects of American Indian life of his time. Some of his photographs document quilts hanging over building rafters and on walls at the various agricultural fairs on the Standing Rock Reservation. As the photographs show, occasionally women chose the Morning Star as their pattern, the large star that is typical for the quilt pattern we know as star quilts today, but the majority of the quilts show other patterns. Major John Brennan, superintendent on the Pine Ridge Reservation from 1900 to 1917, also took a number of photographs of the Lakota people and their way of life. A series of his photographs depicts a giveaway, and one photograph shows quilts hung over a rope. Here too a star quilt is one of several quilts but no more prominent than others. At least one horse has a blanket spread over its back in the Brennan photographs, but it is not a star quilt either. A star quilt is thrown over a wagon seat, however, in yet another photograph.[10] American Indian women seem to have chosen any pattern that appealed to them, either aesthetically or because they had the resources to make a quilt in that pattern.

SHSND 1852-3519

A giveaway and feast at Standing Rock Reservation, early 1900s, photographed by Frank Fiske. Giveaways are held to mark an important event in an individual's life or within a family. Gifts are given by the honored individual and his or her family to those who have been helpful. For example, if a student graduates from college, the student and his or her family may give gifts to everyone who has helped the student. If someone dies, the family may have a giveaway to honor those who have been important in that individual's life. Star quilts have become important gifts at giveaways.

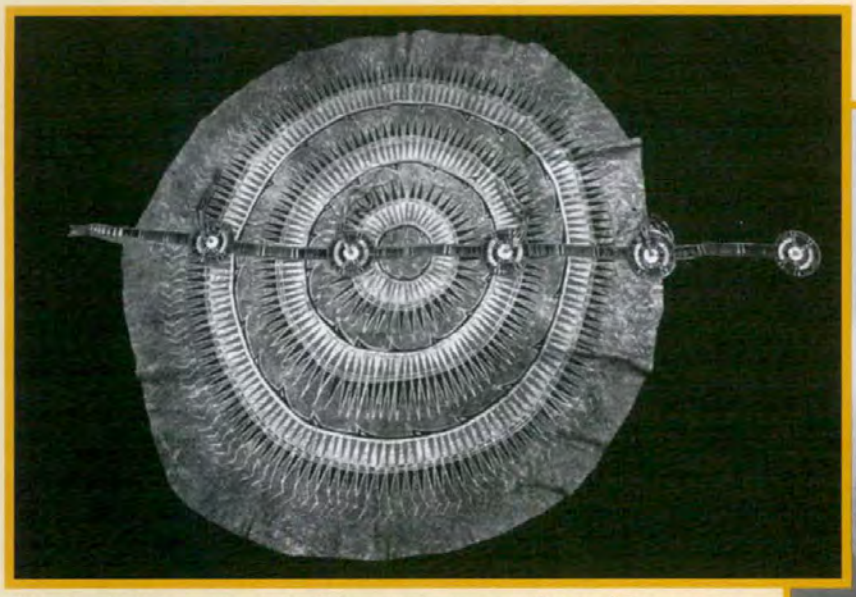
Despite the photographic record, many Native women I talked to about star quilts told me that the star pattern was not used until the 1950s. It is likely that star quilts were made but were not on public display in earlier years, especially if they were used in various American Indian ceremonies that the federal government attempted to eradicate between the 1880s and the late 1920s. While many American Indians converted to Christianity during those years, others continued the ceremonies out of sight of the federal representatives and the Christian missionaries on the reservations. In the ceremonies, star quilts probably replaced the painted buffalo robes that often showed patterns similar to that of the star quilt. Buffalo robes were traditionally painted by men, but women were also involved in the manufacture of sacred objects during pre-reservation times; therefore, the replacement of an object made by men for one made by women should not have been problematic. However, if the family members of the women I interviewed were primarily involved in Christian activities during that time, they would have been oblivious to the importance of the star quilt. The ceremonies, of course, continued to be conducted out of sight. During the American Indian fight for civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s, native spirituality was once more openly practiced, and the star quilt became part of the public record. Since then, the Morning Star pattern has virtually replaced all other quilting patterns. [11]

The Star Quilt

There are hundreds of quilt patterns whose popularity has changed during the centuries. Sandra Dallas points out in *The Quilt that Walked to Golden* that" stars were the most popular nineteenth-century quilt pattern."[12] However, the eight-pointed star of the American Indian star quilt is only one of the multitudinous star patterns that non-Native women used. The names of the quilt patterns changed as well, and the star quilt pattern is variously known as the Morning Star, the Star of Bethlehem, the Mathematical Star, the Star of the East, and the Lone Star; there may be other names as well. While the American Indian communities on the northern plains adopted the Morning Star pattern as their symbol of cultural identity in the 1950s, the pattern remains only one of many patterns among non-native quilters.

In both Native and non-Native quilt traditions the central star of the Morning Star pattern covers most of the quilt top. The mainstream American version usually has a border pieced together from smaller pieces

SHSND 9943



Circular designs composed of diamonds are a traditional form among many Native people of the northern plains. This robe, approximately fifty-two inches in diameter, has diamonds arranged in progressively larger circles. A decoration of bird quills crosses the robe. Dating from about 1850, the robe is of Hidatsa origin.

SHSND 1952-5314

Mary Bullhead stands with a painted canvas cloth in a photo taken by Frank Fiske.

SHSND C1588

Frank Fiske photographed this canvas tipi with traditional decoration on Standing Rock Agency.

SHSND 15685

Moccasins, dated from 1900 to 1909, collected from the Standing Rock Reservation.

and often uses at least one patterned print. American Indian star quilts usually have no border, and until very recently Native quilters preferred to use solid fabrics. Lately though I have seen star quilts that use print design fabrics. Some Native women say that the colors they choose for their quilts represent the traditional colors of the four directions (black, red, yellow, and white). Others simply choose colors that appeal to them or that they happen to have at hand.

The range of materials today has also led to other changes, such as the use of polyester-cotton mixes instead of all cotton fabrics and satin fabrics. Emma King from Fort Yates expresses a strong preference for polyester-cotton fabrics:

> "years ago we had cotton, nothing but cotton. This polyester just came recently. But I like to use polyester-cotton [blend], it washes up nice, and the color stays, whereas with your cotton it fades. And when you're stitching [quilting] the needle just glides along. And the batting is made of polyester, and that won't tear."[13]

Satin star quilts are especially valued on the northern plains and have become extremely popular in the last ten years. Ina Mae Driver from Mandaree, North Dakota, was attracted to satin fabrics when she saw them in the stores:" I thought, well, wouldn't these look pretty on a star quilt."[14] Some American Indian women have told me that they prefer satin because it is considered fancier and the more intense colors make the star bursts more vivid However, other quilters often mention that the satin is too slippery, frays too easily, and generally slows them down, especially if they are making a larger number of quilts for giveaways, funerals, and memorials.

The popularity of the eight-pointed star is probably related to its similarity to traditional decorative design:

> The design principles and color arrangements of Sioux star quilts are remarkably similar to the geometric paintings on some nineteenth century hide robes. There is a group of painted robes in which the central design is formed by arranging diamonds in progressively larger circles. This group is represented by, among others, the "War Bonnet" and "Morning Star" patterns. The morning star design bears the closest resemblance to the star motif on Sioux quilts. Although the diamonds of the morning star are laid out in a different fashion, the overall effect of this pattern is nearly the same as that found on star quilts.[15]

The traditional design is often referred to as feathered circles and represented the sun as well as war bonnets signifying honor. Eventually, hide robes were replaced by Pendleton blankets and star quilts, whose original name, as Beatrice Medicine points out, translated as star robes.[16]

American Indian quilters have found ways of redesigning the classic Morning Star pattern to incorporate additional cultural symbols. For instance, the center part of the star often integrates an eagle, headdress, buffalo skull, or other cultural symbols. Florence Pulford talks about the importance of some of these cultural symbols to the Lakota quilter Laura Takes the Gun in *Morning Star Quilts*:

> This elderly woman, with fading eyesight, talked animatedly about her quilts as if they were her children. Laura's old treadle singer sewing machine was by one of the two windows. Here she had created many a noteworthy quilt. She was especially proud of one named Flying Sparrows and an Eagle Star quilt. The eagle, revered messenger between earth and the sky and symbol of valor and courage, was depicted in the star.[17]

However, not only cultural symbols are incorporated in the center of the star quilt. Some women use images from popular culture, such as Mickey Mouse and other cartoon and television characters, high school logos, basically anything that is of importance to the maker and/or the recipient. Mary Ann Helper from the Standing Rock Reservation says that she is "known for putting 'anything' in a star." Her book of designs shows everything from a turtle and a buffalo to Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. Helper says she has put every existing cartoon character into the middle of a star quilt.[18] Pictorial depictions are difficult to do with a slippery fabric like satin; these quilts are usually made from cotton. American Indian quilters also play with the shape of the star. Today it is quite common to see broken stars, smaller stars in various arrangements, small stars in the corners of the central star, and many other variations. The star quilt has definitely been adapted to American Indian aesthetics.

Helper's book of designs is known as a pattern book, a binder or folder that contains colored paper patterns for star quilts. Several Lakota quilters have shown me their pattern books. When someone orders a quilt he or she can choose from the patterns in the specific pattern book. The drawings of the star quilts are meticulously done, and they include penciled instructions on the

Courtesy of the North Dakota Council on the Arts

Viewers admire star quilts displayed at an 1988 exhibit, sponsored by the North Dakota Council on the Arts, of quilts created by Native American quilters. The eagle star quilt was made by Arlene Benson of Bismarck, North Dakota.

number of diamonds needed in each color. One woman I spoke to made one of each pattern in her binder for her mother's memorial, altogether more than eighty quilts, a huge investment of time and materials. While she managed to finish two quilt tops a day when she could work without interruptions, the tops also had to be quilted and bound. It was a tremendous time investment to finish the star quilts for the one-year memorial of her mother's death.

Needless to say, the quality of the star quilts varies, and people know who makes the best star quilts in the community. Shoddy workmanship is easy to discern even by a novice; the seams of the diamonds won't meet, which muddles the color arrangement, the quilting that holds the layers together will be done in huge stitches, there can be puckers on the front or the back, and the color choices may be less attractive. Very often a woman lacks to money to purchase the necessary fabrics or may not have access to venues where she can purchase quilting fabrics; in these cases she may use whatever is at hand. Other American Indian women create star quilts with stunning color arrangements and superb workmanship; in fact, many are exhibited in museums off and on the reservation. They are true works of art.[19] However, no matter who made the quilt or what its quality is, a star quilt is always received with respect and gratitude at a giveaway.

The Star Quilt as a Source of Economic Power

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Native peoples experienced a dire need for all kinds of fabrics on the reservations in the northern plains. The treaties promised that the annuity payments would include fabric. Take, for example, the Great Sioux Treaty concluded at Fort Laramie in 1868. Article X lists, among other things:

> For each female over twelve years of age, a flannel shirt, or the goods necessary to make it, a pair of woolen hose, twelve yards of calico, and twelve yards of cotton domestics.
>
> For the boys and girls under the age named, such flannel and cotton goods as may be needed to make each a suit of the aforesaid, together with a pair of woolen hose for each.[20]

The treaty provisions are for clothes only, and, even though women probably had scraps left over after making clothes that were undoubtedly incorporated into

quilts, this was not enough fabric to make the quilts that were needed to survive the cold northern plains winters. Also, the annuity payments were not always delivered as promised; so even the supply of fabric for clothing, with scraps for quilts, remained tenuous.

The economic situation on the reservation was truly desperate at that time. For example, Catching Bear, a Lakota from the Standing Rock Reservation, could not afford to replace the canvas cover of his tipi and asked for flour sacks left over from distributing rations at the agency:

> Rations were issued to them. The flour to be issued came in large one hundred pound sacks. Ten or fifteen sometimes twenty of these sacks sewed together made a nice large tent. It was the custom to save up these sacks to give to those who asked for them. Catching Bear, one of Sitting Bull's close friend (sic), asked for enough to make a tent as they lost there (sic) tent by fire.[21]

This letter excerpt indicates that it was a common practice to use the flour sacks for tipi covers; considering how tightly they must have been woven to hold the flour, that makes sense. However, considering the flour sacks were commonly used by American Indian women on the northern plains to make shirts and by non-Native women to make all kinds of clothing and domestic goods, flour sacks probably provided no more than a makeshift, temporary tipi cover. Despite the tight weave, the fabric was not strong enough to withstand the weather, especially the wind, in the northern plains. Its use is indicative of the lack of fabric resources due to the poverty on the reservations during that time.

Missionaries asked for fabric and quilt pieces in their missionary letters. The Standing Rock Congregational minister Mary Collins wrote in April 1905, for example, "the women rejoice over the nice bits of calico and woolen goods sent by the friends. The churches grow in numbers and I trust in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Only a month later her letter says: "thank you for the pieces. The women's societies enjoy them and the people enjoy seeing the pretty bits on their beds when the quilts are made."[22] Collins' words indicate that American Indian women during that time made quilts that were both utilitarian and *pretty*.

Appeals for quilting fabrics were also included in *The Indian Sentinel*, the publication of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, usually listed in the section "Mission needs." To give but one example:

> CLOTHING: My Sioux Indians at Holy Rosary Mission would appreciate pieces of cloth or old garments to wear. Again and again many Sioux Indian women come to me with the request for *onspaspa* (pieces or scraps) to make quilts. But I have nothing to offer. The depression also worked havoc with pieces. I have been called *Wicahinca Kuka*, (Raggedy Man). But even the rag business is not so good now. Can the readers of *The Indian Sentinel* help me out of this raggedy slump? The more useable the articles the greater my recovery. – (Rev.) Placidus F. Sialm, S.J., South Dakota.[23]

Very few priests were as poetic as Father Sialm about the need for quilting materials, but many mentioned it. The clothing boxes that were sent by donors from the East coast to various reservations on the northern plains often contained clothing entirely

SHSND A0997

Women sewing a tipi cover at Fort Berthold Reservation, late 1800s.

Frank Fiske identified this photo as taking place at the Standing Rock Fair in 1917. Note the Broken Star quilt on the horse to the far left.

inappropriate for the Plains and everyday use. However, American Indian women used those fabrics in their quilts if they could not alter the garments for their needs. Velvets and silks were juxtaposed with woolen cloth. Unfortunately, there are no photographs of such quilts.

The ledger of the McLaughlin & Spangler General Merchandise store at Fort Yates on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota indicates that individual Lakota women may have had the means to buy occasional pieces of fabric.[24] For example, on December 5, 1896, someone simply called Little Soldier in the ledger purchased "1 pr hose 45 6 yd cotton flannel 60"; the entire purchase came to "1.05." And on November 21, 1896, a member from a well-known Native family from Cannon Ball, Mrs. Howard, bought:

25 Yds Blk Calico	2.40
4 Spools Thread	20
1 Pr ladies over Shoes	1.25
10 Yds Canton Flannel	1.50

The Fort Yates store seems to have catered to Lakota men and women, the Anglo-American officers and their wives, and other Anglo-American men and women living on the Standing Rock Reservation. The ledger shows that the store carried silk, lace, cambric, calico, muslin, gingham, ticking, oil cloth, and possibly other fabrics, a range of goods that is unexpected on any reservation during the late nineteenth century.[25] There is no indication whether any of the women used the calico or any other fabrics for quilting, but it is safe to assume that at least bits and pieces went toward quilting. Lakota women may also have purchased a piece of calico or two to supplement what they had on hand.

It is unfortunate that the information on quilting during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is so sparse, because we have in all likelihood different groups quilting at Fort Yates during this time period. On the one hand, Lakota women were producing utilitarian—but pretty—quilts during this economically difficult time; it would be interesting to know how much of a Lakota aesthetic in regard to colors and composition had already developed at that time. Officers' wives and other Anglo-American women, not officers' wives, were also making quilts. However, even though all of these women were quilting, there would have been little or no interaction between them. The perceived social superiority of the officers' wives would have prevented them from interacting with either Lakota women or the other Anglo-American women. Quilting would not have been a unifying bond between them.

The Native women's societies, whose organization was encouraged by missionaries, raised money for their own needs, but were also urged to contribute money to the various missionary endeavors to "send the gospel to heathen women."[26] To raise funds during those hard, often desperate times, American Indian women made traditional crafts to sell. In the case of the Catholic

missionaries, *The Indian Sentinel* advertised the goods:

> Indian curios as card prizes are the very latest thing. Baskets, beaded chains, hammered silver bracelets and rings, Navajo runners and chair drapes make an attractive varieties. E.M Bouchelle, M.D., of Baltimore, Md., cleared $96 on an Indian curio party for the benefit of the missions. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions can supply curios on short notice from its store in Washington, D.C.[27]

Societies with sewing circles also occasionally bought fabrics for quilting. The papers of Mary Collins include the record book of the Elk Butte Women's Society. No further information about this society is found in Collins' papers, but it appears to be a Lakota women's society that raised money, at least in part, by selling handicrafts. The January 1, 1894, entry in the book is a list that included items such as: "Received for articles sold in society $10.09," "Received from Alice for articles bought of Society $1.25," "general collection $16.75." There is also a note related specifically to quilting: "Received from Sehi-win on acc't of quilts $1.50." On the opposite page is a further entry regarding quilts:

Paid for Calico	1.00
" " " , 18 yds @ 6cts-	1.08
" " " , 7 yds @ 7"	.56
" " 2 Rolls Batting,	.30
	2.94 [28]

The Elk Butte Women's Society seems to have bought calico for the quilts that they were selling and also giving away within their community. The money to do so came from donations by society members and the sale of the curios. This early record book unfortunately gives no information about the patterns women were using in constructing the quilts. The same is true of the missionaries' writings; there is no mention of patterns. The handiwork of the women remains simply "quilts."

In pre-reservation times American Indian women were able to secure some economic independence as well as prestige for themselves and their families through their beadwork, quillwork, and other skills.[29] Not every woman, however, was an expert quillworker, beadworker, or tanner, and such knowledge was restricted to women who were members of various traditional societies.

> "Specialization was maintained in two ways: through the regulation on the part of the teachers

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The Exhibit Hall, 1912, at the Standing Rock Fair, displaying both quilts, including some star patterns, and more traditional craftwork.

Quilt exhibit at the first annual Mid-winter Fair and Corn Show, Standing Rock Agency 1931. Photographed by Frank Fiske.

> who were selective in the number of people they taught . . . and through rituals which were required to do the work without peril."[30]

The work of women who were members of such societies had a spiritual dimension to it. Additionally, women had to meet social obligations, that is they had to give to those who had less in their communities. Generosity was a highly valued character trait of both men and women.

Early reservation times saw a decline in the status of Christian native women, since the churches' patriarchal structure replaced the complementary gender roles of earlier times. Generosity, once greatly valued, was frowned on by the missionaries. Missionary Mary Collins assessed the character of American Indian women as follows in a pamphlet she wrote entitled *Indian Womanhood*:

> Generosity does not have to be taught to the Indian woman, neither hospitality. In fact we as missionaries have had to try to instruct them to be more careful and saving in order to accumulate property. The old religion impressed them with the idea that their gods loved the cheerful giver, and that stinginess would be thought not to care for the dead one if they withheld anything. It was like the old Bible hire mourners. People who went to the home to weep with the bereaved would carry away with them anything they saw. When Running Antelope's daughter died, he gave away everything they had, even to his own blanket, and appeared in an old cast-off horse blanket. So it was a difficult task to train the women or men either to economy. And when they are Christians they are more than willing to divide their all with the church, and to give of their poverty to the cause of the Missions.[31]

To Collins and other middle-class reformers, generosity is only admirable if it follows the prescribed Christian ways. The women's societies with their emphasis on church and work were one way in which missionaries hoped to retrain American Indian women to fit into the mainstream Cult of Domesticity.

American Indian women, however, used these societies as a form of resistance, which non-Natives did not always recognize. First, the women's societies organized by the various Christian denominations permitted them to meet in a group, something that was otherwise frowned on during early reservation times. In this way, American Indian women continued to work cooperatively as a group, but the emphasis on the social aspect of their work led to a loss of the spiritual dimension that had been inherent in traditional

women's societies. In many ways the social emphasis devalued their work. Secondly, the women's societies permitted them to fulfill some of their traditional obligations of generosity. Historian Rebecca Kugel has written how Ojibwa women in Leech Lake, Minnesota, used Episcopalian church institutions to maintain some of their traditional roles and power within their communities, just as the Native women of the Plains were struggling to do:

> In the early 1880s, Bonga Wright and other Leech Lake Episcopal women had "begun the good work" of organizing a sewing circle. Bonga Wright assured Bishop Whipple that meetings always opened with prayer, and that the women "do not seek *earthly* reward." The Episcopal hierarchy approved heartily, and encouraged all Ojibwe converts to commence such women's meetings. Not only did sewing circles allow Ojibwe women to perfect their new skills of housewifery, the meetings also engaged them in appropriately female charitable work.
>
> Beneath the surface of Susie Bonga Wright's pious remarks, however, lies another, more significant layer of meaning. At the same time they sought to learn the new skills, Bonga Wright and the other Episcopal women reaffirmed their commitment to the traditional Ojibwe redistributive economy. The new-style Anglo-American clothing and bedding made at the sewing bees was "*carefully* given to the needy." The women sought to reinforce community solidarity and avoid partisanship. [32]

Eventually, the non-Native Episcopalian leadership opposed the Ojibwa women's outspoken participation in community issues while the Ojibwa leadership continued to accept the reciprocal gender roles of pre-reservation times.[33] For the Ojibwa women, the sewing circles gave them the opportunity to fulfill their kinship and community obligations and to exert some leadership in their new life.

American Indian women of the northern plains used the sewing circles in similar ways. The sewing circles also permitted them to continue to exert control over the existing resources and the goods they manufactured as they had done in pre-reservation times. Since many of the goods, such as clothing and quilts, were essential to the survival of American Indian communities, they continued to be a force to be reckoned with. American Indian women found a way to redefine their roles within the structures imposed by the federal government and the various Christian denominations.

Today the star quilt is an integral part of American Indian cultures on the northern plains and assures an important role for American India women in the reservation economy. Take, for instance, the family of Mary Ann Helper on the Standing Rock Reservation. In addition to holding a full-time job, Mrs. Helper makes star quilts, both for family giveaways and to sell. Only one of her three daughters sews, but everyone in her household, whether male or female, helps with cutting the diamonds when she is busy and needs to get quilts done. Quilting is a family affair, and she considers this cooperation within the household as traditional and very important. Star quilts play an important role in both traditional ceremonies and Christian churches. Not every American Indian family includes a person who is a quilter though, and if a larger number of quilts is needed, the family faces a larger outlay of money than others that can produce the needed quilts themselves.

Funerals, for example, usually require at least one star quilt to cover the coffin, and Medicine describes in "Lakota Star Quilts" how families deal with this demand:

> No matter how poor a Lakota family may be, there is a concerted effort to obtain a star quilt for the funerary rites. Upon hearing of a death in their family, many women of all ages quickly gather to make the requisite quilts. Working

SHSND 0041-0401

Women's sewing meeting on the Fort Berthold Reservation, 1897

> efficiently, they are able to produce one in approximately four hours. These may be hand-quilted or simply "tied" with yarn or threat. If the quilters are not paid immediately in cash, they are compensated by gifts a year later during the memorial feast.[34]

Today some families decide to wait with the giveaway until the memorial a year later and only procure the quilt that will cover the coffin. After the wake, that quilt may be placed in the coffin to be buried with the deceased or given to someone at the funeral. In many families women still work together when there is a death in the family. Tressa Berman describes such an occasion on the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota:

> Women gathered up their goods—hand-sewn pillows, blankets, and shawls—and immediately after Lizzy's death, began the daily rounds of soliciting donations of goods, time, and skills, especially sewing. Sewing is the literal thread connecting kinship. With the precision of a jeweler, women crafted quilt upon quilt, until a mound of star quilts seemed to reach up to the Seven sisters who descended from the sky to become the stars themselves. It felt as though everyone who was connected to Lizzy was busy sewing star quilt tops that week. Pam, a relative by marriage, collected the quilt tops and brought them down to an Indian-owned quilting business to be sewn.[35]

American Indian women living on reservations on the northern plains still face limited access to fabrics, and starting a new quilt often requires trips into the surrounding towns or the nearest cities. Some may even order fabrics online. Stores like the Ben Franklin in New Town on the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota, carry a surprising range of quilt fabrics and often have sales. With careful shopping for sale prices, it may be possible to buy the fabric for the pieced top, the batting, and the backing for a smaller star quilt for approximately one hundred dollars. Nevertheless buying the fabrics necessary for the star quilts of a giveaway is a very expensive proposition for most families. On the Fort Berthold Reservation the tribal council has established a wake fund to help families partially defray the costs of the funeral and, thereby, the cost of at least the initial star quilt needed.[36]

Reservation economics are based in part on an informal exchange of goods and services. Star quilts are definitely an important item of exchange on the reservations in the northern plains. When I recently talked to several American Indian people from various reservations on the northern plains, I was told that it is not as easy as it once was to find star quilts. An older woman from the Fort Berthold Reservation, for instance, told me that many of the older women she depended on for star quilts and who were part of her kinship group have passed on and she has had to buy quilts from a young woman who is unconnected to her family and clan. This requires a larger outlay of money on her part, especially when the quilt is needed fairly quickly. In exchange for the star quilt she needed for a War Bonnet Dance (explanation?), the older woman paid the electricity bill of the quilter rather than paying directly for the quilt. She didn't trust the younger woman to spend that much money wisely, and in this way ensured that the woman's children benefitted from the sale. Star quilts are also traded for food, diapers, and other commodities necessary in daily life.

The value that American Indians of the northern plains place on star quilts and the fact that they are not always readily available creates an economic niche for some quilters. The job opportunities on the reservations of the northern plains are limited, and in 2010 the unemployment rates hovered at 16.4 percent in contrast to non-Native unemployment rates at 6.3 percent.[37] Even if jobs were available, many women could not take advantage of them, since their child-care obligations would prevent them from doing so. Reservations populations are young populations, according to a 2006 study of American Indian children in North Dakota. More than two-in-five American Indians [living on reservations in North Dakota] . . . were younger that age 20 in 2004," which would make it difficult for women to work outside their homes even if jobs were available.[38] Quilting may provide a workable cottage industry for them. As Medicine pointed out, quilters have always been compensated for their work, whether with goods or money, even if it was the extended family that produced the needed quilts. As she said: "If the quilters are not paid immediately in cash, they are compensated by gifts later during the memorial feast."[39] Payment is not a violation of the cultural norms then, but a cottage industry that may increase the price of a star quilt significantly.

To establish a cottage industry for American Indian arts and crafts and even for quilts is not a new idea. Unfortunately, these attempts are often dependent on federal funding and are bound by federal guidelines, which have rarely reflected the realities of reservation life and the needs of contemporary American Indian women. States in the northern plains are trying to attract more

tourists as part of their economic development. One problem with such development is, as Medicine mentions in "Lakota Star Quilts," that tourism is a problematic focus in the case of the star quilt. Well-made star quilts require a major time investment and some initial monetary outlay for fabrics and batting, and tourists are reluctant to buy such expensive items as souvenirs when they can buy Indian trinkets produced abroad to commemorate their trip to the northern plains.[40] It does not men, however, that all attempts to establish quilt industries have failed. Medicine mentions two such enterprises, and an internet search located several other American Indian quilt businesses on the northern plains.[41]

Courtesy of Marilyn Hudson

Dr. Tony Lingham receives a star quilt May 17, 2011, as a token of appreciation. From left to right are Dr. Herbert Wilson, Dr. Tony Lingham, Scott Eagle (holding quilt), and Martin Cross. The quilt was donated by Marilyn Hudson, who had received it at a memorial of a friend who passed away several years earlier.

The Ceremonial Star Quilt

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the federal government, its reservation representatives, and Christian missionaries did their best to eradicate American Indian spiritual beliefs and ceremonies. The ceremonies never ceased but went underground. It was not until the 1960s that ceremonies became part of everyday public life on the northern plains once more. By that time the traditional buffalo hides used in ceremonies had been replaced by the star quilt. Today star quilts play an important role in both traditional ceremonies and Christian churches. They are needed at bonnet ceremonies, giveaways, baptisms, church decorations, funerals, at a *Yuwipi,* and on many other occasions. During a Yuwipi, a Lakota healing ceremony, the medicine man is usually wrapped in a star quilt and tied up; his spirit helpers will then release him. Another ceremonial use on the Standing Rock reservation is by the Catholic church, which places different color star quilts behind the altar cross to signify the seasons of the liturgical year.

In contrast to pre-reservation times when decorated ceremonial items were made by women who were members of the women's societies with their own spiritual observances, everyone can make a star quilt for ceremonial purposes today, just as everyone can learn how to quilt. However, the roles of American Indian women are not so very different from the way they were in pre-reservation times. Women helped to make ceremonial goods then, too, that is, they tanned the hides, made and decorated containers that held ceremonial articles, and so forth. In contemporary times American Indian women control the number of quilts available, their production, and the price of the quilts.

Quilting has been established on the northern plains for more than one hundred years. Introduced as part of the federal government's and Christian churches' attempt to assimilate American Indian women, it offered quilters the opportunity instead to maintain gender roles in defiance of expectations and to eke out a precarious economic niche for themselves. As one well-known quilter, Mary Brave Bull McLaughlin, from the Standing Rock Reservation, told me: "Since the 1800s quilting has just been a different way of artistic forms for Native people."[42] On the northern plains, however, the adoption and reinterpretation of the mainstream quilting pattern Morning Star by American Indian women has created a distinct symbol of American Indian identity.

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39. Medicine, "Lakota Star Quilts," 169.
40. Medicine, "Lakota Star Quilts," 170. Even the tribal casinos located on the reservations in the northern plains carry primarily Medicine's Indian trinkets in their gift shops; however there will usually be a few star quilts and a few items of American Indian art, for example beadwork or carvings or paintings, among them. It is sometimes difficult to locate the genuine pieces of art among the rest, and they are significantly more expensive.
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Bridging Cultures *Mural Project*

State University New York Potsdam

Francisco Letelier

A collaborative mural project bridging memory and culture

The ***Bridging Cultures Mural Project*** at New York State University Potsdam connects three decades of solidarity and cultural actions in support of human rights and democracy in Chile and Latin America to current issues and perspectives in the Americas. Faculty and students worked in collaboration with artist Francisco Letelier, broadly exploring themes in human rights. The mural uses a central image of an Afro Latina woman framed in the contours of the American continents as well as other depictions of women to symbolize the shared struggles of many nations and communities.

Building Bridges Mural
Panel 1 Nueva Cancion/ New Sing

Panel One- *Nueva Cancion, Pacha Mama*, 'New Song, Pacha Mama.' The New Song movement includes folk traditions, ballads and protest songs. A hybrid music genre, it celebrates commitment and social equality, continues to played an integral role in social struggles. The figure represents the Pacha Mama creative energy that sustains life on earth. Her spirit runs through the Andes Mountains depicted in the mural

Building Bridges Mural
Panel 2 Corazon de Todo/ Heart of it All

Panel 2 - *El Corazon de Todo,* 'The Heart of All Things'
The white dove between panels symbolizes more than peace, in the mural it also contains the idea of justice and dignity. Against the background map of the Americas a train of refugees is depicted in movement towards the central figure of an Afro Latina woman. The figure symbolizes the path of identity and belonging, representing immigrants and travellers. A river flows around her to symbolize our growing negotiation with the earth and ourselves during a time of climate change.

Building Bridges Mural
Panel 3 Los Desaparecidos/ The Disappeared

Panel 3
Los Desaparecidos, 'The Disappeared'
During the military dictatorships in Latin America, thousands of people disappeared after being taken into custody by the armed forces. Decades later, family members and loved ones continue to seek justice and information. Army torture, detentions and disappearances are once again prevalent in Colombia, Chile and Brazil. New lists of disappeared include native women along the US - Canada Border and extend well into the Southern Cone as indigenous and environmental leaders face continued reprisals and citizens demonstrate against economic models. New numbers also include those taken into border camps within the United Sates and are unaccounted for.

Panel 4

Toda la Luz, 'All the Light'
A woman receives light into her hands, as it reflects into other directions. This final panel symbolizes the power of women to create life, shelter and safety. In depicting her we conjure up notions of home and hearth, affirming basic human rights, traditional beliefs, inquiry and investigation.

Building Bridges Mural
Panel 4 La Luz/ The Light

Building Bridges is created within the context of an ongoing pursuit for truth and justice, celebrating survivors, victims, witnesses and observers as carriers of imagination, culture, resilience and persistence. The project and its associated elements are created through collaborative and participatory processes, employing dialogues and exchange to expand upon viewpoints concerning human rights and justice in the Americas.

Building Bridges is a program of ***Forging Memory,*** a collaboration of faculty students and community in the United States and Chile.
The project exhibited a collection of Chilean patchwork appliques called *arpilleras* at Suny Potsdam Gibson Gallery and St Lawrence University's Brush Gallery. During the creation of Building Bridges**,** the artist team created textile works in the style of Chilea*n arpilleras*, that were integrated them into ***Paso del Condor,*** a multi media mural installation presented by ***Francisco Letelier*** at the
Santa Fe Art Institute in October 2019.
Bridging Cultures was made possible through
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Dr. Liliana Trevizán, Dr. Oscar Sarmiento
Dr. M.J. Heisey, Professor Amy Swartele.
Jenica P. Rogers, Director Loughheed Learning Commons
April Vasher-Dean, Director The Art Museum
& Professor Tamara Feinstein, St Lawrence University

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https://www.theclinic.cl/2019/10/03/valentina-bone-la-desconocida-heroina-tras-el-arte-de-las-arpilleras-en-chile/

THECLINIC.CL

Valentina Bone: La desconocida heroína tras el arte de las arpilleras en Chile

Sofía Anich 03 de Octubre, 2019

Murió a los 87 años, pero su legado quedó bordado en las miles de arpilleras que se hicieron en Chile durante la dictadura y en las cientos de artesanas que estuvieron detrás de ellas. Llegó a estar a cargo de más de 600 mujeres en Santiago, a las que transformó en artistas y con la venta de sus artesanías lograron combatir la pobreza y sostener sus casas.

"Volví a mi casa incrustada su angustia en mi, casi no podía creer lo que había escuchado, hijos, esposos, hermanos sacados a golpes y amenazas de sus casas ante la impotencia física de sus familias, llevadas mujeres embarazadas, parejas hasta con sus niños, todos desaparecidos por semanas y hasta meses, sin saberse nada, ni de los recién nacidos, ni de los niños y de los adultos menos". (Valentina Bone, 1984)

Cuando **Valentina Bone** llegó en 1974 a la casona ubicada en la calle Santa Mónica 2338 del Barrio Brasil, el dolor invadía todos los rincones del **comité Pro Paz,** primera organización en Chile, bajo el amparo de la Iglesia, en recibir las denuncias de **familiares de detenidos desaparecidos**.

Llegó porque alguien conocía su nombre. Llegó porque ni las mujeres que estaban sumidas ante su propio desconsuelo, ni las personas a su alrededor, sabían qué hacer con la angustia que las acechaba desde que la dictadura les arrebató a sus seres queridos.

Frontis Comité Pro Paz Foto: Memoria chilena

Valentina, sin embargo, decidida como era, **determinó transformar esos sentimientos en arte** y bordar **arpilleras** fue su primera ocurrencia. "Mi madre era un ser humano muy creativo, tenía una capacidad impresionante para hacer cosas de la nada", cuenta Paulina Barberán, su única hija.

De la nada, pedazos de género que estaban destinados al basurero y ropajes viejos, se convirtieron en el fundamento de las historias que Valentina, artista y escultora de profesión, les enseñó a hilar, **donde quedarían bordados para siempre los crímenes de la dictadura**.

El primer soporte fueron sacos paperos y harineros. De ahí su nombre, arpilleras, creadas con costales que iban a pedir a los verduleros en La Vega y géneros que sacaron hasta de la basura de alguna fábrica textil.

Arpilleristas de Puente Alto, primer mural 1975 *Foto: gentileza de Paulina Barberán*

Así, las **torturas** que no quedaron registradas en imágenes, fueron reconstruidas con hilo y aguja. Figuras desnudas colgadas por los pies y militares representados en sombras negras fueron los primeros sucesos que aquellas manos dolorosas empezaron a relatar a través de bordados.

"En el fondo había que hacer un relato que sirviera de alguna manera como una **forma catártica de manifestar su dolor**", explica Paulina.

Las historias traspasaron fronteras y fueron vendidas a países como Estados Unidos, Suiza y Alemania, para darle **sustento** a las mujeres que confeccionaban las **arpilleras** y al mismo tiempo, para mostrar el arte como reflejo de lo que estaba pasando en Chile y que nadie podía decir.

Fue así como la demanda de arpilleras se inició.

TODO PARTIÓ EN COYHAIQUE

"Nací en Chile, un país de cordillera, trescientos años de lucha no nos pusieron a salvo de la conquista, y la independencia del dominio español tampoco nos puso a salvo de la demencia". (Valentina Bone, 1984)

Antes de dolor, de la dictadura, los detenidos desaparecidos y las arpilleras, Valentina empezaba a desarrollar su trabajo a 1.600 kilómetros de Santiago.

En **febrero de 1973**, ella y su hija comenzaban otra de sus aventuras. La Citrola en la que recorrieron muchos lugares de Chile y que más de una vez ocuparon de hotel, las llevaba esta vez al extremo sur. Fue ahí, cuando cruzaban la cordillera desde la pampa argentina, que Valentina vio **Coyhaique**. El verdor que la rodeaba la enamoró y a pesar de que tenía un trabajo estable en Santiago, dijo: yo aquí quiero vivir.

No tardó en inventarse una ocupación y en menos de un fin de semana ya había convencido al director de la Corfo de que podía crear una **organización con mujeres artesanas**, cuyos productos había visto en la plaza de aquella ciudad.
Ese mismo año, por una gran casualidad, llegó a dirigir el Regimiento de Infantería Motorizada del **general Humberto Gordon**. Y aunque Valentina en esa época no sabía que pronto estaría trabajando con familiares de detenidos desaparecidos, su hija Paulina de 16 años, compartía el banco en el colegio con la hija de quien llegaría a ser director de la CNI y que enfrentaría 130 querellas criminales. Murió el año 2000, impune.

Cerca de Valentina también, vivía su prima y su esposo **Ricardo Tirado**, que se desempeñaba como gerente de Socoagro en Coyhaique, hasta que llegó la dictadura y tuvo que trasladarse a la capital, donde por otra casualidad, encontró trabajo como **chofer del comité Pro Paz.**

Y cuando **Gloria Torres, abogada de la organización**, se cuestionó qué iba a hacer con la pena de tantas madres, hermanas y esposas que lloraban preguntándose dónde estaban todos aquellos a quienes la dictadura los había despojado de sus casas, **Ricardo pensó en Valentina.**

BORDANDO LA HISTORIA POR SANTIAGO

"También eran mujeres angustiadas, otra angustia, más primaria, el hambre, igual de dolorosa, el ver a un niño como va lentamente adelgazando, lentamente consumiéndose, el no tener recursos con que ir a un hospital, con que comprar un remedio, siempre es doloroso. Y con estos grupos siguió la historia de las arpilleras". (Valentina Bone, 1984)

En **1975 el comité Pro Paz fue disuelto** por orden de **Augusto Pinochet** y un día después nacía la **Vicaría de la Solidaridad,** donde las denuncias por las violaciones a los derechos humanos continuaron y con ellas, las arpilleras de aquellas personas que en muchos casos, jamás supieron donde estaban los desaparecidos.

Pero el régimen también llegó a las poblaciones y **Valentina**, con su metro setenta, su pelo rojo y su postura imponente, comenzó su recorrido por las cuatro zonas de Santiago donde estuvo presente la Vicaría (Oriente, Norte, Poniente y Centro) para desarrollar **talleres de arpilleras** con el mismo propósito, pero esta vez, con otros problemas y otros dolores.

Dar de comer al enfermo – Arpilleristas Zona Oriente
Catálogo Arpilleras. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. Año 2012

Esta vez, los hilos trazan la realidad de la pobreza. La solidaridad de las **ollas comunitarias**, los volantines colgados del cable de la luz para iluminar sus casas y las **lavanderías populares**, fueron otros motivos para otras manos.

A sus 70 años, **Silvia Pinto** aún guarda los pedacitos de género que hace muchos años, llenaron su casa de colores y la transformaron en una **artista**.

Con su imaginación, plasmaba lo que para ella era un diario de vida, mientras Valentina les enseñaba de **diseños y colores**. El hambre, el toque de queda y los militares insaciables buscando a vecinos que Silvia nunca volvió a ver.

Cárcel
Catálogo Arpilleras. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. Año 2012

Redimir al cautivo
Catálogo Arpilleras. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. Año 2012

“A las mujeres **ellos las desnudaban**, también hacíamos arpilleras así, como ellos las tomaban presas y las desnudaban, era como una protesta para que el mundo conociera lo que nosotros estábamos viviendo, así empezó todo”, relata quien llegó a ser **Presidenta de los Talleres Artesanales de Conchalí (arpilleristas)** por más tiempo del que puede recordar.

Pero a bordar no fue lo único que aprendió Silvia ni las más de 600 mujeres que estuvieron a cargo de Valentina.

El año 1978 Bone llegó a la zona norte donde hoy se encuentran las comunas de Huechuraba, Conchalí, Recoleta y conoció a la **hermana Karoline Mayer**, con quien trabajaría durante muchísimo tiempo en su misión de profesionalizar a cientos de mujeres.

Valentina Bone junto a las Arpilleristas de Conchalí Foto gentileza de Paulina Barberán

Eran tantas, que tuvieron que organizarse para exportar sus productos a través de la Fundación Missio, que creó la hermana Karoline en 1977 con el obispo regional de la época, Jorge Hourton. Cada una de las más de 200 mujeres que se concentraron en los talleres de la zona norte, tenía una labor. Tuvieron que **diversificar los productos** para ampliar el mercado. Algunas hacían tejidos, otras costuras, otras arpilleras y otras además se dedicaban a realizar el control de calidad, resolver las finanzas y tantas otras tareas, con Valentina a la cabeza de todas. “No te voy a dar los pescados, te voy a enseñar a usar la caña” era su política.

“Podíamos nosotros sobrevivir, porque eso se llamaba sobrevivir y poder hacerlo con nuestras propias manos era algo lindo”, relata Silvia.

Con el tiempo dejaron de bordar denuncias y comenzaron a **hilar escenas típicas de la cultura chilena** para poder vender los productos en Chile.


Vivir de lo Cotidiano

Valentina junto a la hermana Karoline Mayer

“Nosotras éramos como dueñas de casa nomás, pero ahí nos desarrollamos como personas y nos desarrollamos como artistas porque hacíamos unos paisajes preciosos”, cuenta Silvia, que se amanecía para llegar a las fechas de entrega y con ella, su marido, quien también aprendió a bordar y planchar cuando se quedó cesante.

“Ella era una profesora de día completo porque estaba todo el día con nosotras, todos los días de la semana. Era una persona extraordinaria porque era de mente muy amplia, incluso nos enseñó a nosotras a salir para afuera, para conocer nuestro país, nos enseñó a organizarnos”, dice con emoción cuando recuerda a Valentina y con ella, los mejores años de su vida.

LA GALLINA CAHUINERA

“Hablan de la historia de los talleres y su organización, esta organización que las ha transformado, que las ha convertido a todas en personas (…), las ha hecho descubrir el valor y la fuerza de una comunidad”. (Valentina Bone, 1984)

“En una de estas locuras que se le ocurrían dijo: hay que salir de **vacaciones** porque hay muchas personas aquí que nunca han salido nunca de vacaciones”, relata Paulina. Y en dos micros se iban de campamento. Una llevaba a los pasajeros y la otra, los bultos.

Vacaciones Foto: gentileza de Paulina Barberán

Una vez al año, diez días. Juntas y felices, llevaban a toda su familia. Conocieron Rapel, Las Siete Tazas, Pichidangui, Pichicuy, La Boca, Lo Hermita. Algunas incluso, pudieron conocer el mar.

En uno de los primeros viajes que se hicieron en al Cajón del Maipo, alguien sugirió que llevaran una tele para ver el **Festival de Viña**, pero a Valentina no le gustó nada la idea, si se iban de campamento era para compartir. Pero no se iba a quedar de brazos cruzados. Se le ocurrió hacer su propio evento al que llamó el **Festival de la Gallina Cahuinera.**

Gallina en vez de gaviota y cahuinera por la cantidad de mujeres que llenaban el lugares con sus risas y cuchicheos.

“Se disfrazó ella y su marido de un gallo y una gallina y eran los animadores. Al final era un despliegue fenomenal, porque cada vez se le ocurrían cosas distintas: una vez hicimos un elefante de espuma, ¡pero con gente adentro!”, recuerda Paulina riendo.

En todas sus locuras la acompañó **Gustavo**, quien fue su marido por 31 años. Se conocieron cuando él era estudiante de arquitectura y Valentina, profesora de arte en la facultad de Lo Contador de la Universidad Católica. Era 20 años menor que ella, pero según Paulina, no se les notaba mucho la diferencia.

Gustavo también se hizo parte de los talleres. A los hijos de las artesanas les enseñaba carpintería y también se le otorgó el honor de ser jurado en los festivales, junto a Valentina, la hermana Karoline y Paulina. Se separaron cuando ella tenía 75 años.

HERMANAS EN EL DOLOR

Irene Zamorano dice a los 64 años que todo en la vida se entrelaza. El día del **funeral de Valentina**, se preparaba para hacer clases de bordado y diseño a un grupo de mujeres sordomudas. “Yo hasta el día de hoy sigo sembrando en nombre de ella”, dice Irene, que ya ha sido profesora de 150 mujeres en un programa de la comuna de Recoleta. Pero todo comenzó para ella cuando su mamá le contó de los talleres que estaban haciendo en la **zona centro** de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad. Irene ya tenía tres hijos y el último, que hoy ya tiene 35, aún no cumplía un año.

“Yo miro para atrás y digo: **‘¡pucha que fuiste valiente!’.** Yo le dejé mi hijo guagüito a mi mamá y me dijo: ‘¿y Jorge quiere?’ Yo le dije: ‘no, pero voy a ir igual’. Fue una valentía realmente porque eran otros tiempos”, dice.

Valentina junto a artesanas Santiago centro foto: gentileza de Paulina Barberán

En ese momento comenzó una historia diferente en la vida de Irene. Si no se hubiera atrevido, quizás no hubiera ganado un Fondart para ir a exponer su trabajo a Cuba y tampoco habría podido mantener a su familia.

Dice que Valentina sembró en ella el deseo de cambiar su mundo interior. “Yo sentía que había algo dentro de mí que faltaba, porque dueña de casa, con mis niños, todo bien, pero el desarrollo personal uno no puede dejarlo de lado y gracias a Dios que di ese paso”, dice hoy orgullosa.

Hizo de todo, cubrecamas, manteles, ajuares de guagua, cortinas y al igual que Silvia Pinto, se amanecía para llegar a las entregas, porque el barco no esperaba a nadie para zarpar con sus bordados a tierras lejanas.

“Estar en los talleres con otras mujeres que viven las mismas situaciones de dolor, de cesantía, de tantas cosas, de tanta pobreza… **estar ahí unidas, obviamente nos ayudó, nos facilitó la vida”,** relata Irene, que a pesar de la dictadura, recuerda esos años como los mejores de su vida.

COMPAÑERA DE VIDA

“Mi madre es como un **personaje público sin ser pública** porque es una mujer que hizo muchas cosas importantes e interesantes durante gran parte de su vida, pero sin embargo, a ella le cargaba esto de aparecer, aunque de alguna manera yo creo que ella en lo profundo de su corazoncito sintió el hecho de que nunca se le hubiese reconocido formalmente su trabajo”, dice Paulina Barberán.

Ella fue la única hija de **Valentina Bone**, a quien define como la clásica oveja negra de una familia de ingenieros y empresarios. Estudió arte en la Escuela de Bellas Artes, tuvo una hija y se separó. Nunca militó en ningún partido, aunque indirectamente estuvo unida a personas que hacían política. Tanto así que allanaron su casa en dos ocasiones, la segunda vez, a mediados de los 70. Se llevaron a Paulina porque la confundieron con otra persona.

Paulina también estudió **arte**, pero en la Universidad de Chile y apenas salió de la universidad se fue a trabajar con su mamá. Hoy, a sus 62 años dice que está pronto a jubilarse, pero aún trabaja en la escuela que fundó Valentina junto a la hermana Karoline, para profesionalizar a las mujeres artesanas. Solo que ahora no es una, son cuatro y el objetivo es enseñar oficios a jóvenes de escasos recursos.

La escuela, que cuando se fundó en 1980 se llamaba **Centro de capacitación para la autogestión**, buscaba profesionalizar a las mismas mujeres que se encontraban en los talleres de las cuatro zonas donde trabajó Valentina. Los estudios duraban tres años y tenían clases de diseño, administración, color, planificación.

“De repente las chiquillas contaban que las clases de **matemática** eran un tormento, pero era para que entendieran los costos de los productos, como los podían vender y empezaron a poder ayudar a sus hijos en el colegio”, dice. Además explica que la idea era que las mujeres pudieran crear sus propias organizaciones y muchas lo lograron.

Graduación de mujeres artesanas 1994 Foto: gentileza de Paulina Barberán

La última vez que Paulina vio a su madre, habían tomado once juntas. La ayudó a remojar el pan en el café, como tanto le gustaba. Cuando se despidieron, **Valentina, a sus 87 años** le sonrió desde su silla de ruedas un domingo de agosto.

Se fue tranquila, dice, dejando una vida llena de gratificaciones.

Los últimos años de su vida desarrolló el sentido del humor y retomó la escultura, pasión que tantos años atrás había abandonado para dedicarse por completo a formar mujeres y crear artistas, porque la única política de Valentina siempre fue el **compromiso social.**

Por eso, en el funeral, su hija dijo:

“Esta mujer nos pertenecía a todos, no era solo mi madre”.

Valentina Bone murió el 12 de agosto de 2019.

LA IZQUIERDA DIARIO
PTR Partido de Trabajadores Revolucionarios
(http://www.laizquierdadiario.cl/Chile)

Cultura

Arpilleras, relatando desde el desecho el arte de resistencia

Reproducimos el ensayo historiográfico de Rafaella Ruilova que fue escrito como introducción al poemario de Alejandra Decap, el Hilo Azul, recientemente publicado por la editorial Leucocarbo Ediciones.

Rafaella Ruilova (Rafaella-Ruilova)
Licenciada en historia y militante de Pan y Rosas

Lunes 7 de enero de 2019

(IMG/arton121665.jpg)

Este breve ensayo historiográfico pretende entregar a les lectores un trozo, tal vez un breve retazo de lo que fue la historia de las arpilleras chilenas en la dictadura cívico-militar encabezada por Pinochet. Historias de perdida, desaparición forzosa y dolor, pero que, en plena abundancia de ausencia de seres queridos, de justicia y de pan, la presencia en cuerpos femeninos marcó el camino que buscaba gritar lo perdido, las manos y trozos que tejían historias silenciadas se transformaron en la negación del silencio, en el habla desde el desecho como soporte material pero también humano, desde la desesperación, desde el harapo se iba elaborando relaciones colectivas y un arte de resistencia que contaba la miseria, la tortura, las desapariciones y brillaba para contar también la lucha y resistencia, un testimonio vivo hecho de trapos se transformó en protesta.

Así, contradictoriamente, en pleno caos y desgarro, las mujeres, quienes históricamente hemos cargado con el silencio impuesto por una sociedad patriarcal, en la cara de la contrarrevolción capitalista feroz que fue el golpe y la dictadura, se vieron empujadas a buscar a sus seres queridos, a alimentar a los suyos, y a hacer de las “actividades femeninas” el habla de quienes no podían

hablar convirtiéndose activamente en productoras de una cultura de resistencia, en agentes de memoria desde el desecho de ser relegadas a lo marginal, del desecho de la sociedad asediada por la desaparición, asesinato y tortura, hicieron emerger con sus manos y cuerpos, con cada puntada tejida una narrativa que transformó el desecho en arte, lo marginal en habla y la ausencia en presencia del no olvido.

Las arpilleras crearon así miles de vehículos de memoria, cada una de sus obras es uno y tal vez más, la complejidad de su simpleza no salta a primera vista. Vehículos que entrecruzan la vivencia personal y la social, vehículos que sin duda han trascendido y que hasta el día de hoy sigue incentivando elaboraciones culturales y artísticas, como es el caso de este poemario, “Hilo azul”, escrito por mi querida amiga y camarada Alejandra Decap.

Tradición arpillera en Chile, continuidad y ruptura

Antes de las conocidas arpilleras del periodo de la dictadura en Chile, había una tradición sobre esta técnica que lleva el nombre arpillera por la pieza sobre la que se trabaja: un tejido generalmente de estopa, que es fuerte y áspero; el que se utiliza sobre todo para hacer sacos y cubrir bultos en almacenes o transportes.
La conocida cantautora chilena Violeta Parra dijo que “las arpilleras son como canciones que se pintan” al referirse a la técnica que utilizó al bordar con hilo y lana sobre tela cuando cayó enferma en cama en los años sesenta. Esta tradición fue continuada por las bordadoras de Isla Negra, mujeres que motivadas por problemas económicos se dedican a bordar escenas cotidianas para venderlas y obtener recursos. Pablo Neruda se refirió a estos bordados en su libro “Para nacer he nacido”:

En este último invierno comenzaron a florecer las bordadoras de la Isla Negra. Cada casa de las que conocí desde hace treinta años sacó hacia afuera un bordado como una flor. Estas casas eran antes oscuras y calladas; de pronto se llenaron de hilos de colores, de inocencia celeste, de profundidad violenta de roja claridad. Las bordadoras eran pueblo puro y por eso bordaron con el color del coraz6n. Nada más bello que estos bordados, insignes en su pureza, radiantes en su alegría, que sobrepasó muchos padecimientos (Neruda, 1978)

El trabajo manual permite expresar experiencias que son difíciles o imposibles de comunicar en palabras (Bacic, 2008), lo que es común en las arpilleras, un arte de lo femenino y marginal, del silencio de las palabras, pero del tanto que decir del cuerpo, de la experiencia, de lo social. Es justamente ahí donde surge un cambio en la tradición el año 1973, tomando sus hilos de continuidad hay una ruptura, como lo hubo en la sociedad de conjunto y por tanto también en las percepciones. Este cambio se expresó tanto en términos narrativos como en la técnica. Las isleñas retrataban en sus piezas escenas bucólicas, imágenes costumbristas de la vida rural y cuestiones referentes a su entorno. Las obras de la cantautora chilena aluden a memorias de la infancia, pasajes de la historia colectiva y elementos de la cosmología mapuche. En cuanto al aspecto manual, en ambos casos se trata de lanigrafías: bordados con lanas realizados directamente sobre la arpillera base, que se caracterizan por las texturas y matices alcanzados gracias al manejo de las hebras (Sastre, 2011).

Desde la dictadura la obra de las arpilleras adopta un contenido testimonial y de denuncia, en ella centra una protesta, no solo busca retratar, sino que expresa y es producto de un contexto fuertemente represivo, donde se transmitía por medio de la obra lo que no podía ser transmitido por la palabra. También se crear un lenguaje artístico distinto al de las predecesoras, donde el bordado ya no es la labor preponderante sino un elemento más puesto en uso, ya que por medio de la técnica del appliqué en una arpillera se genera una especie de mosaico de retrasos por el cual se le da vida al relato contenido en cada obra, destacando en ellas la libertad creativa en su desarrollo y en su materialidad. La poca rigidez de los materiales a utilizar, el despliegue de la creatividad, también se transformaban en una forma de negarse a un qué hacer de lo impuesto.

Dictadura y la destrucción de la familia trabajadora y militante. Las mujeres y la lucha por la sobrevivencia

Es indispensable entregar una pincelada del contexto político, social y económico, los fundamentos del golpe militar y las bases que trastocaron profundamente dinámicas sociales en las que subyacen en parte elementos explicativos de los hilos de continuidad y de ruptura de la tradición arpillera, y del nuevo carácter que tomó en dictadura.

El golpe se realiza por los militares en Chile apoyado por EE.UU, la derecha y sectores de la DC, el 11 de septiembre de 1973. El objetivo de la dictadura era mucho más profundo que solo echar por tierra todos los avances democráticos y redistributivos de la riqueza conquistados, era principalmente ahogar los profundos cuestionamientos a la propiedad capitalista y el avance de conciencia de clase que lo propiciaba, que se habían desarrollado por medio de la autooganización, el control y gestión de la producción en los Cordones Industriales, las relaciones con las JAP´s y los controles comunales. Amplias franjas de masas tenían las perspectivas de terminar con el capitalismo, de transformar la sociedad de raíz y de gobernar su propio destino, la polarización política de aquel entonces mostraba dos caminos posibles: la salida que contenía la consigna expandida el año 73 y que resonó fuerte en la marcha del 4 de septiembre de dicho año “trabajadores al poder” o una dictadura feroz del capital para barrer con todo lo avanzado y extirpar las perspectivas revolucionarias. La dictadura puso a ese proceso revolucionario un freno a punta de bota, fusil, tortura y detenidos desaparecidos, el golpe fue el asentamiento en el poder de la tendencia contrarrevolucionaria en curso y la derrota de la tendencia revolucionaria.

En un principio, y en búsqueda de aliados que abalaban el golpe, pero que eran reacios a una dictadura duradera como sectores de la DC y de la curia eclesiástica, los militares justificaron su alzamiento como una acción en aras de una “restauración democrática” debido al grado de polarización social, mostrándose como los supuestos defensores de la patria contra el comunismo y el marxismo, demagógicamente enfatizaban el respeto a la institucionalidad y el derecho, por lo que dijeron mantenerse en el poder “por el sólo lapso en que las circunstancias lo exijan”.

Sin embargo, este discurso cambió rápidamente hacía 1974, cuando se dio a conocer la “Declaración de Principios del Gobierno de Chile”, donde se desechaba cualquier plazo para la gestión militar, imponiéndose una acción profunda de reconstrucción “moral, institucional y material del país”, rechazando la idea de ser un “gobierno” de mera administración, y dando cuenta también que para cercenar el proceso revolucionario en Chile, en ningún caso bastaba con derrocar al gobierno de la Unidad Popular.

La dictadura adoptó, entonces, un discurso más definido basándose en la doctrina de seguridad nacional, justificando el régimen militar a través de la noción de guerra contra el marxismo, entendiéndolo como un agresor permanente contra la nación. Este concepto de guerra permanente se alzó como uno de los ejes principales de legitimidad del régimen cívico-militar, culpando a la debilidad de la democracia liberal de haber sido incapaz de contener el avance del comunismo.

La concentración del poder e imposibilitar cualquier oposición eran tareas fundamentales del nuevo régimen, por lo cual la Junta Militar mediante decreto ley disolvió el Congreso Nacional, el Tribunal Constitucional, prohibió los partidos políticos que sustentaran doctrinas marxistas, y puso en receso al resto.
Pero para sus objetivos contrarrevolucionarios era insuficiente sólo garantizar la imposibilidad de oposición por medios institucionales, por lo que desarrollaron una línea férrea de represión con torturas, desapariciones y ejecuciones políticas: su flanco principal los dirigentes trabajadores y militantes de izquierda. Buscaban desarticular todos los rasgos de cultura militante de izquierda, también se volvió un imperativo por eso la quema masiva de libros, y la puesta en operación del reino de la fragmentación y desarticulación por medio de la represión y el terror.

Las mujeres militantes y activistas sociales y políticas vivieron en carne propia una cruda represión, donde la violencia política y la violencia sexual estuvieron a la orden del día, el elemento de género se expresó en la propia tortura. Así mismo, la represión directa -que es la más evidente pero solo una de las formas de represión, ya que no se pueden minimizar las otras vividas- de la dictadura cívico-militar tuvo un componente altamente masculino, según los datos entregados por el Informe de la Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación de las 3.195 personas asesinadas por la dictadura, 2.992 fueron hombres y 199 mujeres (ICNVR,1996). Según las investigaciones realizadas por la Comisión Nacional de prisión y tortura el 2004, de un universo de 27.255 personas calificadas como víctimas de prisión política y de tortura, 23.856 fueron hombres y 3.399 mujeres.

Esta diferencia expresada en los datos entregados tiene que ver con la brecha de aquella época entre la participación de mujeres y hombres en espacios laborales y políticos, expresión del estado respecto al problema de la emancipación femenina en la izquierda chilena, pero también de la inserción en el mundo laboral de las

mujeres y, por tanto, el nivel de dependencia económica y la relación con lo público. Algunos porcentajes de la población económicamente activa antes del golpe arrojan que el 22,8% correspondía a mujeres trabajadoras (asalariadas), mientras el 77,6% restante correspondía a hombres (Muñoz, 1988).

De esta manera, con el encarcelamiento, desaparición y clandestinidad, la dictadura trastocó las bases familiares de las y los sectores populares y militantes, buscando arrancar la humanidad e ideales, de hacer desaparecer sus cuerpos y luchas, generó dolor y traumas profundos en las víctimas directas y en sus familiares, y también modificó materialmente sus vidas. Partiendo de la base del sustento material familiar, que era llevado o complementado por el detenido y/o desaparecido.
Las mujeres en la perdida se vieron forzadas a suplir la necesidad de alimentar a la familia. A la carga de la reproducción familiar (cocinar, planchar, vestir, cuidar) se sumó por medio del despojo de un ser querido, la de la producción (sustento económico), al dolor de esposa, hija, madre, hermana, y la desesperación por saber ¿Dónde están? se sumó la necesidad material de seguir manteniendo a su familia viva en medio del despojo.

A las consecuencias directas de la represión recién mencionadas, se suman las consecuencias estructurales de las transformaciones impulsadas por el régimen, el aumento de la tasa de desempleo que en diciembre de 1982 alcanzó un 25%, para fines de 1983 aumento llegando al 30% (Silva, 1993). Estas cifras ya dramáticas alcanzaban un número superior en los sectores populares llegando a un 50%, así como en la juventud a un 60% (Arriagada, 1998), lo que demuestra que sin duda alguna fueron las y los trabajadores, los sectores más empobrecidos y la juventud quienes sufrieron más fuertemente los costos de la crisis económica desatada en 1983, pero que venía con tasas de desempleo y flexibilidad previa.

En este contexto, los talleres de arpilleras fueron una forma alternativa en la cual mujeres encontraron una vía para generar ingresos para mantener a sus familias, pero también para denunciar, para elaborar sobre el trauma, como expresa el relato de Inelia Hermosilla, arpillerista:

“Las arpilleras eran una fuente de ingreso para aquellas que habíamos tenido que abandonar nuestros trabajos y, al mismo tiempo, era una forma de calmarnos espiritualmente para poder seguir. […] Cuando hacíamos una arpillera, escribíamos nuestras experiencias y dejábamos un testimonio de lo que ocurría en nuestro país” (Sepúlveda,1996).

Como plantea Maryorie Agosín, *“la arpillera producida nace de una necesidad vital y urgente: el hambre. Se confecciona y se vende la arpillera para poder alimentar a hijos de padres muertos, desaparecidos o para suplementar la exigua suma de dinero obtenida con el salario mínimo” (Agosín, 1985)*

El nacimiento de los primeros talleres de arpilleras en Chile

A partir del año 1974 las arpilleras comienzan a organizarse en talleres auspiciados por el Comité Pro Paz, quien ante la situación de marginalidad, pobreza extrema y vulneración que vivían estas mujeres decide prestarles ayuda facilitando el espacio para que pudieran reunirse y trabajar en la creación de sus arpilleras.

El Comité Pro Paz fue fundado el 9 de octubre 1973, después de la junta de varios grupos ecuménicos. Según sus estatutos, el Comité quería brindar apoyo económico, espiritual y jurídico a todos aquellos chilenos que se encontraban en la miseria personal o económica por la situación política del país. A pesar de que seis de cuarenta obispos estuvieron de acuerdo con el golpe militar, y de que las primeras declaraciones del Comité Permanente de la Conferencia Episcopal de Chile (CEC) estuvo marcada por la confianza en la integridad de los militares y el carácter transitorio de la intervención militar, y que la primera crítica al régimen se realizó recién 6 meses después del golpe y con un tono muy reservado; el asistencialismo y ayuda samaritana por parte de la Iglesia se puso en pie de inmediato (Strassner, 2006).

El Comité Pro Paz fue disuelto por orden de Pinochet al Cardenal Raúl Silva Enrique, el sucesor de este organismo fue la Vicaría de la Solidaridad creado en 1976, pocas semanas después de la disolución de Pro Paz, por ser acusado por parte del régimen de ser *“un medio creado por los marxistas leninistas para crear problemas que perturben la tranquilidad de la gente y la paz necesaria del país,*

cuyo mantenimiento es el principal deber del gobierno ... nosotros [el régimen] vemos entonces la disolución del comité en cuestión como un paso positivo para evitar males peores" (Agosín, 1987).

La Vicaría de la Solidaridad tenía como centro la defensa de los derechos humanos y defender a los prisioneros políticos, y se organizó de una manera que buscaba no estar al alcance del régimen para no volver a sufrir un cierre. La Vicaría siguió auspiciando los talleres de arpilleras, que no eran los únicos talleres de artesanía que propiciaban a lo largo del país, pero sí fue el de arpilleras el que proporcionaba las imágenes más condenatorias al régimen (Agosín, 1987)

El primer taller de arpilleras fue formado por un miembro de la Asociación de Detenidos Desaparecidos en 1974 con el objetivo de entregar ayuda inmediata a las a las familias devastadas psicológica y económicamente por la desaparición de sus seres queridos, las mujeres empezaron a ver las ventas y compradores, y se organizaron. Los grupos de arpilleras estaban compuestos por aproximadamente veinte mujeres, cada taller contaba con una tesorera que se encarga de distribuir las ganancias obtenidas con la venta de las arpilleras, cada mujer recibía el dinero de su arpillera vendida y contribuía con un porcentaje al fondo común del taller.

Las arpilleras eran anónimas, de esta manera las creadoras se protegían contra la persecución del régimen, quien no quería que estas obras salieran del país porque en ellas llevaban el testimonio de lo que ocurría, porque eran un acto del rebeldía y sedición para el régimen como muestra el hermoso cortometraje "Como alitas de Chincol" en los periódicos, cuando encontraban en la aduana estas piezas, por tanto, su paso para salir fuera de Chile no era fácil. La dedicación a cada arpillera era grande, las mujeres arpilleristas tenían un montón de responsabilidades, no se dedicaban sólo a la arpillería, con dedicación cada pieza tardaba una semana en estar lista, por tanto, el requisamiento en la aduana era un problema no sólo del limite que implicaba a la hora de que estos testimonios se vieran truncados de salir del país, sino también del tiempo invertido y la necesidad de la recaudación material.

Las arpilleras, quienes se reunían en diferentes comunas como Puente Alto, Lo Hermida, La Pincoya, Villa O'Higgins, discutían colectivamente la obra, trabajaban juntas, si bien cada una trabajaba individualmente su propio relato bordado a trozos, los rasgos comunes están presentes, eran sus propias vivencias en escena: la escasez, la represión y la tortura; y si la vivencia de despojo y necesidad unía como ellas unían cada trozo para contar una historia, cada una, como cada trozo tenía su propia historia, y sumergía en el conjunto una particularidad que hacía al conjunto del mensaje, así mismo cada una sumergía su propia humanidad, su propia materialidad, colorido y creatividad y muchas veces personalizaba dentro de su clandestinidad con un pequeño mensaje escrito en un diminuto bolsillo al reverso de la arpillera destinado al ser querido, al desaparecido o simplemente un mensaje a quien lo fuera a leer.

Este trabajo individual, social y colaborativo, de espacio de encuentro y de profundidad en la creación, de trazar con la propia humanidad destrozada, de ir uniendo por medio de hilvanada los trozos, un proceso tan íntimo, pero a la vez en compañía, donde juntas se contaban sus dolores y tristezas, sus deseos y anhelos. Ahí en cada puntada iban dibujando un arte de denuncia y resistencia, un arte del desecho para desechar la inhumanidad, para negar el olvido, para poner en cuerpo la ausencia del cuerpo no encontrado, para narrar y expresar lo no dicho en palabras.

Los desechos de la esperanza, trazando memoria contra el olvido

«

"A través de pedazos de género rasgados de vestimentas y objetos sin valor en un mundo imbuido de un nuevo consumismo, estas mujeres lograron expresar escenas prohibidas: tortura, prisiones clandestinas y hambre en sus poblaciones. Para las arpilleristas, las circunstancias políticas del país y de sus vidas cotidianas se volvieron inseparables. A través de su arte ellas representaron su mundo: hogares vacíos e hijos buscando a sus padres. Sin embargo, a pesar de representar un mundo de horror, la arpillera es luminosa, encantadora, y habla de esperanza y del empoderamiento que nace de un trabajo colectivo" (Agosín, 1996)

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Los desechos de la esperanza quedaron estampados en las fábricas, en las poblaciones, en las casas, en los escondites que alojaban a quienes buscaban mantenerse vivos para volver a recobrar la esperanza y desechar la muerte y el asedio. La esperanza de cuántos desapareció con una ráfaga, sin más llegaron los milicos y metieron balas. Desechar la falsa esperanza de que todo cambiará sin que defiendan sus intereses matando a todo lo que luche por real libertad. Lo que busco desechar la dictadura fue lo que los pechos inflados de esperanza, organización y conciencia de clase querían desatar ¡Revolución! ¡trabajadores al poder! ¡tomemos el cielo por asalto!

Para los dueños de Chile no era más que ¡basura! Las y los esclavos con esperanza de cambiar su orden, la esperanza amenazaba su propia existencia, sus fortunas y propiedades. Ahí empezó la carrera de desechos y esperanzas, que al igual que la memoria y la historia no son una definición pura y universal, lo que para ellos era triunfo para nosotros derrota, los que para ellos eran desecho, para nosotros eran hombres y mujeres llenos de esperanza.

Las arpilleras unieron harapos, lo que es desecho para muchos, para ella era un trozo de vestimenta de su ser amado, era el pedazo que unido a otro daría el sustento a un hogar destrozado, la hilvanada unía los desechos para transformarlos en un canto pintado como diría Violeta Parra, pero un canto para poder cantar, para poder recordar, para que la ausencia no tragara toda la verdad. En el reino de la reacción, que alzaran la voz de protesta contra la miseria y el régimen quienes habían estado relagadas a la friegas era un acto de rebeldía, y en el relato de la miseria, con colore, bordados y la vida misma, aparecía la resistencia a ser el desecho que quieren despojar de todo, cuando ya lo han quitado casi todo, la humanidad y creación aparecen para mostrar lo que no es mostrado, lo indecible, el testimonio y en ese acto, en esa puesta tan intima para hablar hicieron hablar a todos con un relato contado con harapos para decir la verdad: se tortura, se mata, ¿dónde están?…

Memoria contra el olvido, las arpilleras trazaron con sus propias manos y materiales memoria de las y los vencidos, si se sigue uniendo esos trozos y trazos trabajados, podemos empezar a trazar otra capa olvidada, algo que la dictadura y

la democracia pactada buscaron desechar: miles y millones militaron por la esperanza de cambiar esta sociedad.

TEMAS RELACIONADOS

Literatura (Literatura) / Cultura (Seccion-Cultura)

Más leídas en esta sección

1. A 40 años: Yolanda González, militante trotskista, asesinada por los fascistas en la Transición española (Yolanda-Gonzalez-militante-trotskista-asesinada-por-los-fascistas-en-la-Transicion-espanola)
2. Takiji Kobayashi: una pluma roja de las entrañas del proletariado japonés (Takiji-Kobayashi-Una-pluma-roja-de-las-entranas-del-proletariado-japones)
3. JOJO RABBIT: La mirada infantil de lo absurdo y lo bello en medio de la Alemania Nazi (JOJO-RABBIT-La-mirada-infantil-de-lo-absurdo-y-lo-bello-en-medio-de-la-Alemania-Nazi)

Destacados del día

Con la complicidad del PS, la DC y el PPD, la "oposición" salva a Guevara de la acusación constitucional (Con-la-complicidad-del-PS-la-DC-y-el-PPD-la-oposicion-le-salva-la-vida-a-Guevara)

Fuera Guevara: Acusación contra intendente se vota hoy (Fuera-Guevara-Acusacion-contra-intendente-se-vota-hoy)

ChileVamos alista su equipo para defender la Constitución de Pinochet (ChileVamos-alista-su-equipo-para-defender-la-Constitucion-de-Pinochet)

Las carreras universitarias más caras del país ajustarán sus aranceles hasta 2,6% por sobre el IPC (Las-carreras-universitarias-mas-caras-del-pais-ajustaran-sus-aranceles-hasta-2-6-por-sobre-el-IPC)

LAIZQUIERDA DIARIO

(http://www.laizquierdadiario.cl)

RedInternacional EN 8 IDIOMAS

(Red-Internacional)

Argentina (http://www.laizquierdadiario.com/spip.php?page=sommaire)

Brasil (http://www.esquerdadiario.com.br) **México (http://www.laizquierdadiario.mx)**

Chile (http://www.laizquierdadiario.cl)

Estado Español (http://www.izquierdadiario.es)

Estados Unidos (http://www.leftvoice.org/)

Francia (http://www.revolutionpermanente.fr/)

Alemania (https://www.klassegegenklasse.org/)

TEJIDO SOCIAL:: ARTE TEXTIL Y COMPROMISO POLÍTICO

CURADURÍA—JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

TEJIDO SOCIAL:: ARTE TEXTIL Y COMPROMISO POLÍTICO

CURADURÍA—JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

La noción de "tejido social" ha sido comúnmente utilizada para dar cuenta de las variadas interacciones que se producen en una comunidad. Esta metáfora supone que cada individuo es un hilo y que las relaciones y cruces entre ellos generan una trama cuya resistencia depende de la participación de sus miembros en la sociedad. Esta exposición recoge esa idea para presentar un conjunto de obras textiles de la Colección del MSSA y de colecciones privadas, locales e internacionales, cuyos horizontes de exhibición y circulación están asociados al compromiso social y la solidaridad.

Las obras que forman parte de esta muestra fueron realizadas con distintas técnicas y materialidades y dan cuenta de las diversas manifestaciones del arte textil moderno y contemporáneo. El arco temporal en el que ellas se inscriben permite observar las sutiles transformaciones del medio entre la década del cincuenta y la del ochenta. Junto a la atención prestada a la especificidad material y técnica de las obras aquí reunidas, la exposición está organizada a partir de dos ejes: la circulación y la escala de las obras. Ambos ejes funcionan como puertas de entrada a constelaciones de viajes y desplazamientos físicos y simbólicos, y también revelan historias de desaparición y destrucción. Asimismo, permiten atender a la escala material y simbólica de las obras en relación con su visibilidad y presencia en el espacio público. A partir de este conjunto, se hace necesario pensar cómo se escribe la historia y cómo la perspectiva que da el tiempo permite, literalmente, escalar la importancia de ciertos eventos y episodios y privilegiar ciertas historias sobre otras.

Esta exposición cuenta historias de resiliencia, de manos que hacen, que sienten y piensan táctilmente. Manos que, atentas a su contexto, apuestan por tejer, y también remendar, el tejido social.

SOCIAL FABRIC:: TEXTILE ART AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

CURATED BY JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

The notion of "social fabric" has been commonly used to represent the varied interactions that take place in a community. This metaphor implies that every individual is a thread, and that relations and crosses between and among them produce a weft whose resistance depends on the participation of their members in society. This show uses that concept in order to present a set of textile works from the MSSA collection as well as local and international private collections, whose exhibition and circulation horizons are associated to social commitment and solidarity.

The works in this exhibition were created using different techniques and materials, and they account for the diverse manifestations of modern and contemporary textile art. The temporal narrative in which they are inscribed allows us to examine the subtle transformations of the medium between the 1950s and the 1980s. In addition to the attention given to their material and technical specificity, the show is organized around two axes: the circulation and the scale of the works. They both act as entry points to constellations of physical and symbolic travels and displacements, and they also reveal stories of disappearance and destruction. Likewise, they allow us to perceive the material and symbolic scale of the works in relation to their visibility and presence in public spaces. Following this set of issues, it becomes necessary to think about how history is written and how the perspective of time allows us to "scale" the importance of certain events and episodes, and to privilege certain stories above others.

This exhibition tells the stories of resilience, of hands that create, that feel and think in a tactile manner. Hands that, paying attention to their context, commit themselves to weaving and mending the social fabric.

ÑGÜREN PU CHE: FÜW ÑIMIN KA KÜZAW POLÍTICO
JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

Tañ rakizuam tati "ngürekan pu che" pünengeki tufa chi küzaw pengelal fillke chem ngütramkaken ka chumken engün pu lof mew tañ llewün ka zungu piam. Tufa chi pu ñimin kom füw kake che reke piam, ka kom trawki tati pu reñma kizutu engün Kañmawkingün wuewalu tizoy newengelu fey müleki tati pu reñma lofmew. Tufa chi pengeluwün az künoy tati trawülüwün fillke ñimin tufa chi antümew. MSSA ka kake che ñimintun, tüfamew ka kakeñple, wallonple tañ pengelngeal ka Trawül ke che ngünenelu ka tati pu wülkelu.

Kom tati trawülu tufa chi küzawmew fillke küzaw pengelaingün ka fillke füw pengelay tufa chi antü ngealu k atufa chi pue we pu che ngealu ka kuyfiem. Tati pu kintulalu tufa chi pu kuzaw peay chumngechi tañ küme az niel engün. Ka chumngechi weluntuyngün kuifi ke küzaw ti kechumari ka pura mari tripantu mew. Zema küme kuizangei kom tañ pünengel ka trawlngi tufa chi pu kuazaw, tufa chi küzaw epuñpleleay: trünkankleay ka fillke zungu entoy. Mür ti pu kuzawti epuñplelelu konkingü wuallontumew mu ka tañ fillple miaulneal ti pünen ka papilmew, ka miaulay tan ngütram ñi monge ka chumngechi tañ ñamllekümen engün Femngechi, kellungeay tañ kümelngeal kom tañ pu pünen pengelngeal rangi pu che. Tufamu ula zumllengi tañ rakizuam chungechi wiringi tufa chi ngütram ka chumngechi peniy upachi antümew ka rakizumngi.

Ta zoy falilngifillke eventumew ka chumngechi ünelkünongi tüfa chi ngütramngen ka wünekonüy tufa chi küzaw pengelüy fillke ngütram che, zewmael küwü mew, chem nien ka rakizüam. Küme küwü ngüreney femngechi küme peay tati pu kintulmelu tüfa.

MAPUDUNGÚN

TEJIDO SOCIAL: ARTE TEXTIL Y COMPROMISO POLÍTICO
CURADURÍA DE JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

Nosyon 'tejido social ' te kreye nan lide pou explike varyete ki gen nan entèraksyon kap pwodui nan yon kominote. Metafò sa sipoze ke chak endividi se yon egwi, kote relasyon yo kwaze e fòme yon nas rezistan tou depan de patisipasyon manb yo andan sosyete a. Expozisyon sa se nan lide pou prezante yon rasanbleman atizanal ak twal nan koleksyon MSSA ak koleksyon prive, lokal ak entènasyonal, nan orizon egzibisyon ak sikilasyon ki asosye ak angajman sosyal ak solidarite.

Zèv ki soti nan demonstrasyon an arive realize avèk diferan teknik ak materiel e pèmèt nou wè varyete manisfestasyon atizanal textil modèn ak kontanporen. Nan ark tanporèl kote ke nou ka enskri e pèmèt nou obsève sibtilite transfòmasyon medyan ant dekadans lane 50 ak lane 80. Anplis ke atansyon ke nou pran nan espès materyèl ak teknik ke nou anplwaye nan zèv ke nou met ansanm, ekspozisyon an òganize apati de 2 aks: Sikilasyon ak elevasyon zèv yo. Toude aks sa yo fonksione tankou pòt antre nan konstelasyon vwayaj ak deplasman fizik ak senbolik, ak reveye Istwa ki disparèt eki detwi. Se konsa, yo pèmèt elevasyon materyèl e senbolik de zèv yon an relasyon de vizibilite l ' ak prezans nan espas piblik. Apati de asanbleman sa li nesesè poun panse kòman poun ekri istwa e kòman manevre tan ak posibilite poun eleve enpòtans de sèten evenman ak privilèj sèten Istwa ak lòt.

Expozisyon sa rakonte Istwa rezistans, de men kap travay, ki resanti e ki panse ak zèv texstil. Men ki toujou prè nan kontèks, ki prè pou koud e ki pou relanse kouti sosyal.

CREOL


MUSEO DE LA
SOLIDARIDAD
SALVADOR ALLENDE


Nunca
te
entregues
ni
te
apartes
del camino.

John Dugger (Estados Unidos, 1948)
Nunca te entregues ni te apartes del camino, 1978
Listones cosidos de tela
352 x 510 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Carla Macchiavello

En marzo de 1978 se realizó en Londres una exposición titulada *'We Want People to Know the Truth' Patchwork Pictures from Chile ['Queremos que las personas conozcan la verdad' Arpilleras de Chile]*. Haciendo eco al llamado de la muestra, el artista John Dugger creó un estandarte de gran escala para la exposición en la AIR Gallery. Dugger había sido parte de *Artists for Democracy* con Cecilia Vicuña y Guy Brett en 1974 y continuaba trabajando en la creación de banners políticos para distintas luchas de liberación anticoloniales, como las de los países africanos. En esta obra, el artista combinó su propio lenguaje con los diseños litúrgicos de Henri Matisse; asimismo, las formas gruesas recortadas cosidas sobre bandas verticales de tela que componen sus estandartes también tienen reminiscencias a la pintura budista. Vinculando estas referencias artísticas y culturales con las arpilleras, reprodujo una de ellas, *Nunca te entregues*, para la exposición. El estandarte actuó como telón de fondo para una serie de charlas con exiliados chilenos del mundo del teatro y la cultura (incluyendo la Mapuche) y actividades que se organizaron en la galería, entre ellas, una exhibición de obras de orfebrería hechas por prisioneros chilenos, un documental y la película *Chile, The Most Painful Hour* dirigida por David Elstein y realizada para la televisión inglesa. Londres fue una de las nueve paradas que hizo la exposición de arpilleras en Inglaterra, la que estuvo compuesta por 52 ejemplares (prestados para su exhibición por diversas fuentes) mostrados junto a fotografías documentales y textos explicativos. En el caso de Londres, el promotor principal de la muestra fue el crítico de arte Guy Brett.

Como medida de conservación preventiva, la exhibición de esta obra en la fachada del museo se realizó el 30 de Marzo y el 11 de Septiembre de 2019.

John Dugger (USA, 1948)
Never Give Up nor Leave the Trail, 1978
Stitched fabric strips,
352 x 510 cm
MSSA Collection

By Carla Macchiavello

In March 1978, an exhibition entitled *We Want People to Know the Truth' Patchwork Pictures from Chile* was held in London. It was for that exhibition at the AIR Gallery that artist John Dugger created a large-scale banner. He had been part of *Artists for Democracy* with Cecilia Vicuña and Guy Brett in 1974, and was continuing to work on the creation of political banners for various anti-colonial liberation struggles, such as those in African countries. In this work, the artist combined his own language with the liturgical designs of Henri Matisse. The thick shapes sewn on vertical bands of fabric that make up his banners are also reminiscent of Buddhist painting. Linking these artistic and cultural references with the arpilleras, he reproduced one of them, *Never Give Up*, for the exhibition. The banner was also the backdrop for a series of talks with Chilean exiles from the world of theater and culture (including the Mapuche) and other activities that were organized in the gallery, including an exhibition of precious metal works made by Chilean prisoners, a documentary and the movie *Chile, The Most Painful Hour*, directed by David Elstein for English television. London was one of nine stops in England for the arpilleras exhibition, which was composed of 52 works (lent by various sources), documentary photographs and explanatory texts. The main promoter of the London exhibition was art critic Guy Brett.

As a preventive conservation measure, the exhibition of this work on the facade of the museum only took place on March 30th and September 11th 2019.

HALL / SALA 1

PISO 1

Una selección de arpilleras de la colección MSSA se exhibe en esta sala junto a un tapiz de Ana María Rojas realizado en Polonia. Las arpilleras son los textiles más conocidos del período de la dictadura y, desde muy temprano, estas piezas de pequeño formato viajaron al extranjero de modo clandestino gracias a redes solidarias, nacionales e internacionales, transformándose rápidamente en símbolos de resistencia. Por su lado, el tapiz de Ana María Rojas, ligado a la experiencia de su autora en el exilio, introduce modos distintos de pensar tanto la circulación como la escala simbólica y material de una obra a partir de sus citas y referencias al campo cultural y artístico de su época.

Los documentos presentados en este espacio permiten trazar distintas rutas de circulación de personas, obras e ideas asociadas al textil desde la década del 50 hasta los últimos años de la dictadura chilena. Ellos visibilizan las redes de apoyo y solidaridad artística, cultural y política que permitieron la exhibición, el cuidado y el reconocimiento de las obras que forman parte de esta exposición. También, actúan como puertas de entrada a constelaciones de obras y episodios de la historia reciente, aún por conocer e investigar en profundidad.

A selection of *arpilleras* of the MSSA collection is displayed in this room along with a tapestry made in Poland by Ana María Rojas. *Arpilleras* are the best known textiles of the dictatorship period. From its very beginnings, these small format pieces travelled abroad in clandestine ways through national and international solidarity networks, thus quickly becoming symbols of resistance. On the other hand, the tapestry of Ana María Rojas –which links to the experience of its author in exile– introduces different ways of reflecting on both, the circulation as well as the symbolic and material scale of an artwork, from its quotes and references to cultural and artistic fields of its time.

The documents exhibited in this room allow the tracing of different routes concerning movements of people, works, and ideas associated with textile art spanning from the 1950s to the last years of the Chilean dictatorship. These records visualize artistic, cultural, and political support and solidarity networks which allowed the exhibition, care and recognition of the textiles that are part of this exhibition. Also, they perform as doorways to constellations of works and episodes of recent history, still to be known and thoroughly researched.


TEJIDO
SOCIAL:
ARTE TEXTIL Y
COMPROMISO
POLITICO


PARO
Chile

Artistas no identificadas
Arpilleras, producidas entre 1973 y 1985
Retazos de telas cosidas
Medidas variables
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

Los textiles más representativos del periodo de dictadura corresponden a las arpilleras. Ampliamente conocidas en el país y en el extranjero, estas piezas de pequeño formato se convirtieron, desde muy temprano, en símbolos de la resistencia. Producidas por grupos de mujeres chilenas agrupadas bajo distintas organizaciones, siendo una de ellas y tal vez la más reconocida, la Vicaría de la Solidaridad, las arpilleras son textiles de bajo costo de producción, realizados con retazos de tela cosidos con una fuerte intención figurativa. Las imágenes creadas por las arpilleristas visualizaban la pobreza, el hambre, la violencia y las violaciones a los derechos humanos, pero también registraban la solidaridad y la resiliencia de familias y comunidades de distintas zonas de la ciudad de Santiago y de diversas regiones del país.

El origen y desarrollo de esta práctica textil está asociado, entre varios aspectos, a una necesidad de subsistencia económica y a estimular el trabajo manual como un medio terapéutico que responde a la importancia de compartir historias y de tratar de dar forma a un tejido social quebrado mientras se cosen y bordan experiencias difíciles. Una parte de la producción de las arpilleras se sacó del país de modo clandestino y se vendió en el extranjero a través de organizaciones que apoyaban la lucha en contra de la dictadura y la defensa de los derechos humanos. Sus pequeñas dimensiones y la maleabilidad intrínseca del textil facilitaban la circulación, exposición y venta de estas piezas en el extranjero. Asimismo, la presencia y visibilidad internacional convirtió a estos pequeños textiles en uno de los conjuntos de imágenes más significativos asociados a la lucha contra la dictadura. Reconociendo este tránsito internacional, las arpilleras presentadas en esta exposición destacan, a través de las donaciones llegadas al MSSA tras la vuelta a la democracia, la circulación de estas piezas en el extranjero.

Unidentified Women Artists
Arpilleras, produced between 1973 and 1985
Sewn pieces of fabric
Variable measures
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

The most representative textiles of the dictatorship period are the arpilleras. Widely known in Chile and abroad, these small format pieces very early became symbols of resistance. Produced by Chilean women grouped under different organizations, perhaps the most recognized being the Vicaria de la Solidaridad, the arpilleras are low-cost textile productions made with pieces of cloth sewn with a strong figurative intention. The images created by the arpilleristas represented poverty, hunger, violence and human rights violations, as well as the solidarity and resilience of families and communities from different areas of Santiago and different regions of the country.

The origin and development of this textile practice is associated, among several aspects, to a need for economic subsistence and to stimulate manual work as a therapeutic mean that responds to the importance of sharing stories and trying to shape a broken social fabric. Part of the production of arpilleras was exported clandestinely and sold abroad through organizations that supported the fight against dictatorship and the defense of human rights. Their small dimensions and the intrinsic malleability of the textile made it easier to transport, exhibit and sell them abroad. Also, their international presence made these small textiles one of the most significant sets of images associated with the fight against dictatorship. Recognizing this international transit, the arpilleras presented in this exhibition highlight, through donations that arrived at the MSSA after Chile's return to democracy, the circulation of these pieces abroad.


SALA
SALVADOR ALLENDE

Ana María Rojas (Chile, 1948)
***Sin título*, 1979-80**
Tapicería
151,5 x 131 cm
Colección de la artista

Por Josefina de la Maza

Esta obra, tejida en un bastidor de muro, fue realizada por Ana María Rojas como parte de su memoria de título para cerrar su ciclo de estudios en arte en la Universidad de Varsovia, Polonia, país en donde ella y su marido se exiliaron en 1974. Durante tres meses y con jornadas de trabajo diarias de ocho horas, Rojas tejió lo que a primera vista parece ser un motivo decorativo abstracto de color negro sobre un fondo rojo, estableciendo un guiño con la cultura europea a través de una reflexión sobre el marco ornamental barroco. Sin embargo, una vez que la pieza se observa en detalle, se distingue una serie de figuras que marchan y portan una bandera chilena. Rojas se apropió de una serigrafía de José Balmes que circuló por esos años como el anverso de una tarjeta de año nuevo (1979), en donde se agradecía la "fraterna solidaridad" con la Unidad Popular de Chile en Polonia. A modo de homenaje a Balmes, Rojas la reprodujo. A pesar del mensaje de lucha que transmite la serigrafía, y si bien utiliza el rojo y el negro característicos del MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria), la artista optó por representar un recorrido que, encerrado en sí mismo, parece no tener futuro. Este movimiento circular evoca también la idea del exilio como el de una continua espera. A esta idea se suma un elemento adicional que remite al mismo universo marcado por la espera: la urgencia del tema representado no se condice con los tiempos lentos del tejido.

La imagen de Balmes, reproducida en el tapiz de Rojas, se transformó en ese proceso: de una tarjeta a un tapiz, de una imagen pensada para circular ampliamente a una obra de arte única. Al mismo tiempo y sin saberlo la artista, esa misma imagen también circuló –un par de años antes– en otro contexto, más mediático aún: como la portada del disco de 1977, *Le Marche et le drapeau, anthologie de chansons inédites* de Quilapayún.

Ana María Rojas (Chile, 1948)
***Untitled*, 1979-80**
Tapestry
151,5 x 131 cm
Artist's Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

This work, woven in a wall frame, was made by Ana María Rojas to close her art studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland, where she and her husband went into exile in 1974. Working eight hours per day during three months, Rojas wove what at first sight seems to be a black abstract decorative motif on a red background, a nod to European culture through a reflection on the ornamental baroque framework. However, once the work is observed in detail, a series of figures that march and carry a Chilean flag can be distinguished. Rojas appropriated a screenprint by José Balmes that circulated in those years as the front of a 1979 New Year's card, thanking the "fraternal solidarity" with the Unidad Popular of Chile in Poland. As a tribute to Balmes, Rojas reproduced it. Despite the message of struggle conveyed by the screenprint, and although it uses the combination of red and black that was characteristic of the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), the artist chose to represent a journey that, locked in itself, seems to have no future. This circular movement also evokes the idea of exile as that of a continuous wait. There is also an additional element that refers to the same universe of waiting: the urgency of the represented theme does not match with the slowness of the weaving.

The image of Balmes, reproduced in the Rojas' tapestry, was transformed in that process: from a card to a tapestry, from an image intended to circulate widely to a unique work of art. At the same time, and unbeknownst to the artist, the same image also circulated a couple of years prior in another context, even more widespread: it was the cover of the 1977 album *Le Marche et le drapeau, anthologie de chansons inédites* by Quilapayún.


TEJIDO
SOCIAL::
ARTE TEXTIL Y
COMPROMISO
POLITICO

1. Portada catálogo Exposición Jean Lurçat, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC), Santiago, 1955. Gentileza Archivo MAC, Facultad de Artes, Universidad de Chile. VER

2. Portada catálogo Las Bordadoras de Isla Negra, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA), Santiago, 1969. Gentileza Biblioteca y Cedoc, MNBA. VER

3. Invitación exposición Piezas artesanales de Violeta Parra, Galería Latinoamericana, Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1971. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

4. Catálogo COCEMA Galería Artesanal, Ministerio de Educación, Santiago, 1972. Gentileza Archivo Paulina Brugnoli Bailoni. VER

5. Cartel COCEMA, Galería Artesanal para UNCTAD III, Santiago, 1972. Autores: Waldo González y Mario Quiroz. Gentileza Archivo Waldo González. VER

6. Tarjetón exposición Murales Textiles, MNBA, Santiago, 1973. Gentileza Archivo Paulina Brugnoli Bailoni. VER

7. Vista general de la inauguración Violeta regresa a casa, arpilleras bordadas de Violeta Parra, Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1976. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

8. Invitación exposición Violeta regresa a casa, arpilleras bordadas de Violeta Parra, Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1976. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

9. Noticiero ICAIC Nº 798. "Arpillería Chilena: Exposición en Casa de las Américas de arpilleras confeccionadas por mujeres chilenas", La Habana, 1977. Director: Santiago Álvarez. Gentileza Archivo ICAIC.

10. Invitación exposición Las bordadoras de la vida y de la muerte, Casa de las Américas, La Habana, 1977. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

11. Invitación al Festival por la Democracia en Chile. En la imagen aparece el estandarte de John Dugger, *Chile Vencerá*, montado en Trafalgar Square durante una manifestación en Londres, 1974. Gentileza Artists for Democracy. VER

12. Registro fotográfico del banner de John Dugger, Nunca te entregues ni te apartes del camino, incorporado en la peña realizada en el marco de la exposición Art and Resistance, Air Gallery, Londres, 1978. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

13. Invitación Chilijskie Arpilleras (Arpilleras Chilenas), Club Internacional de Prensa, Cracovia, 1979. Gentileza Archivo Casa de las Américas. VER

14. Recorte de prensa, "Chile Vive en la Resistencia", Revista Triunfo, Madrid, 1977. Archivo MSSA. VER

15. Mariela Ferreira, carátula Por Chile. Suecia, 1978. Sello: YTF. VER

16. Varios autores, carátula Chant pour les enfants du Chili. Francia, 1977. Sello: Secours Populaire Français. VER

17. Quilapayún, carátula Le marche et le drapeau. Francia, 1977. Sello: Dicap. VER

18. Tarjeta de fin de año enviada por el Comité de la Unidad Popular de Varsovia a los chilenos exiliados residentes en Polonia, 1979. Gentileza Ana María Rojas. VER

Tejido colectivo es una instalación en proceso, que suma tejidos producidos por grupos de estudiantes y organizaciones sociales que visitan la exposición a través de las actividades de mediación, impulsadas por el área de Programas Públicos del MSSA. A partir de la metáfora que supone a cada persona como una hebra de un tejido social colectivo, las tramas aquí expuestas son una representación de diversas reflexiones tejidas en diálogo durante un ejercicio de mediación, con cordones de algodón crudo retorcido, yute embarrilado y lana.

Collective Weave is an installation in process which is constructed progressively adding weaves and knits produced by groups of students and members of social organizations after touring the exhibition, in the activities of Public Programs of MSSA. From the metaphor that assumes each person as a thread of a collective social fabric, the wefts exhibited here represent various reflections woven in dialogue during a mediation exercise, made with twisted raw cotton laces, racked jute and wool.

SALA 2

PISO 1

El bordado y la tapicería son dos prácticas textiles de larga data que tienen distintas tradiciones y tecnologías asociadas a su hacer. En esta sala, se presentan dos piezas bordadas por las mujeres de Isla Negra y un tapiz de Jean Lurçat. En estas obras aparece, por un lado, el espacio doméstico y femenino, las puntadas simples, pero expresivas y la visión particular y subjetiva de cada bordadora. Por otra, a partir de la tradición de la cual proviene Lurçat podemos invocar el espacio del taller, la visión de un maestro y la jerarquía del trabajo manual supervisado.

El tapiz de Lurçat tiene la particularidad de haber sido la primera obra textil que recibió el museo. Es, también, el único textil del periodo de Solidaridad. La obra fue enviada a Chile por su viuda para apoyar el gobierno de Salvador Allende. Los vínculos de Lurçat con Chile eran antiguos: en la década del cincuenta expuso en el MAC y en el MNBA y era conocida su admiración por Pablo Neruda, a quien probablemente conoció por las redes compartidas de intelectuales y artistas de izquierda de la posguerra europea.

Los bordados también visibilizan esas redes, ellos comenzaron a producirse en 1966 gracias al encuentro entre Leonor Sobrino, vecina y veraneante de la zona, y las mujeres del pueblo. El bordado fue introducido para estimular la actividad económica de las mujeres. Gracias a las redes del mismo Neruda y de artistas como Nemesio Antúnez, el trabajo de las bordadoras tuvo un alcance mayor que rápidamente excedió los espacios del arte popular y artesanal, exhibiéndose en museos y bienales.

Embroidery and tapestry are two longstanding textile practices that have different traditions and technologies associated with them. This room holds two pieces embroidered by the women of Isla Negra and a tapestry by Jean Lurçat. In them we can see, on the one hand, the individual imprint of the feminine textile emerging from the subjectivity and expressiveness of the embroidered images. On the other, we can see the workshop space and the hierarchy of supervised manual labor emerging from the tradition from which Lurçat comes.

Lurçat's tapestry was the first textile work received by the Museum, back in 1972. This work was sent to Chile by his widow to support the government of Salvador Allende. Lurçat's connections with Chile were longstanding: in the 1950's he held an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art and his admiration for Pablo Neruda was well known. He probably met him through the shared networks of intellectuals and left-wing artists of the post-European war.

The embroideries also shed a light on these networks: they began forming in 1966 due to the meeting of Leonor Sobrino, a neighbor and summer visitor of Isla Negra, with the women of the town. Embroidery was introduced in order to stimulate women's economic activity. Thanks to the networks of Neruda himself and artists like Nemesio Antúnez, the work of these embroiderers increased their reach beyond the spaces of folk art, exhibiting in museums and biennials.


Tunçal

Jean Lurçat (Francia, 1892 – 1966)
Janus, 1964
Tapicería
148 x 100 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

Jean Lurçat es un artista francés asociado al surrealismo, que después de la Primera Guerra Mundial incursionó en la elaboración de cartones para la fabricación de tapices, convirtiéndose en una de las figuras más destacadas de la 'tapicería pictórica' francesa. La obra fue enviada a Chile por su viuda para apoyar el gobierno de Salvador Allende. Los vínculos de Lurçat con Chile eran antiguos: a fines de la década del 50 expuso en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo y era conocida su admiración por Pablo Neruda.

Janus forma parte de una tradición de larga data en la que el tejedor se concentra en la trama, es decir, en el hilo transversal del tejido y no en la urdimbre, la serie de hilos longitudinales que se tensan en un marco o telar. A partir de un diseño previo, los tejedores reproducen la imagen previamente creada por el o la artista. A diferencia de otras técnicas, el tapiz tiene un derecho y un revés (por el reverso los saltos de los hilos quedan a la vista), aspecto que refuerza la comprensión de estos textiles como obras bidimensionales. La pieza, de formato vertical, representa a un gallo, animal que aparece recurrentemente en el repertorio iconográfico del artista. Su cabeza sorprende: el rostro, antropomorfo, enfrenta al espectador. La cabeza se completa con dos perfiles adicionales que parecen dibujarse a cada lado de la cara humana del animal. En el mundo romano, Janus era el dios de las puertas, de los pasajes, del tiempo, de los principios y los términos, del pasado y del presente, y se lo representaba con dos caras: una mirando hacia el pasado y la otra hacia el futuro. El gallo no era el animal tutelar de Janus, pero en siglos posteriores el dios romano fue asociado a San Pedro, quien tiene las llaves de las puertas del cielo –el gallo acompañaba a San Pedro y su canto anunciaba la resurrección de Cristo. El gallo era, también, en el contexto de la Francia revolucionaria, el símbolo de la libertad. La obra de Lurçat visualiza de modo contemporáneo los diálogos iconográficos entre el mundo clásico y el medieval. Asimismo, la materialidad de la obra refuerza, desde un punto de vista técnico y enraizado en la recuperación de la tradición de la tapicería francesa, la utilización del repertorio iconográfico del artista.

Jean Lurçat (France, 1892 – 1966)
Janus, 1964
Tapestry
148 x 100 cm
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

Jean Lurçat is a French artist associated with surrealism, who after World War I ventured into the elaboration of tapestries, becoming one of the most prominent figures of the French 'pictorial tapestry'. This work was sent to Chile by his widow to support the government of Salvador Allende. Lurçat's had a longstanding connection with Chile: at the end of the 1950's he held an exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo and his admiration for Pablo Neruda was well known.

Janus is part of a longstanding tradition in which the weaver concentrates on the weft, that is, on the transverse thread of the fabric and not on the warp, the series of longitudinal threads that are tensioned in a frame or loom. Based on a previous design, the weavers reproduce the image already created by an artist. Unlike other techniques, the tapestry has a front and a back (on the back, the ends of the threads are visible), an aspect that reinforces the understanding of these textiles as two-dimensional works. This vertical work represents a rooster, an animal that appears repeatedly in the iconographic repertoire of the artist. Its head is surprising: the anthropomorphic face stares at the viewer. The head is completed with two additional profiles that seem to be drawn on each side of the animal's human face. In the Roman world, Janus was the god of doors, of passages, of time, of beginnings and ends, of the past and the present, and he was represented with two faces: one looking to the past and the other to the future. The rooster was not Janus' tutelary animal, but in later centuries the Roman god was associated with St. Peter, who holds the keys to the gates of heaven. The rooster accompanied St. Peter and its song announced the resurrection of Christ. The rooster was also, in the context of revolutionary France, the symbol of freedom. Lurçat's work is a contemporary view of iconographic dialogues between the classical and medieval worlds. Likewise, the materiality of the work reinforces, from a technical point of view and rooted in the recovery of the French tapestry tradition, the use of the artist's iconographic repertoire.

P.P. (Bordadora de Isla Negra)
Sin título, circa 1969-70
Bordado en lana
62,7 x 60 cm
Colección Fundación Félix Maruenda

P.P. (Embroiderer from Isla Negra)
Untitled, c. 1969-70
Wool embroidery
62.7 x 60 cm
Fundación Félix Maruenda Collection

R.S.A. (Rosa Santander, Bordadora de Isla Negra)
La casa del poeta, circa 1972-73
Bordado en lana
67 x 83 cm
Colección Luz Mendez Pereira

R.S.A. (Rosa Santander, Embroiderer from Isla Negra)
The Poet's House, c. 1972-73
Wool embroidery
67 x 83 cm
Luz Mendez Pereira Collection

Por Josefina de la Maza

La historia oral de Isla Negra cuenta que los bordados de la zona, conocidos por su colorido expresionista y la representación de los trabajos del mar, del campo y de las costumbres del pueblo, comenzaron a producirse en 1966 gracias al encuentro entre Leonor Sobrino, vecina y veraneante del litoral, y las mujeres del pueblo. El bordado fue introducido para estimular la actividad económica de las mujeres, permitiendo la existencia de ingresos que ayudaran a la economía familiar. La vitalidad de las imágenes representadas, la simpleza de sus formas y la riqueza de las gamas de colores utilizadas por las artesanas, incidieron rápidamente en el éxito temprano de estas piezas. Uno de los promotores de estos bordados fue un vecino ilustre de Isla Negra: Pablo Neruda. Gracias a sus redes culturales y artísticas, el trabajo de las bordadoras tuvo un alcance mayor que rápidamente excedió los espacios del arte popular y artesanal. Los bordados fueron exhibidos en el Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago (1969), en el Institute of Contemporary Arts de Londres (1972), en la Galerie du Passeur y L'Espace Cardin en París (1972) y en la Bienal de São Paulo, Brasil (1973). Junto a estas exposiciones, en donde las artesanas participaron de modo individual con sus bordados, es necesario destacar un proyecto colaborativo, en el que hicieron a un lado sus diferencias e individualidades. Este proyecto fue un bordado de grandes dimensiones realizado en un periodo de tres meses para acompañar, desde el arte, al edificio de la UNCTAD III. Esa obra es un recordatorio de la fuerza que puede alcanzar el tejido social de una época.

Los bordados presentes en esta sala dan cuenta de las redes privadas y públicas en las cuales estas piezas se insertaron y ambas pertenecen a colecciones privadas. Uno de ellos fue un regalo amoroso y familiar que forma parte de la vida de los artistas Graciela Córdova y Félix Maruenda, y el otro fue expuesto en la Bienal de São Paulo de 1973 y pertenece, hasta el día de hoy, a la familia de quien fue la comisaria de esa exposición, Luz Pereira.

By Josefina de la Maza

The oral history of Isla Negra tells that the embroidery of the area -known for its colorful expressionism and the representation of sea and countryside labors, as well as the customs of the town- began to appear in 1966 after a meeting between Leonor Sobrino (neighbor and summer visitor) and the women of the town. Embroidery was introduced to stimulate women's economic activity, providing income that would help the family economy. The vitality of the images represented, the simplicity of their forms and the richness of the color ranges used by the crafters quickly influenced the early success of these pieces. One of the promoters of these embroideries was an illustrious neighbor of Isla Negra: Pablo Neruda. Thanks to his cultural and artistic networks, the work of the embroiderers had a greater reach that quickly exceeded the spaces of folk art. The embroideries were exhibited at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago (1969), at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London (1972), at the Galerie du Passeur and L'Espace Cardin in Paris (1972) and at the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil (1973). Together with these exhibitions, where artisans participated individually with their embroideries, there was a remarkable collaborative project for which they set aside their differences and individualities. This project was a large embroidery made over a period of three months for the building where the UNCTAD III was held. That work is a reminder of the strenght that the social fabric of an era is able to reach.

The embroideries in this room belong to private collections and give an account of the private and public networks in which these pieces were inserted. One of them was a loving gift that is part of the life of the artists Graciela Córdova and Félix Maruenda, and the other was exposed in the São Paulo Biennale of 1973 and belongs to the family of the curator of that exhibition, Luz Pereira.

SALA 3

PISO 1

Gracia Barrios, Roser Bru y Paulina Brugnoli comparten una historia de compromiso político y, también, de desaparición y pérdida. Las tres artistas realizaron obras para el edificio de la UNCTAD III, uno de los símbolos del gobierno de Salvador Allende, inaugurado en 1972. Barrios y Bru, pintoras mayores que Brugnoli, cosieron grandes piezas figurativas que representaban la imagen del pueblo y la familia, respectivamente. Brugnoli, la única de las tres formada en el taller textil de la Escuela de Artes Aplicadas de la Universidad de Chile, realizó un tapiz abstracto.

A estas obras se les perdió el rastro tras el golpe de Estado: fueron destruidas, olvidadas o invisibilizadas durante la dictadura, a pesar de sus grandes dimensiones y del impacto que ellas causaron al momento de su exhibición. Las obras de Barrios y Bru aparecieron hace algunos años, al igual que otra obra textil del mismo conjunto descubierta recientemente, un bordado de grandes dimensiones realizado de modo colectivo por las mujeres de Isla Negra. El tapiz de Brugnoli lamentablemente sigue desaparecido.

En esta sala se exhiben por primera vez desde la Unidad Popular los textiles de Barrios y Bru juntos. Ellos van acompañados por fotografías del edificio de la UNCTAD y los bocetos de la obra perdida de Brugnoli. De esta última artista se incluye, además, un tapiz de la misma época de la colección del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo.

Gracia Barrios, Roser Bru and Paulina Brugnoli share a history of political commitment and, also, of disappearance and loss. The three artists made works for the UNCTAD III building, one of the symbols of the Salvador Allende government, opened in 1972. Barrios and Bru, both painters and both older than Brugnoli, sewed large figurative pieces that represented the image of the people and the family. Brugnoli, the only one of the three who was educated in the textile workshop of the School of Applied Arts of Universidad de Chile, made an abstract tapestry.

These works were lost after the coup d'etat: they were destroyed, forgotten or hidden during the dictatorship, despite their large dimensions and the impact they caused at the time of their exhibition. The works of Barrios and Bru resurfaced some years ago just as another textile work of the same group found recently, a large embroidery made collectively by the women of Isla Negra. Brugnoli's tapestry unfortunately is still missing.

In this room, the textile works by Barrios and Bru are exhibited together for the first time since 1973. They are accompanied by photographs of the UNCTAD building and sketches of the lost work of Brugnoli. One of her tapestries from the same period, belonging to the collection of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, is also included in this room.

Gracia Barrios (Chile, 1927)
***Multitud III*, 1972**
Retazos de telas cosidas
300 x 800 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Caroll Yasky

Esta obra fue creada por Gracia Barrios para ser instalada en el edificio donde se realizó la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre Comercio y Desarrollo en el Tercer Mundo de 1972, más conocida como UNCTAD III, en Santiago de Chile. El tamaño, la factura, la materialidad y la temática de la obra fueron pensados expresamente por la artista, considerando su futura ubicación: el vestíbulo de acceso por donde ingresarían mandatarios e invitados internacionales. La mujer, el campesino y trabajadores agrupados en masa llevando la bandera nacional constituyen el 'pueblo de Chile', una imagen representativa de la sociedad ideal activa y afectiva que enarbolaba la Unidad Popular. Fue aquel cuerpo social el que por votación popular llevó al gobierno, por primera vez en la historia mundial, a un presidente socialista, Salvador Allende. *Multitud III*, como otras obras de ese periodo de la artista, consagra a los protagonistas de ese logro democrático.

La construcción del edificio de la UNCTAD III se realizó en un tiempo extraordinario gracias a la voluntad de los trabajadores que hicieron turnos diurnos y nocturnos para lograr esta empresa, entre ellos artistas como Barrios, a quienes se invitó a producir obras especialmente para el proyecto, recibiendo por ello la misma remuneración entregada a los obreros.

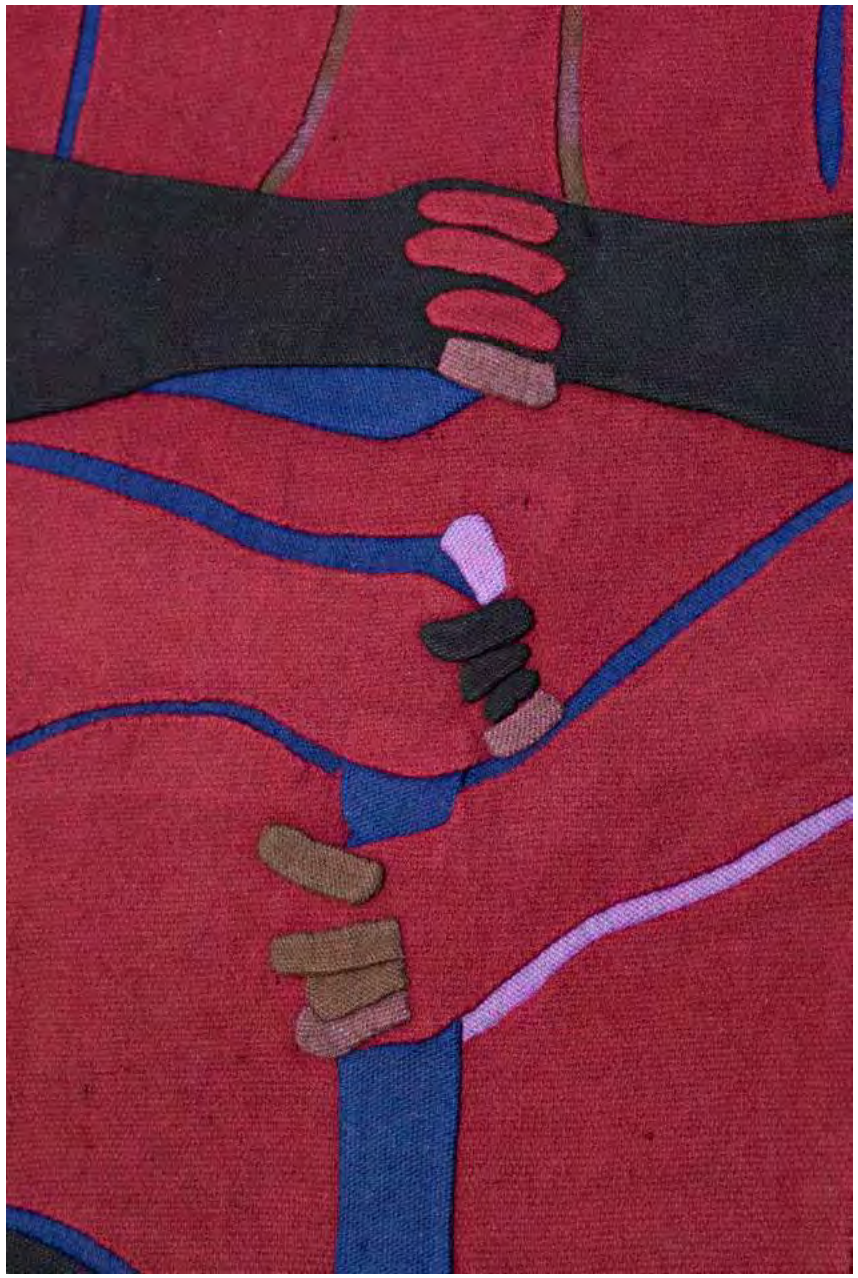
Gracia Barrios (Chile, 1927)
***Crowd III*, 1972**
Sewn pieces of fabric
300 x 800 cm
MSSA Collection

By Caroll Yasky

This work was created by Gracia Barrios to be installed in the building where the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the Third World of 1972, better known as UNCTAD III, was held in Santiago, Chile. The size, the materiality and the theme of the work were expressly thought by the artist considering its future location: the entrance hall that would receive international leaders and guests. The woman, the peasant and workers grouped together carrying the national flag constitute the 'people of Chile', a representative image of the active and affective ideal society traced by the Unidad Popular. It was that social body that decided, by popular vote and for the first time in world history, that the government should go to a socialist president: Salvador Allende. *Crowd III*, like other works from that period of the artist, enshrines the protagonists of that democratic achievement.

The construction of the UNCTAD III building was completed in very little time thanks to the will of the workers who took day and night shifts. They included artists (such as Barrios) who were invited to produce works especially for the project, receiving the same remuneration given to the workers.


BRU



Roser Bru (España, 1923)
El hombre, La mujer, La familia, 1972
Retazos de telas cosidas
254 x 126 cm, 257 x 124 cm, 260 x 260 cm
Custodio temporal, Eduardo Armijo

Por Josefina de la Maza

Este conjunto fue realizado de modo especial para el edificio de la UNCTAD III, al igual que la pieza de Gracia Barrios que también se puede observar en esta sala. Los textiles representan a hombres, mujeres y niños a través de la unidad básica de la sociedad, la familia. El textil de mayores dimensiones está dedicado a la familia y cada una de las piezas individuales introduce a uno de sus integrantes. Los colores de las telas son vivos y las siluetas diseñadas por la artista son simples y redondeadas. Ambos aspectos dialogan con los requerimientos de una obra proyectada para ser instalada en el espacio público. Si bien el conjunto de textiles está pensado para ser visto a la distancia, cada pieza contiene detalles delicados que contribuyen a reforzar el mensaje de la artista. Por ejemplo, los cuerpos del hombre y de la mujer, representados en los dos textiles individuales, tienen dos pares de brazos: los propios y un par adicional, que simboliza a la comunidad. La idea es clara: solo a través de la comunidad y del trabajo colectivo y solidario se puede reforzar el tejido social.

Después del golpe, estas piezas corrieron la misma suerte que la mayoría de las obras que se instalaron en el edificio de la UNCTAD: desaparecieron de la esfera pública y por décadas se creyó que habían sido destruidas. De los cuatro textiles que formaban el políptico de Bru, tres de ellos fueron recuperados a mediados de los 2000 por el coleccionista Eduardo Armijo, quien hasta el día de hoy es su custodio temporal, mientras se espera que las obras vuelvan a formar parte del patrimonio del Estado de Chile. Como una de las piezas se encuentra hoy perdida, la exposición de este políptico conserva el espacio del textil desaparecido, con el objetivo de generar consciencia sobre esta y otras obras del periodo, realizadas por artistas afines a la Unidad Popular, a las que se les ha perdido el rastro.

Roser Bru (Spain, 1923)
The man, The Woman, The Family, 1972
Sewn pieces of fabrics
254 x 126 cm, 257 x 124 cm, 260 x 260 cm
Temporary Custodian, Eduardo Armijo

By Josefina de la Maza

This set was made especially for the UNCTAD III building, like the work by Gracia Barrios also in this room. The textiles represent men, women and children through the basic unit of society: the family. The largest textile is dedicated to the family and each of the individual pieces introduces one of its members. The colors of the fabrics are vivid and the silhouettes designed by the artist are simple and rounded. Both aspects establish a dialogue with the requirements of a work designed to be installed in a public space. Although the textile set is intended to be seen from a distance, each piece contains subtle details that contribute to reinforcing the artist's message. For example, the bodies of men and women, represented in each of the two individual textiles, have two pairs of arms: their own and an additional pair, which symbolizes the community. The idea is clear: it is only through the community and the collective work that the social fabric can be reinforced.

After the coup, these pieces suffered the same fate as most of the works that were installed in the UNCTAD building: they disappeared from the public sphere and for decades were believed to have been destroyed. Three of the four textiles that composed Bru's polyptych were recovered in the mid-2000's by collector Eduardo Armijo, who is currently the work's temporary custodian while they await to become part of the heritage of the State of Chile. The exhibition of this polyptych retains the space of the missing textile, raising awareness about the fact that this and other works of the period, made by artists related to the Unidad Popular, remain unfound.

Paulina Brugnoli (Chile, 1940)
Sin título, 1968
Tapicería
203 x 103,5 cm
Colección Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, MAC, Facultad de Artes, Universidad de Chile

Por Josefina de la Maza

Los tapices realizados por Paulina Brugnoli a fines de la década del 60 dan cuenta de la experticia adquirida por la artista tras su paso por los talleres de gobelino y telar de la Escuela de Artes Aplicadas de la Universidad de Chile, espacio en el que se formó después de haber estudiado danza en el Conservatorio y pintura en la Escuela de Bellas Artes de la misma universidad. Los tapices de estos años fueron tejidos en telar de lizos y son una demostración de cómo Brugnoli integró conocimientos de distintas fuentes. Por ejemplo, los que aprendió con pintoras como Gracia Barrios y Matilde Pérez y, en textil, con su maestra y mentora Margarita Johow, quien, de hecho, le regaló el telar en el cual fue tejida la obra aquí expuesta.

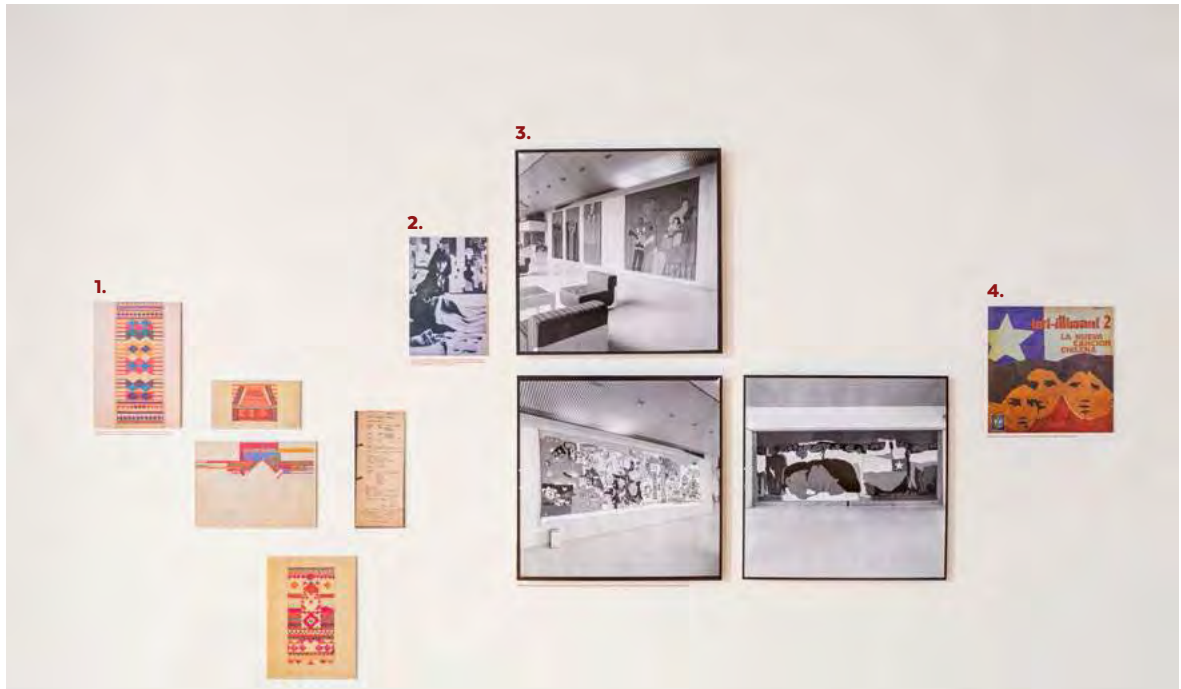
Uno de los desafíos enfrentados por Brugnoli en esta época fue desarrollar tejidos que tuvieran un diseño y una ejecución clara y planificada. Su aproximación a la abstracción y a la geometría tiene que ver con la necesidad de establecer puentes directos entre la preparación de la obra y su posterior producción que, en ocasiones, era asistida por una tejedora. La serie en la cual se inserta el tapiz aquí presentado se vincula al deseo de sentir la tierra y la vida. Más allá de si sus piezas son consideradas obras de arte u objetos funcionales enraizados en la tradición de las artes aplicadas, los tapices de Brugnoli son, desde su conceptualización, cuerpos que abren sus brazos al sol.

Paulina Brugnoli (Chile, 1940)
Untitled, 1968
Tapestry
203 x 103,5 cm
Collection of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC), Facultad de Artes, Universidad de Chile

By Josefina de la Maza

The tapestries made by Paulina Brugnoli at the end of the 1960's show the expertise acquired by the artist in the workshops of the School of Applied Arts of Universidad de Chile, after having studied dance at the Conservatory and painting at the School of Fine Arts of the same university. The tapestries of this period where made in a hedge loom and are a demonstration of how Brugnoli integrated knowledge from different sources. For example, what she learned from painters such as Gracia Barrios and Matilde Pérez, and from her textile teacher and mentor Margarita Johow, who, in fact, gave her the loom on which this work was woven.

One of the challenges Brugnoli had to face then was to develop textiles with a clear and planned design and execution. Her approach to abstraction and geometry has to do with the need to establish direct bridges between the preparation of the work and its subsequent production that, on occasion, was assisted by a weaver. The series to which the tapestry presented here belongs is linked to the desire to feel the earth and life. Regardless of her pieces being considered works of art or functional objects rooted in the tradition of applied arts, Brugnoli's tapestries are, from their conceptualization, bodies opening their arms to the sun.



1. Dibujos preparatorios de la obra textil de Paulina Brugnoli expuesta en la UNCTAD III y desaparecida después del golpe de Estado. Gentileza Archivo Paulina Brugnoli Bailoni. VER

2. Carlos Tapia, registro fotográfico de Roser Bru cosiendo su obra para la UNCTAD III, publicado en "También una obra de arte", revista Hechos Mundiales, Santiago, 1972. Gentileza Hemeroteca, Biblioteca Nacional. VER

3. Armindo Cardoso, fotografías de obras de Gracia Barrios, Roser Bru y las Bordadoras de Isla Negra, edificio UNCTAD III, Santiago, 1972. Gentileza Archivo Fotográfico, Biblioteca Nacional. VER

4. Inti-Illimani 2, carátula *La nueva canción chilena*. Italia, 1974. Sello discográfico: Vedette Records. VER

Esta selección de documentos contextualiza la producción y el montaje de algunas de las obras textiles que participaron en la inauguración del edificio de la UNCTAD en 1972 y que se exhiben en esta sala. Se presentan registros que el fotógrafo portugués Armindo Cardoso (Porto, 1943) tomó de las obras de Barrios y Bru, junto a la gran pieza textil comunitaria realizada por las bordadoras de Isla Negra. Las fotografías, al igual que las obras mencionadas, estuvieron ocultas durante años y su recuperación, desde las primeras décadas del 2000, forma parte de los esfuerzos individuales e institucionales de reconstrucción de la memoria histórica de la Unidad Popular. A pesar de la gran cantidad de fotografías tomadas por Cardoso, su lente no registró el tejido a telar realizado por Paulina Brugnoli, hoy desaparecido, del cual exhibimos sus bocetos de preparación.

Este conjunto se completa con la portada de un disco del grupo musical chileno Inti Illimani, producido desde su exilio en Italia en 1974, que evoca los rostros que Gracia Barrios diseñó y cosió en su tapiz, dando cuenta del sentido colectivo del tejido social.

This selection of documents brings context to the production and assembly of some of the textile works that participated in the inauguration of the UNCTAD building in 1972 which are exhibited in this room. Visual records taken by Portuguese photographer Armindo Cardoso (Porto, 1943) show the works of Barrios and Bru, alongside the large community textile piece made by the Isla Negra embroiders. These photographs –like the works mentioned– were hidden for years, and their recovery since the first decades of the XXI century is part of individual and institutional efforts to rebuild the historical memory of the Unidad Popular [Popular Unity]. Unfortunately, and despite the large number of photographs taken by Cardoso, his lens did not record the handloom woven tapestry made by Paulina Brugnoli, a piece which is missing to this day, of which the exhibit shows its preparation sketches.

This set of works is completed with a record cover by Chilean musical group Inti Illimani, produced in 1974 during their exile in Italy. It evokes the faces that Gracia Barrios designed and sewed on her tapestry, stressing the collective will of the social fabric.

Mujeres de la etnia Guna, Panamá
Molas, circa 1970-1976
Superposición de telas cortadas y cosidas
Medidas variables
Colección MSSA

Por Caroll Yasky

La primera donación que recibió el Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende (MIRSA) en 1976 fue un conjunto de molas panameñas. Ellas fueron adquiridas gracias a la campaña "Una mola por Chile", una semana cultural solidaria realizada bajo el alero de la Universidad de Panamá. Entre las iniciativas de la campaña, se mencionó a "un notable pintor que recogió 'molas' entre la minoría nacional Guna, que fueron entregadas al Museo como expresión de apoyo a los mapuches chilenos".

Las molas son un tipo particular de textiles tradicionales que transmiten, a través de formas abstractas y figurativas, la cosmovisión del pueblo Guna. Es posible pensar que la razón por la cual Panamá donó piezas textiles indígenas y no obras de arte, está asociado a su origen. El pueblo Guna forjó su propia revolución en 1925, en defensa de su independencia cultural y territorial. Gracias a ello fueron reconocidos por la legislación panameña en 1938 y desde entonces han conseguido varios logros en defensa de sus derechos, costumbres y tradiciones originarias. Son un pueblo que sabe de resistencia y este hecho ha marcado su identidad. Las mujeres Guna son centrales para la preservación y transmisión de esta herencia cultural. Ellas son quienes producen las molas y enseñan a las menores no sólo la compleja técnica de su confección –la superposición de varias telas de colores cosidas entre sí– y su función en la indumentaria femenina, sino también su valor simbólico y primordial. Cada vez que una mola es creada se renueva el sentido colectivo, se afirma y expresa la identidad social de la comunidad y se activa la tradición mítica y ritual de este pueblo. En este sentido, su producción es también un ejercicio político. En ello radica la importancia de su legado al Museo.

Guna Women, Panama
Molas, c. 1970-1976
Layers of cut and sewn fabrics
Variable measures
MSSA Collection

By Caroll Yasky

The first donation received by the International Museum of the Resistance Salvador Allende (MIRSA) in 1976 was a set of Panamanian molas. They were acquired through the "A Mola for Chile" campaign, a solidarity cultural week held by the Universidad de Panamá. Among the initiatives of the campaign, "a notable painter who collected 'molas' among the national minority Guna, which were handed over to the Museum as an expression of support for the Chilean Mapuche" was mentioned.

Molas are a particular type of traditional textiles that transmit, through abstract and figurative forms, the worldview of the Guna people. It is feasible that the reason behind Panama's donation of indigenous textile pieces instead of works of art is associated with their origin. The Guna people forged their own revolution in 1925, in defense of their cultural and territorial independence. As a result, they were recognized by Panamanian legislation in 1938 and since then they have managed to protect their rights, customs and original traditions. They are people who know about resistance, which has shaped their identity. The Guna women are fundamental to the preservation and transmission of this cultural heritage. They are the ones who produce the molas and teach the girls not only the complex technique behind their confection (the superposition of several colored fabrics sewn together) and their role in women's clothing, but also their symbolic and primordial value. Each time a mola is created, the collective sense is renewed, the social identity of the community is affirmed and expressed, and the mythical and ritual tradition of this people is activated. In this sense, its production is also a political exercise. That is where the importance of their legacy to the Museum lies.

1. Invitación a la semana cultural *Una Mola por Chile*, Universidad de Panamá, Ciudad de Panamá, 1976. Archivo MSSA. VER

2. Catálogo *Imagen para luchar por Chile*, exhibida en el contexto de *Una Mola por Chile*, Paraninfo Universitario de la Universidad de Panamá, Ciudad de Panamá, 1976. Archivo MSSA. VER

3. Catálogo *Chilijskie Arpilleras I Molas Z Panamy*, Galería TPSP Stara Kordegarda, Varsovia, 1980. Archivo MSSA. VER

Las molas que hoy forman parte de la colección del MSSA comenzaron su itinerario de exhibiciones en Ciudad de Panamá en 1976, cuando fueron reunidas para apoyar un evento de solidaridad con Chile. Tiempo después viajaron a La Habana, Cuba, y se sumaron a un conjunto de arpilleras que había sido retirado clandestinamente de Chile. Ambos grupos de textiles fueron enviados a Europa y exhibidos en una muestra del Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende realizada en Varsovia, Polonia, en 1980. A pesar de sus evidentes diferencias formales, de origen y significado, molas y arpilleras compartían tanto su condición de embajadoras de la resistencia chilena, como su materialidad y formato. Su maleabilidad y pequeñas dimensiones permitían su fácil traslado en una maleta.

A través de documentos y de la exhibición del reverso de una de las molas, se destaca la circulación que tuvo este conjunto y se visibiliza especialmente el desgaste del textil, que da cuenta de la intensa vida social de estas obras durante el periodo de Resistencia. Por otro lado, una detenida mirada al reverso de la mola permite comprender el delicado y paciente trabajo manual realizado por las mujeres Guna en la elaboración de estas piezas, y nos invita a no perder de vista la escala individual del quehacer artístico, artesanal y tradicional.

The *molas* that are now part of the MSSA collection began their itinerary of exhibitions in Panama City in 1976, when gathered to support a solidarity event for Chile. Sometime later these travelled to Havana, Cuba, and joined a group of *arpilleras* that had been secretly dispatched from Chile. Both textile groups were sent to Europe and shown in an exhibition of the Museo Internacional de la Resistencia Salvador Allende held in Warsaw, Poland, in 1980. Despite their obvious formal differences of origin and meaning, *molas* and *arpilleras* shared both their condition of Chilean resistance ambassadors and their materiality and format. Their malleability and small dimensions allowed their easy transfer in a suitcase.

The circulation of this group of works is highlighted through the display of documents and the back of one of these *molas*: the wear of the textile is especially visible, which accounts for the intense social life of these textiles during the Resistance period. On the other hand, a careful look at the back of the *mola* allows us to understand the delicate and patient manual work done by the Guna women in the elaboration of these pieces and invites us to keep an attentive eye on the individual scale of this artistic, handmade and traditional work.

ZÓCALO

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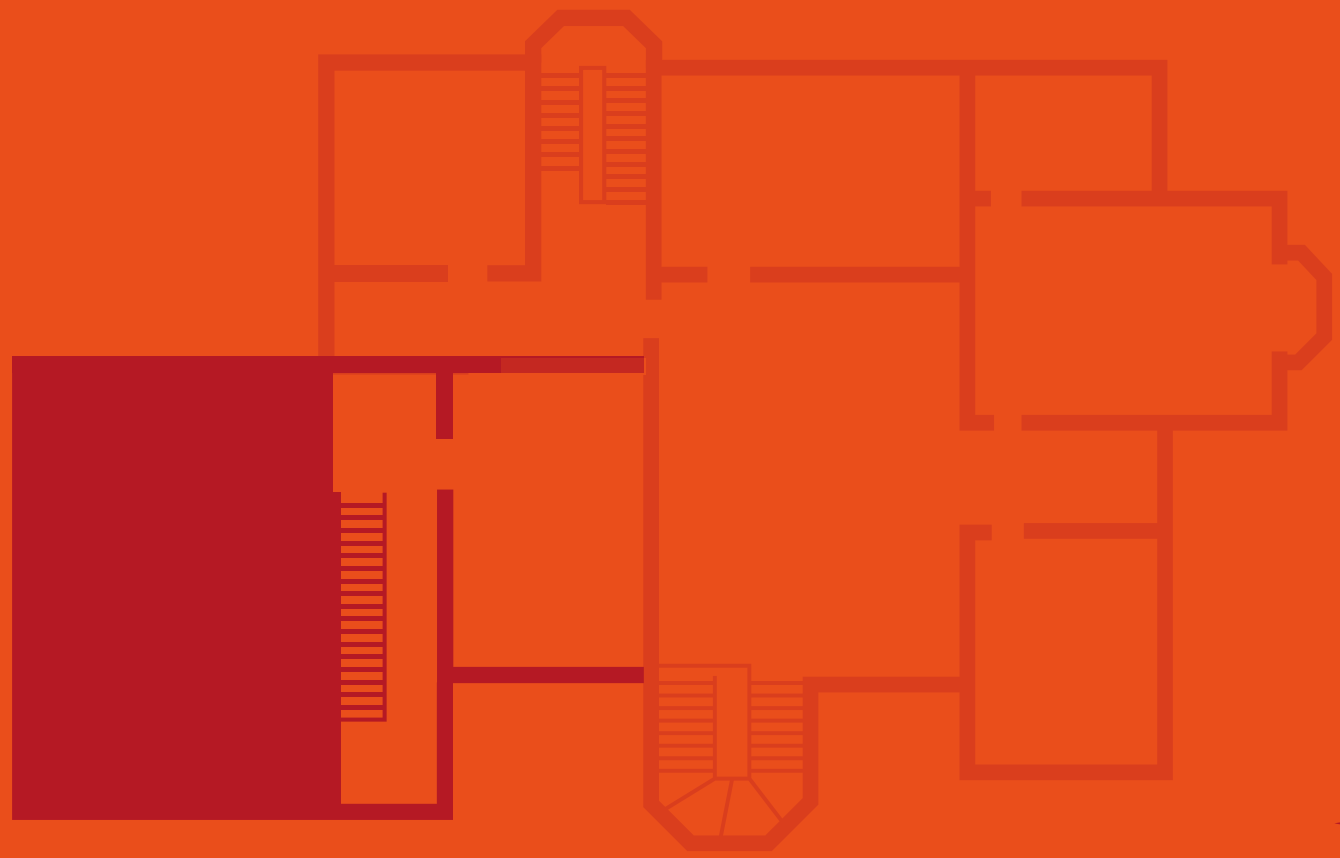

Las obras reunidas en esta sala fueron donadas al Museo durante la dictadura, en el llamado periodo de Resistencia (1975-1990). El centro de operaciones del Museo se encontraba entonces en La Habana, en Casa de las Américas, y su principal figura fue Miria Contreras, quien se dedicó a gestionar donaciones en distintos países que recordaran y actualizaran la solidaridad con el pueblo de Chile. Las piezas textiles –desde las molas panameñas que se encuentran en el vano de la escalera, a las obras de Olga de Amaral, Josep Grau-Garriga, Marta Palau y María Asunción Raventós– fueron incluidas en donaciones organizadas por país: Colombia, España, México y Panamá. Después de ser exhibidas en sus países de origen, las obras fueron guardadas en depósitos esperando la vuelta a la democracia en Chile, con la excepción de las molas que tuvieron una circulación particular por Europa junto a un grupo de arpilleras. Así, parte de la historia de estos textiles está vinculada a su condición de 'objetos en espera', el que estaba asociado a un futuro incierto pero deseado, que dependía del término de la dictadura.

De modo particular, estas obras están relacionadas al desarrollo y la actualización de la tapicería contemporánea. Amaral es una de las artistas más relevantes del arte textil contemporáneo latinoamericano. Por otra parte, Grau-Garriga fue uno de los principales actores de la renovación de la tapicería catalana y cumple una función de bisagra con otros artistas que forman parte de esta muestra. En sus años de formación, fue cercano a Jean Lurçat y, con posterioridad, Raventós y Palau estudiaron con él.

The works in this room were donated to the Museum during the dictatorship, in the so-called Resistance Period (1975-1990). The Museum's operation center was then in Havana, in Casa de las Américas, and its main figure was Miria Contreras, who managed donations from different countries that would remember and renew their solidarity with the people of Chile. The textile pieces – from the Panamanian molas found in the stairwell, to the works of Olga de Amaral, Josep Grau-Garriga, Marta Palau and María Asunción Raventós– were included in donations organized by country: Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Spain. After being exhibited in their original countries, these works were stored in warehouses waiting for Chile's return to democracy, with the exception of the molas, which traveled through Europe with a group of arpilleras. Thus, part of the history of these textiles is linked to their status as 'waiting objects', associated with an uncertain but desired future, that depended on the end of the dictatorship.

In particular, these works are related to the development and renewal of contemporary tapestry. Amaral is one of the most relevant artists of contemporary Latin American textile art. On the other hand, Grau-Garriga was one of the main actors in the renovation of Catalan tapestry and serves as a hinge with other artists who are part of this exhibition. In his formative years, he was close to Jean Lurçat and, subsequently, Raventós and Palau studied with him.

Josep Grau-Garriga (España, 1929 – Francia, 2011)
A Xile [A Chile], 1977
Tejido a telar y tela, fibras vegetales y sintéticas
190 x 150 x 25,5 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

Grau-Garriga es un artista clave para comprender la tapicería española del siglo XX. Formado en pintura, su carrera tuvo un giro temprano hacia la producción de tapices y alfombras cuando asumió en 1955 la dirección creativa de Casa Aymat (una importante fábrica de tapices en Cataluña). Tras su iniciación en el mundo del diseño de tapicería, varios encuentros posteriores con Jean Lurçat le permitieron explorar las características y posibilidades del arte textil. Estos encuentros con el tapicero francés y, de modo especial, una cuidada atención al informalismo, derivaron en un temprano interés por trabajar con fibras naturales, de revelar en sus obras el reverso de los tapices y de explorar las posibilidades escultóricas de las estructuras tejidas. Asimismo, en ese proceso el artista dejó gradualmente de diseñar los cartones de sus tapices, optando por sentarse él mismo frente al telar a tejer sus piezas.

Con un fuerte compromiso político de izquierda, Grau Garriga fue contactado en 1976 por Miria Contreras, quien en esos años conducía el proyecto del MIRSA. En su comunicación con Contreras, el artista apoyaba la iniciativa del MIRSA y comentaba "a ver si conseguimos eliminar el aspecto que tiene actualmente el arte como producto comercial dirigido a unas élites que son las que menos lo necesitan". Con este espíritu, Grau-Garriga realizó *A Xile*, una obra pensada especialmente para el Museo. Esta, al igual que varias otras obras de fines de los 60 y principios de los 70, combina el color crudo de las fibras naturales con el rojo. En este caso, un tejido grueso envuelve un bulto, dándole forma y peso a los cuerpos de cientos de desaparecidos.

Josep Grau-Garriga (Spain, 1929 – France, 2011)
To Chile, 1977
Loom weave and fabric, vegetable and synthetic fibers
190 x 150 x 25,5 cm
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

Grau-Garriga is a key artist for the understanding of the Spanish tapestry of the twentieth century. Trained in painting, his career had an early turn towards the production of tapestries and carpets when he assumed, in 1955, the creative direction of Casa Aymat, an important tapestry factory in Catalonia. After his introduction to the world of tapestry design, several subsequent meetings with Jean Lurçat allowed him to explore the characteristics and possibilities of textile art. These meetings with the French artist and a close attention to informalism resulted in an early interest in working with natural fibers, in revealing the reverse of tapestries and exploring the sculptural possibilities of woven structures. In that process, the artist gradually stopped designing the tapestry cartons, preferring instead to just sit in front of the loom to weave his pieces.

With a strong political commitment with the left, Grau-Garriga was contacted by Miria Contreras in 1976, when she was leading the MIRSA project. In his communication with Contreras, the artist expressed his support for the initiative of the MIRSA and commented "let's see if we can eliminate the aspect that art currently has, as a commercial product aimed at some elites who need it the least". It was with this spirit that Grau-Garriga made *To Chile*, a work intended especially for the Museum. This piece, like several others from the late 1960's and early 1970's, combines the raw color of natural fibers with red. In this case, a thick textile surrounds a bulge, giving shape and weight to the bodies of hundreds of missing persons.

Marta Palau (España, 1934)
Macramóvil, 1975
Macramé
126 x 61 x 45 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

La obra de Marta Palau ingresó a la colección del MIRSA en 1977, cuando un grupo de artistas mexicanos concretó su apoyo a la resistencia chilena a través de una donación colectiva compuesta de 95 obras gestionada por el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) de México. Las obras fueron expuestas entre junio y julio de ese mismo año en el Museo de Arte Moderno de la Ciudad de México. Al cierre de la exposición, las obras quedaron en custodia del INBA hasta su traspaso al Estado chileno tras la vuelta a la democracia.

La obra de Palau fue el único textil de esta donación. Este volumen tejido con vellón a macramé o, en otras palabras, a través de nudos, es representativo del trabajo que la artista venía realizando en esos años, experimentando entre el textil, la escultura, la pintura y la creación de ambientes. Siguiendo la línea de trabajo de su maestro, Josep Grau-Garriga, a Palau le interesaba ir más allá de la superficie bidimensional de la tapicería tradicional. Como ha comentado la crítica e historiadora del arte Raquel Tibol, la obra de Palau "rompe con las tradiciones del gobelino y el sarape, e introduce nuevas maneras de anudados, cosidos, trenzados, ovillados, armados, rellenos" ese es "el humus propicio para plantar allí conjuntos de formas orgánicas de fuerza primitiva, los cuales frecuentemente sugieren –no representan– aparatos reproductores de machos y hembras" (*Proceso*, 1978).

Marta Palau (Spain, 1934)
Macramobile, 1975
Macramé
126 x 61 x 45 cm
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

Marta Palau's work arrived to the MIRSA collection in 1977, when a group of Mexican artists expressed their support for the Chilean resistance through a collective donation composed of 95 works, managed by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) of Mexico. The works were exhibited between June and July of 1977 at the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City. After the end of the exhibition, the works remained in the custody of the INBA until they could be transferred to the Chilean State once it returned to democracy.

Palau's work was the only textile of this donation. This volume woven with macramé fleece or, in other words, through knots, is representative of the artist's work in those years, experimenting with textile, sculpture, painting and the creation of environments. Following the line of work of his teacher, Josep Grau-Garriga, Palau was interested in going beyond the two-dimensional surface of traditional tapestry. As the critic and art historian Raquel Tibol said, Palau's work "breaks with the traditions of the gobelin and serape and introduces new ways to knot, sew, braid, curl, stuff," which is "the auspicious humus to plant sets of organic forms of primitive force, which frequently suggest -and do not represent- male and female reproductive systems" (*Proceso*, 1978).

María Asunción Raventós (España, 1930)
***El día roto*, 1979**
Tapicería con aplicaciones
191 x 210 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

Raventós se formó en la Escuela de Bellas Artes Sant Jordi en Barcelona y posteriormente estudió tapicería con Josep Grau Garriga en la Escuela Catalana de Tapiz de Sant Cugat convirtiéndose, al igual que su maestro, en una de las figuras fundamentales de la escena del arte textil español de mediados del siglo XX. *El día roto* es una obra que da cuenta de la trayectoria y experticia de Raventós. Combinando distintas técnicas y materialidades, la pieza –de gran peso y formato– forma una cruz que parece indicar la presencia de un cuerpo.

A diferencia de otras obras de la colección textil del MSSA, la historia de la obra de Raventós tiene menos documentación asociada a su donación y, por lo mismo, es difícil reconstruir su itinerario. Se sabe que fue incluida a último minuto en la donación española al MIRSA en 1991. Como todas las piezas de ese conjunto, participó en la exposición *Selección de Fondos para el Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende* en la ciudad de Valencia y habría llegado a Chile a mediados de ese año. La pieza de Raventós también es compleja desde otro punto de vista. Registros fotográficos de exposiciones anteriores muestran que la obra ha sido montada de diversas maneras en las últimas décadas, modificando parcialmente su estructura. El proceso de restauración de la obra para esta exposición ha revelado esas transformaciones, y una de las tareas del MSSA ha sido registrar y restituir a *El día roto* el sistema de montaje original que proyectó para ella la artista.

María Asunción Raventós (Spain, 1930)
***The Broken Day*, 1979**
Tapestry with applications
191 x 210 cm
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

Raventós studied at the Sant Jordi School of Fine Arts in Barcelona and later specialized in tapestry with Josep Grau-Garriga at the Catalan Tapestry School of Sant Cugat, becoming, like her teacher, one of the fundamental figures of the Spanish textile art scene from the mid-twentieth century. *The Broken Day* is a work that reflects Raventós' trajectory and expertise. Combining different techniques and materialities, the piece-of great weight and dimensions-forms a cross that seems to indicate the presence of a body.

Unlike other textile works from the collection of the MSSA, there is less documentation associated with its donation; therefore, it is difficult to reconstruct the itinerary of Raventós' piece. We do know that it was included at the last minute in the Spanish donation to the MIRSA in 1991. Like all the pieces of that set, it was part of the exhibition *Selection of Funds for Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende* in Valencia and it arrived in Chile in mid-1991. There is also another layer of complexity to Raventós' piece. Photographic records of previous exhibitions show that the work has been exhibited in various ways in recent decades, partially modifying its structure. These transformations have been revealed through the restoration process for this exhibition, and one of the tasks of the MSSA has been to register, restore and present *The Broken Day*, just as the artist conceived it.

Olga de Amaral (Colombia, 1932)
***Primer paso*, 1974**
Listones entrelazados tejidos a telar
66 x 59 x 30 cm
Colección MSSA

Por Josefina de la Maza

En 1976 un grupo de artistas colombianos, entre los que se encontraba Olga de Amaral, donó un conjunto de obras al MIRSA. La donación se concretó con una exposición en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá en los meses de octubre y noviembre de ese año, en el que Marta Traba escribió un pequeño y elocuente texto sobre la importancia de apoyar, desde el arte, a la resistencia chilena. El objetivo de la exposición fue visibilizar el apoyo colombiano, denunciar el quiebre democrático y las violaciones de derechos humanos ocurridos en la dictadura y, también, gestionar la venta de algunas piezas para apoyar a la resistencia. Tras el cierre de la muestra, la donación se mantuvo en depósito en la ciudad de Bogotá, esperando la vuelta a la democracia en Chile. Sin embargo, en 1984 las obras fueron trasladadas a Cuba y quedaron bajo la tutela de Casa de las Américas, espacio cultural que fue un apoyo fundamental para las gestiones del MIRSA.

La pieza donada por Olga de Amaral es una estructura volumétrica tejida en telar con hilo, lana y diversas fibras vegetales. Las obras de Amaral de fines de los 60 y principios de los 70 se caracterizan por la creación de volúmenes complejos, creados a partir de la separación de grupos de urdimbres en el proceso de tejido, las que se vuelven estructuras independientes que luego se pueden trenzar o anudar. En este periodo, la artista estaba particularmente interesada en crear obras que, a partir de la tridimensionalidad, impulsaran una reflexión acerca de lo táctil. Obras como *Primer paso* todavía mantienen un tamaño pequeño, casi íntimo, en contraste con la envergadura de sus trabajos posteriores. Al momento de la donación, Amaral ya era una artista reconocida en Colombia. En 1971 obtuvo el primer premio del XXII Salón Nacional, el año siguiente ganó el primer premio de la Tercera Bienal de Coltejer, y hacia 1974 se encontraba disfrutando el segundo año de una beca de creación otorgada por la Guggenheim Foundation.

Olga de Amaral (Colombia, 1932)
First Step, 1974
Interlocked woven strips
66 x 59 x 30 cm
MSSA Collection

By Josefina de la Maza

In 1976, a group of Colombian artists, one of which was Olga de Amaral, donated a set of works to the MIRSA. The donation was completed with an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Bogota in October and November of that year, for which Marta Traba wrote a small and eloquent text about the importance of supporting, from the arts, the Chilean resistance. The objective of the exhibition was to bring visibility to the Colombian support, to denounce the democratic breakdown and human rights violations that occurred in the dictatorship and also to sell some pieces to support the resistance. After the exhibition ended, the donation remained in a warehouse in Bogota, waiting for Chile's return to democracy. However, in 1984 the works were transferred to Cuba and remained under the tutelage of Casa de las Américas, a cultural institution that was a fundamental support for the MIRSA.

The piece donated by Olga de Amaral is a volumetric structure woven in loom with thread, wool and various vegetable fibers. Amaral's works from the late 1960's and early 1970's are characterized by the creation of complex volumes from the separation of warp groups in the weaving process, which become independent structures that can then be braided or knotted. In this period, the artist was particularly interested in creating works that promoted reflections on the sense of touch, from their three-dimensionality. Works like *First step* still maintain a small, almost intimate size, in contrast to the size of her later works. At the time of the donation, Amaral was already a recognized artist in Colombia. In 1971 she won the first prize of the XXII Salón Nacional; the following year, she won the first prize of the Third Biennial of Coltejer; and by 1974 she was on the second year of a creation grant awarded by the Guggenheim Foundation.

JOSEFINA DE LA MAZA

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