

Press Office  
Department of Communication and Development

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### **Launch of Digital Archive of International Quilt Exhibition**

The University of Ulster has launched a digital archive based on an exhibition of Irish and international quilts held in Derry earlier this year. The launch in the Cultural Centre, Letterkenny (Thursday September 11) coincided with the official opening of 'The 'politics' of Chilean Arpilleras', a display of Chilean arpilleras or quilts included in the Derry exhibition, which was compiled by guest curator Roberta Bacic.

The archive material was compiled by Dr. Martin Melaugh, CAIN Director, as part of an Arts Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project on victims, survivors and commemoration in post-conflict Northern Ireland and can be found within the existing CAIN website (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts/>)

CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet) is a web site devoted to providing a wide range of information and source material on the Northern Ireland conflict and politics from 1968 to the present. It is based within the University of Ulster at the Magee Campus.

Speaking at the launch in Letterkenny Roberta Bacic, a Chilean lecturer, researcher and activist, said the Internet based archive, which includes photographs and other documentation relating to the exhibition, would be a great asset to quilt makers and researchers in the field of conflict, human

rights, textile and community arts, as well as those dealing with trauma caused by war or violent conflict.

In the exhibition's introductory brochure she writes that preparing for the exhibition was much more than just collecting beautiful or interesting pieces.

“It was empowering and insightful to meet quilt makers from all over Ireland. For over a year we have shared the meaning of being involved in quilt making and what this has meant to women's lives as individuals and part of a group, and then extend it beyond their group to the other groups of quilt makers. It has also meant looking beyond Ireland, to becoming part of the wider world and feel and share the universality of being a woman and experiencing adverse situations, be those: wars, poverty, marginalisation, political repression, racism, human rights violations, disempowerment and abuse.

While quilt-making has enjoyed a revival in recent years, for centuries it has been used by women as a medium to express their creativity and tell stories of conflict, struggle and survival. The Derry exhibition ‘The Art of Survival International and Irish Quilts’ featured quilts from many countries including Colombia, Egypt, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Palestine, Peru, the USA and Zimbabwe.

**For further information contact: Trina Porter, Press Office, University of Ulster, 028 90368390 or 07789757784**



Jordanstown campus  
Shore Road  
Newtownabbey  
BT37 0QB

T: +44 (0) 28 9036 6178  
F: +44 (0) 28 9036 6872  
[pressoffice@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:pressoffice@ulster.ac.uk)  
[www.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.ulster.ac.uk)

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