



TITLE: *Pan, Trabajo, Justicia, Libertad*
(Bread, Work, Justice, Freedom)



ARTIST: Arpillera workshop—Vicaría de la Solidaridad (Vicariate of Solidarity), Chile

DATE: 1974-1988 ca.

SIZE: 15 x 19 1/2 inches

MEDIUM: textile, appliqué and embroidery (arpillera)

ACQUISITION #: 95.25

Additional works in the collection by the artist?

Yes No

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

"Arpilleras and quilts have been a means of artistic expression by women worldwide to depict the horrors and atrocities of human rights abuses. Sewing, embroidering, appliquéing and stitching, women explore the effects of armed conflict, suppression, vulnerability, violence and trauma, among other ordeals in their daily lives" (Bacic and Sanfeliu, n.d., p. 1). Arpilleras are anonymous. The most well-known Chilean arpilleras are the ones created during Pinochet's dictatorship years (1973-1990). Wives, mothers and sisters of the detained/disappeared came together in workshops usually supported by the local Catholic Church in Santiago de Chile and neighboring areas to create textile pieces to protest and denounce the crimes of the regime. However, outside of this context, arpilleras are generally considered "appliqué pictures in cloth, usually depicting the hunger, lack of jobs, and political repression in the shantytowns. A typical arpillera would show a soup kitchen, a shantytown raid by soldiers, unsuccessful job hunting, and protest" (Adams, 2002, 30).

See below a picture of Chilean women protesting on the streets of Santiago much like the arpillera portrayed in this object guide. Demonstrations by women with posters similar to those seen in both these images, the photograph and the arpillera, claiming "Truth and Justice" (Verdad y Justicia) or "Bread, Work, Justice and Freedom" (Pan, Trabajo, Justicia y Libertad), were representative of the days of the dictatorship and even later. During these years of oppression, women became increasingly active politically. They wanted their voices to be heard and they were not afraid of going to the streets in defense of their families. Arpilleras were a way to silently express Chilean turmoil during the dictatorship years, but other more active expressions such as these demonstrations eventually became more frequent at that time.

VOCABULARY

Arpilleras - Pronounced "ar-pee-air-ahs," these three-dimensional textile pieces have their roots in Isla Negra, a coastal area west of Santiago de Chile, where inhabitants created textile images using rags which they would then embroider onto large pieces of cloth (Bacic, 2009). The word arpillera is usually translated to English as "sackcloth or burlap" (LaDuke, 1983, p. 34).

Appliqué - Decoration usually done by applying cut pieces of one material to the surface of another.

MEDIA AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION

There are three common techniques that are still in use:

- One that is fairly flat or two-dimensional—called the *flat or planar method*—where shapes are stitched on the edges.
- One that exhibits relief elements that add a three-dimensional feeling to the piece—referred to as *raised or relief technique*—where pre-made doll-like forms or other three-dimensional details are attached to the picture frame.
- One that incorporates glue to attach shapes to the surface—a more recent technique in which fabric shapes are added using glue and outlines of contrasting wool in different thicknesses are also adhered to each fabric shape (LaDuke, 1983).

At the beginning, *arpilleras* were created with used and leftover pieces of fabric that belonged to the clothes of the detained/disappeared. Later on, new pieces of fabric were utilized.

Photo from Associated Press.



REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (2002). Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in Pinochet's Chile. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Mar., 2002), pp. 21-56.
- Bacic, R. (2009). *The Politics of Chilean Arpillera II* [PDF document]. Retrieved from http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/quilts/followup/docs/ISE_Arpilleras-II_020309w.pdf
- Bacic, R. & Sanfeliu, A. (n.d.). *A conversation about arpilleras and quilts as artistic and emotional self expression by women in troubled times, with a focus on the arpillera known as Yesterday and Today by the Peruvian women's group, Kuyanakuy* [PDF document] (M. Ray, Trans.)(T. R. Morris & M. Bales, Eds.). Retrieved from <http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/musica/07musica017i.pdf>
- LaDuke, B. (1983). Chile: Embroideries of Life and Death. *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 24, No.1 (Spring, 1983), pp. 33-40.

For more information please refer to the arpillera *Untitled (Soup Kitchen Encampment)* which is also part of our collection.



CHILE AND LATIN AMERICA

GEOGRAPHY AND LANGUAGE ARTS
LESSON PLAN: 3- 5

Session Activity and Objectives: Students will find examples of different types of textile pieces created in Latin American countries, locate the countries on the map, and share print-outs of the artworks found. Students will:

- Learn the location of the different countries in South America.
- Make associations between the countries and the types of textile pieces made by their native people.
- Make a presentation in which they will share images of the different textile pieces found and at least one fact about their countries of origin.

Activity Procedures: Introduce the topic of the arpilleras and locate the countries in which they are made: Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. Research other types of textile works made in Latin America. See <http://www.crossroadstrade.com/textiles.php> for more information.

Look for images and facts using the internet. Print out and share facts and images on the findings in a presentation that helps the class make connections between the geographic locations and the textile pieces.

Materials: Large map of South America, computers with internet access, and printers.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 3—5

SOCIAL STUDIES—

Strand B: People, Places, and Environments [Geography]

Standard 1: The student understands the world in spatial terms. (SS.B.1.2)

LANGUAGE ARTS—

Strand C: Listening, Viewing and Speaking

Standard 3: The student uses speaking strategies effectively. (LA.C.3.2)

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 9—12

SOCIAL STUDIES—

Strand A: Time, Continuity, and Change [History]

Standard 3: The student understands Western and Eastern civilization since the Renaissance. (SS.A.3.4)

Standard 4: The student understands U.S. history to 1880. (SS.A.4.4)

LANGUAGE ARTS—

Strand C: Listening, Viewing and Speaking

Standard 3: The student uses speaking strategies effectively.

TEXTILES OF THE WORLD

HISTORY AND LANGUAGE ARTS LESSON PLAN: 9– 12

Session Activity and Objectives: The class will be divided in three groups and each group will be assigned one of the textile pieces below. Students will:

- Research one of the following: the **Hmong Story Cloths**, created by members of the Hmong culture (from Southeastern Asia, emigrated to the U.S. after the Vietnam War,) who are traditionally known for their decorative textiles using needlework, appliqué and embroidery techniques; **Esther Krinitz**, survivor of the Holocaust who decided to represent her stories through quilts, or **Harriet Powers**, famous American quilter and former slave, whose work illustrates different biblical themes.
- Compare and contrast the assigned textile pieces with the arpilleras
- Develop a group presentation to share their findings.

Activity Procedures: Introduce the topic of the Chilean arpilleras by discussing the political context in which they were created emphasizing the history component. Introduce the three textile pieces provided as examples (see below) to analyze their historical settings. In addition to a comparison and contrast of the historical context of these textiles, groups will look at the following topics: physical (geographical) context surrounding the artworks, the themes included, media and techniques, etc.

See the following sites for reference:

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=241

<http://www.artandremembrance.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.showAbout&subLevel=estherProject>

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2577>

http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/hmong.htm

Materials: Computers with internet access for research, and printers, as well as foam boards, glue, scissors or paper cutters, etc. to prepare the group presentations.



Hmong Story Cloth (detail from a shirt), embroidery and appliqué, 20th Century.



Esther Krinitz, *The Nazis Arrive*, embroidery and fabric collage, 1993.



Harriet Powers, *Pictorial Quilt*, cotton plain weave, pieced, appliquéd, embroidered, and quilted, 1895–98.