



CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

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 would come 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, out 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).

ARPILLERA WORKSHOP (CHILE)

"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.

The increase in making of *arpilleras* and quilts in many countries in the last few decades shows how the textile arts can reveal and testify to the fearful human rights violations and atrocities. For example, the Chilean *arpilleras* of the 1970s, when the oppressive Pinochet regime crushed all protest, allowed what could not be voiced aloud to be expressed silently" (Bacic and Sanfeliu, n.d., p. 1).



For more information please refer to the arpillera entitled *Pan, Trabajo, Justicia, Libertad* (Bread, Work, Justice, Freedom) which is also part of our collection.

TITLE: *Untitled (Soup Kitchen Encampment)*



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

DATE: 1974-1988 ca.

SIZE: 14 1/2 x 20 inches

MEDIUM: textile, appliqué and embroidery (arpillera)

ACQUISITION #: 95.24

Additional works in the collection by the artist?

Yes ☒ No ☐

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).

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.

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 arpilleras 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, Kuyanaky* [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.

CREA TU PROPIA ARPILLERA

MAKE YOUR OWN ARPILLERA—ART MAKING ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: 3- 5

Session Activity and Objectives: Students will learn about arpilleras as a form of expression and will brainstorm issues they would like to illustrate through the creation of their own arpillera pieces. Topics can relate to activities that take place in their neighborhoods, environmental issues they want to advocate, etc. In honor of the origin of the arpilleras and with the assistance of a Spanish teacher, students will title their arpilleras in Spanish, and will think of different ways in which titles can be included in their artworks (see image on the right for reference). They will ultimately design arpilleras that will tell the stories they want to share with others and will present them to the class explaining their choices of themes and titles. Students will:

- Learn the significance of the Chilean arpilleras and make connections between the themes represented on them and the context in which they were created.
- Make associations between the issues represented in the Chilean arpilleras and the stories they want to illustrate in the classroom.
- Develop an understanding of the different techniques used to create the Chilean arpilleras while determining techniques for making their own.
- Organize their thoughts and ideas in Spanish in a coherent way to express the themes of their artworks through representative titles.
- Express the concepts of their own arpillera creations in English and/or Spanish in presentations.



Pan, Trabajo, Justicia, Libertad, arpillera, 1974-1988.

Materials: Fabric (large and scrap pieces), needles, scissors, chalk, markers, yarn, glue, etc.

Activity Procedures: Begin with an introduction of the way arpilleras are created and what they represent to the arpillera makers (arpilleristas). Discuss possible topics or themes that students can use for their creations. Discuss different techniques and walk them through some of the processes. Collaborate with a Spanish teacher for the students to create titles for their arpilleras. Help them to decide the way titles can be incorporated in the compositions. (See sample lesson plans on similar activities at:

http://www.artandremembrance.org/view/main_view/pdfs/Hero%20Project%20Art%20Unit%20Lesson%20Plan.pdf and

<http://www.coastal.edu/bryanartgallery/pictures/exhibits/Arpillera%20lesson%20plan%20and%205%20Step%20Process.pdf>)

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 3—5

VISUAL ARTS—

Strand A: Skills and Techniques

Standard 1: The student understands and applies media, techniques, and processes. (VA.A.1.2)

Strand B: Creation and Communication

Standard 1: The student creates and communicates a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas using knowledge of structures and functions of visual arts. (VA.B.1.2)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES—

Strand A: Communication

Standard 2: The student understands and interprets written and spoken language on a variety of topics (FL.A.2.2)

Strand B: Culture

Standard 1: The student understands the relationship between the perspectives and products of culture studied and uses this knowledge to recognize cultural practices (FL.B.1.2)

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 9—12

VISUAL ARTS—

Strand C: Cultural and Historical Connections

Standard 1: The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture. (VA.C.1.4)

Strand D: Aesthetic and Critical Analysis

Standard 1: The student assesses, evaluates, and responds to the characteristics of works of art. (VA.D.1.4)

LANGUAGE ARTS—

Strand B: Writing

Standard 1: The student uses writing processes effectively. (LA.B.1.4)

Standard 2: The student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively. (LA.B.2.4)

Strand D: Language

Standard 2: The student understands the power of language. (LA.D.2.4)

THE ART OF PROTEST—LANGUAGE ARTS AND ART HISTORY LESSON PLAN: 9– 12

Session Activity and Objectives: Students will learn and discuss the different ways in which art has been used as a political and social instrument of protest. Students will:

- Compare and contrast arpilleras with well-known works of art such as Goya's *Tres de Mayo* and Picasso's *Guernica* and look at the cultural and historical connections between them, reflecting on the following: their respective places and events? their political contexts? actions occurring—peaceful or violent? what the artist was protesting? the make-up of the audience? the influence of the work?
- Research other artworks with similar themes and write short essays (1000 words) that reflect their thoughts on the topic of art as protest.

Activity Procedures: Analyze the cultural and historical contexts of the selected works of arts, *Guernica* and *Tres de Mayo*, comparing and contrasting them with the Chilean arpilleras. Emphasize the aesthetic qualities of the artworks as part of the concepts chosen by the artists, and also consider the different principles of design as they apply to the compositions. Each student will write, after doing research, an essay (1000 words) about two other art works that have been used for similar purposes, comparing and contrasting them with the arpilleras as well as Goya and Picasso's paintings.



(above) Picasso, *Guernica*, oil on canvas, 1937.

(right) Goya, *El Tres de Mayo de 1808 en Madrid* (The Third of May 1808), oil on canvas, 1814.

