

# PRESS RELEASE

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## from the Air Gallery

AIR Gallery, 125-129 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2, Telephone 01 240 3149

"WE WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THE TRUTH"  
patchwork pictures from Chile

March 15th - April 1st 1978. Tues-Sat 10am- 6pm, closed Sunday and Monday

In September 1973 the progressive Popular Unity government of Chile was overthrown in a coup and a military regime established whose brutality has become notorious throughout the world. Apart from direct political repression, the junta's economic policies have brought poverty to Chile on a scale not seen since the beginning of the century.

Over the past two years, women living in the shanty towns - the poorest areas - of Chile have been making pictures out of scraps of waste cloth. These patchwork pictures are sent out of Chile and sold abroad as a form of folk art, but the women, though they have no formal training or tradition, have managed to use this form to show in detail what it means to live under the military regime. Many are the wives or mothers of political prisoners; they have set up workshops and collect the scrap materials from textile factories to produce the patchworks. Their work is full of humour and observation which increases its effectiveness as a means of morale-lifting and resistance. These popular pictures denounce the killings, arbitrary arrests and reactionary policies of the government - but they also show the desire of the people to end the conditions, physical and mental, of "underdevelopment".

The main exhibition consists of 52 of these patchworks. We will also be showing through other examples how artistic expression has become for the Chilean people one way to resist: carvings, jewellery, embroidery, poems, plays made under extreme conditions in prisons and camps, have been collected together for the exhibition. This will be linked with a documentary exhibition intended to show the continuity, and also adaptability, of popular art as a "culture of resistance" running through Latin American history.

During the exhibition, on each Saturday, there will be a programme of talks and discussions, with contributions from Chilean exiles in Britain speaking from direct experience, on the subject of the patchworks and the women who make them; the popular resistance movement; the culture of the Indian peoples and its role in the political struggle; the workers and peasants theatre movement during the Popular Unity period, and other subjects. A printed programme will be available from the gallery from March 1st. The last day of the exhibition (Saturday April 1st) will end with a peña of Latin American live music and song.

For more details of either the exhibition or the events programme, for press photos etc, please contact Guy Brett (01-674 8416) or Nicki Bennett at the gallery (01-240 3149).

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1. Third Eye Centre, Glasgow . Oct - Nov 1977
2. Gardner Arts Centre, University of Sussex, Brighton  
Nov - Dec '77
3. Kon Gallery, Birmingham : Jan 1978
4. Chapel Becke Gallery, Cleveland : Jan - Feb 1978
5. McRobert Centre University of Stirling, Scotland  
Feb. 78
6. Art Gallery, London : March 1978
7. Richard Demaree Gallery, Edinburgh . April 1978
8. Art Gallery, Dundee, Scotland , April - May 1978
9. Hayes Art Gallery, Sheffield , May - June 1978