

Art shows repression

By STEPHANIE-LYN GROSS

Atkinson College, along with other co-sponsors from York, have organized an exhibition of Chilean "Arpilleras" current in the Zacks Gallery at Stong College.

The Chilean art show is one of three York-sponsored events intended to inform York students about the nature of repression in Chile today.

Canadian folk singer Nancy White opened the art exhibition with a concert Monday night. White travelled throughout Chile last year with Bruce Cockburn for OXFAM Canada. Her performance included Chilean folk songs and more contemporary works, some of which she translated and wrote herself.

The Chilean tapestries are by women, children, unemployed, and imprisoned Chileans who organized themselves with support from the Vicariate of Solidarity, formed in 1976. The Arpilleras were first seen in concentration camps, and with the most rudimentary materials were sewn onto the backing of sack cloth. The handicrafts became a vehicle and symbol for solidarity and communication to the Chilean people.

Colored with innocence and simplicity, the Chilean tapestries do not at first resemble a voice of resistance. A glance reveals a child-like working of bright materials sewn into scenes with optimism. Another look echoes the loss and repression of a culturally strong and independent people.

Woven into the blue skies, yellow and orange dresses, and flower-printed mountains is a sense of hope. The stitched-in and sometimes misspelt language adds humility while the inventive use of symbol displays a deep understanding.

In many of the Arpilleras, a black clothed figure is used to represent the repressive government.

Concern about the children's loss of education was illustrated in two of the tapestries.

One showed a student being expelled by the State University under military intervention. Another was of a teacher standing outside a school asking "Where are the children?" on the First Day of Protest.

The simplicity characteristic to all the tapestries is because of the representation of everyday life. A street arrest, a poor household, a soup kitchen in a church all depict what the Chilean people are living through.

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While there is irony in some of the work, for example, "Cooking the Constitution," and anger in others, with children holding signs that read "We want work" and "freedom," there remains a sense of confusion and struggle. One Arpillera shows the Chilean border next to an area labelled "far away." A husband and wife stand outside the border while two military soldiers tell them not to come across. The artist has sewn two

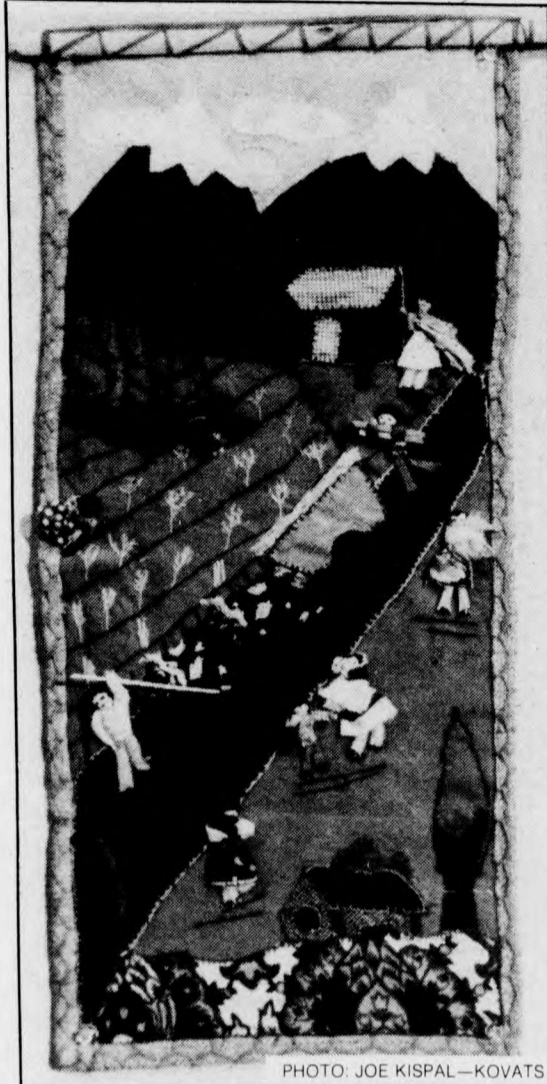


PHOTO: JOE KISPAL-KOVATS

Chilean artwork on display at Stong.

question marks above the Chilean heads.

That such a voice, a voice of resistance, can be heard with sweetness and depth, with vibrant color and sincere hope, reflects the strength of the Chilean culture, in their self-knowledge and preservation.

The show, which was scheduled to end this week, has been extended for another week.

Hillel Children's Workshop

A cooperative Jewish Sunday school, which meets at New College, is seeking new members for the next academic year. Hillel Children's Workshop was begun 10 years ago by faculty members from York University and the University of Toronto. In addition to children's classes for children 6-13 years, we have an adult discussion group and we celebrate some holidays together. We also have Saturday evening socials from time to time and a preschool for children 3-5.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT COORDINATOR MICHAEL RYVAL AT 481-9595. (Affiliated to Board of Jewish Education)

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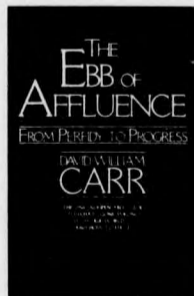
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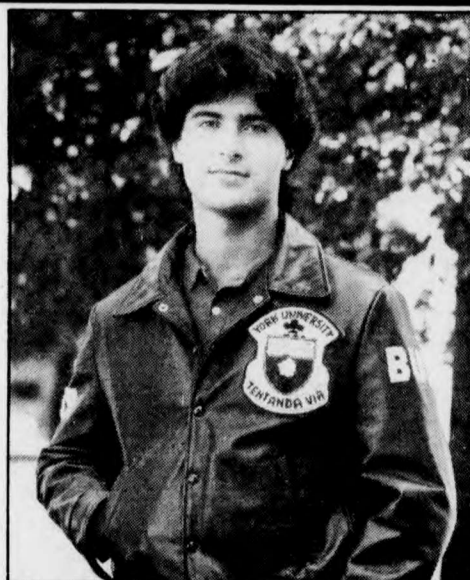


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