



CASA COMÚN **(Communal House)**



*A collaborative art
project from victims
of the armed
conflict in Caquetá,
Colombia*



Casa Común (Communal House) is an art archive from Colombia that confronts the atrocities of war and presents hopes for a peaceful future through the handcrafted work of victims. The 2016 peace accord between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP guerrilla put an end to 52 years of armed conflict. According to the Colombian truth commission, the war left over 8 million victims (Colombia's current population is 51.5 million people), including 7.7 million who were forcibly displaced, 450,664 killed, and thousands more tortured, kidnapped, or victims of sexual violence since 1985.

One of the guiding principles included in the peace accord is *Buen Vivir*, an ancestral indigenous epistemology that speaks to the harmony between humans and nature. In this Participatory Action Research (PAR) and artistic project, two organizations of victims of the armed conflict in the state of Caquetá were invited to create a collective art piece. The artists, primarily women, embroidered, painted, and used seeds to tell their stories of survival and their ideas for a future of *Buen Vivir*. In their art, any prospect of justice and hope remains forever entangled with war-related pains and memories. However, they also convey that community building, taking care of plants and animals, and the powers of medicinal plants allow survivors to find joy and solace.

Casa Común invites audiences to think that besides respecting rights, *Buen Vivir* can only happen if we care for the territories we inhabit, and nurture plants, rivers, animals, and humans.

"The Hug"

The creation of “Casa Común”



When Maria Argensola Quintero went to the Colombian Office of the General Procurator on June 10, 2015 to denounce an episode of war-related sexual violence, she faced officers that rather than helping her suggested that she was the one at fault for putting herself in that situation and that she should've acted differently. Disgusted and enraged by that interaction, she decided to organize a group of women that she knew had also suffered from war-related sexual violence. In 2017, they created the *Asociación Sobrevivientes Tejiendo Memoria* (Association Survivors Weaving Memory) and, since then, Maria has acted as the association's coordinator. The association works around two main pillars: sexual violence within the context of the armed conflict and enforced disappearance. The 18 women that conform the association are very close and committed. In 2021 they elaborated the report “*De las voces del silencio al renacer*” (“From the Voices of Silence to Rebirth”) for the JEP (*Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz*, Peace Special Jurisdiction), institution in charge of the judicial processes of war-related crimes. These women firmly believe that “psychosocial processes” are key for healing the wounds of war and violence, and thus they have embarked on various artistic projects.

When one of Maria's dear friends, researcher Vanesa Giraldo, invited her to embark on a participatory action research art project, Maria enthusiastically agreed. Since survivors know or participate in different organizations and initiatives, the invitation was extended to another association: *Fusión Tropical de la Amazonia*, (Tropical Fusion of the Amazon.)

In 2002, Amparo Velazco and Saúl Rivera were living in the municipality of La Montañita. Along with other 165 families, they experienced forced displacement, killings, kidnapping and sexual violence perpetrated by a front of the former guerrilla group FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army). In 2012, facing lack of land and job options in the capital city of Florencia, Amparo and Saúl (wife and husband) decided to start a business around



the commercialization of Amazonian products. In 2017, after the peace accord was signed, Saúl negotiated a piece of land back in La Montañita to be shared with 136 of the families, where they were planning to move forward with the idea of reforesting wetlands and further commercializing Amazonian products. However, a front of dissidents of the peace accord threatened Saúl and they were forced to abandon the land once again.

The other families stayed but gradually were forced to leave. Most of the families left the land between 2020 and 2021 and only six families remained living under very difficult conditions. Back in Florencia, Amparo, Saúl and other families who were already working on the initiative formally registered the association *Fusión Tropical de la Amazonia*, in 2018. Currently 16 families of victims of the armed conflict (with four to six members each) work at *Fusión Tropical*. Parallel to *Fusión Tropical*, they also registered the *Asociación de Víctimas y Desplazamiento Forzado* (Association of Victims and Enforced Displacement). They are working towards recuperating lands where they can grow crops and assure food sovereignty for both the city and the countryside.

The first meeting of the art initiative that resulted in *Casa Común* was held in May 2022 at Saúl and Amparo's house in Florencia. The research team (Vanessa Giraldo, César Abadía and Camilo Ruíz) had discussed with María how skilled this group of women were at sewing, painting, embroidering, and working with seeds. We, researchers and members of these associations, had also been working together in different PAR projects around healing and medicinal plants and were aware of the extensive knowledge they had taking care of plants and using their healing powers. Hence, we were thinking that their handcraft skills and knowledge of plants could become central to the art project. After the harmonization ritual in Amparo and Saúl's backyard, they were invited to envision an art piece that would travel

"Healing Herbs"



“Team Work”

around the world and in which they would be able to tell their ideas of *Buen Vivir* (i.e. good living) and medicinal plants and their hopes for the future. They were invited to sketch their ideas on paper and share them. Most sketches presented versions of a house, an idealized place that was lost but they would love to return. The houses were drawn from the outside and surrounded by flowers, crops, animals, and nature.

We brought these sketches and ideas to artist Paola Gamboa, a professor at the *Universidad de la Amazonia* in Florencia. Paola, another dear friend of María and Vanesa, immediately accepted the invitation to partner with us in transforming these ideas into a collective art project. Another friend and researcher based in a town close to Bogotá, María Teresa Buitrago, had participated in a different art and research intervention in which former FARC combatants embroidered in drums their stories. Over many conversations in Florencia and Bogotá, the idea of working on embroidering drums and building a collective “communal house” started to take shape. Paola offered her house for a second meeting in August, 2022. After the harmonization ritual, Paola presented a preliminary sketch of the house, a cube in which each art piece would hang, with the inside of the drum displaying their artwork and the outside a flower or plant of their preference. The Communal House had to emphasize their love for nature, flowers, and medicinal plants. The research team built a makeshift structure in her backyard so that the women and men could have an idea of how their individual art pieces would become part of the collective house. Besides a snack, a table offered sewing materials, fabrics, and drums so that they could take them home and start producing their art pieces, reminding them that they were transmitting their ideas of *Buen Vivir* and medicinal plants to the world and their hopes for the future.

For our final gathering, the weekend of September 30-October 2, 2022, we invited the artists to come with their children and grandchildren if they needed, so that family obligations wouldn’t deter them from participating. We rented a *chiva* (rural bus) that took 45 people to a beautiful hotel filled with flower gardens, a pool, a mud pool, and a *Temazcal* (i.e. a special structure for a Mesoamerican sweat lodge ceremony.) They were asked to bring their art pieces in whatever stage they were. They were offered food, rest, music, materials, rituals, and spaces to talk, enjoy, and work in their art pieces. In a corner of the common area we were working in, we built the house structure, which started to be populated with the art pieces that were being finished. In groups, we shared what each art piece represented, and we thought about what title we wanted to give to each one of them. Towards the end, in our closing event in a big circle we started to thank the space, thank the opportunity, thank the people, and shouted the things we didn’t want to bring to the communal house. We also shouted the things we hoped would fill this communal house, listed at the end of the catalog.

The Catalog



"Curating the House"



Rosa Emilia Aguirre



Peacock Purple-Magenta

It signifies hope and inner peace.



Flowers and Butterflies

Flowers make me think of joy, tranquility and love, and butterflies of the possibilities of transforming oneself to be better.

Elida Marín D.



Memories of my Childhood

I tried to make my little house like a brick house, I made some trees and a little dove. The trees are nature, having trees at the foot of the house gives a lot of tranquility, a lot of freshness. The little dove is for the peace that we all should have, to be calm, not to be accelerated and to be good people with everybody.

Meryury Medina Ramírez



The Plants of my Tranquility

I made these medicinal plants because I feel very calm every time I take them. Since we were in the pandemic panic came into my life and from one moment to the next, I felt very nervous, so I chose to take plants that I had planted in my house such as lemongrass, valerian and chamomile, which gave me tranquility and happiness. Medicinal plants contribute a lot to our mental health and to our daily life, that is why we must sow and take care of them.

María de los Ángeles Chacón



Basket of Flowers

This exercise reminded me of my childhood, when I was studying, weaving and painting. On this canvas I made a basket with medicinal plants and on the other side a heart. I did it with a lot of love knowing that we must be aware of things and that life goes on in spite of everything that happens. We have to heal the sadness.



The Little House of my Joys and Sorrows

In this work I depicted the small town from which I was displaced: *San Isidro Peneyamo*. There I had many joys, I lived very well until I lost the people I loved the most, my three sons and their father.

Lilia Giraldo Murillo (63 years old)



Hen

I was a victim of sexual abuse, torture, and displacement in 2002. I made a hen with a lot of love and care to heal my wounds a little.



Tree of Hearts



Vase



Cumarales



Butterfly

The drums signify great harmony. When I made them, memories, dilemmas, nostalgia came to me, along with the strength and hope to move forward.

M. Rubiela González (52 years old)



Happy Weaving Memory

With beads I wove a necklace and a couple of earrings on a circle that fades from dark to light blue, because for me this color means purity, the sky, the firmament. Making this piece cleared my memory. In the Weaving Memory project I have been able to tell a part of what has happened to me, for example I have been able to talk about the death of my mother and father, and that of my little brothers and sisters. Anyway, happiness doesn't end, I keep going forward because I have a future.

Karen L. Pogimuy (11 years old)



Mountain Chains

From above, the moon and the stars illuminated the path we had to take, crossing mountains to reach the city. We left everything we had in the countryside to arrive in a place we did not know and where he had to learn to live within four walls.

Rubiela Pogimuy



Colored Flowers on Blue Background



Two Yellow Turtledoves on a Green Background



Flower Chains

Nature and our lands have also been affected and saddened by the armed conflict. The birds, the trees, the flowers also died with the explosion of the bombs.

J. Alexander Pogimuy (14 years old)



Black and White Drawing

This is how the trees were left because of the smoke, bombs and gunshots that multiplied during the armed conflict. They destroyed the environment, the trees, the birds, the people. During war desolation is everywhere.

Adalgiza Hernández (54 years old)



The Tranquility in the Field and the Sadness When Leaving It

I lived my childhood in *Santafé del Caguán*, after being displaced from *Curillo, Caquetá*. We left the joy and were left with the sadness of leaving everything we had. Thank God we are alive to tell that story. I want to capture part of my childhood or what was on the farm when we lived with my mother and brothers. We fed ourselves with corn, yucca, plantain, and that was the happiness of the countryside. Corn means the countryside, abundance.



Flower of Joy

The flower gives joy, every time you approach a plant and talk to it, you know that it responds because it becomes more beautiful and every day it grows more flowers. If you stop talking to it, the plant withers. Plants are like us. When someone gives us love and tenderness, we are happy.

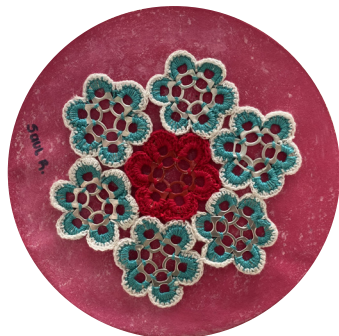


Lamb

The lamb signifies the tranquility, the peace that was in that place.

Saúl Rivera Villegas (60 years old)

My story is about the environment, the flora and fauna, because that is what has been depleting our Colombian territory and the Amazon. Previously, in the time of our grandparents, for the cultivation of rice and corn a lot of forest was depredated, then the cattle ranchers and coca growers continued. Because of this, there is no forest, no natural reserves, no fauna, no water. Because of this, I have a project called Tropical Fusion of the Amazon, in which we extract medicinal and beauty oils from the non-timber products of the forest. I congratulate my fellow victims of the armed conflict in Colombia who have turned their eyes to medicinal plants. My idea is that we must recover the environment 100%, not only for ourselves but for our children, families, friends and relatives who fell into the criminal hands of different armed groups.



Metal Flowers



Yatara

These drums are the flora and fauna of our territory, which today is what we long for the most.



Toucan

The blue represents that we practically look solely to the sky because there is not much to look to the front or to the sides.



Heliconias and Toucan

They represent the animals and flora of the Amazon before the armed conflict. Since 2002 the nature and environment has been destroyed.



Canangucha Palm

The *canangucha* palm is shown, which is fundamental for our company, Tropical Fusion of the Amazon.

John Fredy Pogimuy (18 years old)



Yellow Sunset

The sunset reflects the place I lost when we were displaced by the armed conflict.



Red Sunset on The River



Survivors Of the Armed Conflict

This drum reflects the displacement of a family in the department of Caquetá, such as those of *El Triunfo* and *El Playón*.

Yeiny Paola Velazco (34 years old)

I created this image having in mind the rebirth of a woman victim of the armed conflict. We want a world of peace and harmony in which the poorest families can rejoice.



The Rebirth of Women

In this piece there is a beaten woman who asks for peace, to be more valued as a woman and to be considered.



Colored Hummingbird

The hummingbird represents sweetness and movement, and they are a complement to flowers. It is said that there is a flower for each species of hummingbird.



We Want Peace

With the footprints of the child with the colors of the Colombian flag: yellow, blue, and red, we ask for peace, understanding, and union, and for a world where we can experience human warmth and children can enjoy their mother's love. May Christmas and Mother's Days come in which we are all united and not thinking that we are destroyed by violence.



Birds of Hope

These are the birds of hope that shine together with the flowers on the deep blue. Hope has strong and striking colors, because it is the guide of our path.

Norbelia Piedrahita

We used to live in a very beautiful, divine home, where thank God, we never lacked anything. The war put an end to the home I had built with my children, and we had to go on the run with the small children. I had children who were not yet a year old and I had to leave them alone to go to work and earn a living, since the person who supported the house was no longer there. I lived in the neighborhood, someone came to me once and told me "your children or your life, either you leave or you stay." It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon of September 24, 2001. Ten minutes after my children and I jumped in a garbage truck that was passing and left. I had two boys and three girls.



Insects

Insects are very diverse and important living beings for the life of the earth. They attract and absorb diseases and free people from them. They signify rarity, beauty, and freedom. Beetles come in many colors and sizes. Crickets, ants, butterflies...



Cactus

Cacti protect and defend themselves with their spines, they do not need much water because they contain moisture in their stems which helps them to survive in dry climates. They also purify the environment. There are many types of cacti, being very different and special plant species. Cacti represent the strength and resilience that we survivors have.



My New Dawn

This drum represents the nature that surrounds me, it is what I see when I leave the house and it makes my life happy.

Malervy Marín Polanía (53 years old)



Footprints

Don't go around the world sprinkling thorns... suddenly you might return barefoot.



Animals

I drew a dog, a cat, a rabbit, a parrot, because we should be committed to animals.

I am a stay-at-home mother of three men and one woman. Fifteen years ago, my child was kidnapped and because of that my life is very hard. In order to survive the pain, I do a thousand things, a lot of handicrafts. For Casa Común I made several pieces.



Waterfall Landscape



Pair of Macaws

These drums represent the biodiversity we have in the Amazon. Animals, plants, and landscapes.



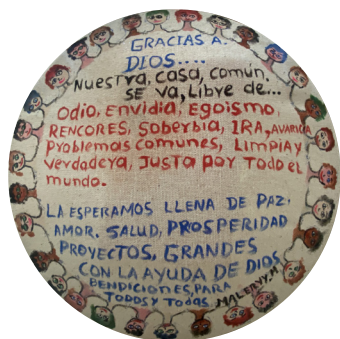
Black Woman

I made one of an Afro woman because we should all be equal.



Flowering Plants

I also made plants because I really like naturopathic medicine and flowers.



How to Learn to Live

In this piece I wrote what we do not want in the Communal House and how we wish to learn to live.



Amazon

It represents the indigenous people, their huts, and the animals of the forest.

Andry Yurleny Leal V. (17 years old)



Warrior Uterus

I have heard many stories from my grandmother. I wanted to depict a uterus with red colors that signify pain. I wanted to depict the women who were displaced, often alone with three or four children. The uterus and the fallopian tubes represent the women who have to leave their homes with her children and who, in spite of all the pain, want to go forward, for and with them.

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Ma. Leiver Urrego J. (60 years old)



A Dream to Fulfill

I grew up in the countryside in the village of *El Quebradón* in the municipality of *El Doncello*, next to my parents and family. We had everything there. Many years ago, before we heard about the guerrillas, the mob came to the farm and my siblings had to spend the night in the bush. We could not stay in the house that night. We had to leave that farm; my father practically had to give it away. I have always longed to be in the countryside, to have a little piece of land again. With the leadership that I have carried for so many years with so many communities and women's organizations, and at the victims' table for four years, I have realized that this is the problem of many women and families who, due to displacement, had to shut themselves up in the middle of four walls in a city. What the victims of forced displacement long for the most is to return to have a little piece of land where we can have a decent home, grow food, push our projects forward, have our animals, and a space for our children and grandchildren to grow freely.

That is why I have depicted a house, a family, a productive project, a lake, a soccer field, animals, and a family that dreams of having that land.

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Ana Beatriz Sánchez (58 years old)

My embroideries represent the nature and freedom that existed where I lived. There, I had a space to grow my food. But the freedom and beauty that I had ended when I was displaced. The pain came when I was displaced and stripped of everything I had. However, wherever I live, flowers will continue to bloom, because I continue to have high morale in spite of pain and conflict. Flowers give me joy and courage to carry on. Flowers heal my sadness while they make my past present; they are the guide to my freedom.



Reborn

Red signifies the pain of my displacement and leaving behind a life of freedom in the countryside, and white the peace and tranquility I feel today, in part due to the work I have done in psychosocial workshops.

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Jasbleidy Lizeth Soachi Grisales



My Tastes

I love mushrooms, watching the moon at night, the stars, the sky. In my free time I love to play basketball, soccer, and volleyball.

Carolina Quiñones (26 years old)

My embroideries represent the nature and freedom that existed where I lived. There, I had a space to grow my food. But the freedom and beauty that I had ended when I was displaced. The pain came when I was displaced and stripped of everything I had. However, wherever I live, flowers will continue to bloom, because I continue to have high morale in spite of pain and conflict. Flowers give me joy and courage to carry on. Flowers heal my sadness while they make my past present; they are the guide to my freedom.



Diaspora

I drew the girl I could not be, the girl I was self-conscious of at an earlier time. When we are born outside our communities, it is easier to lose our roots. I wanted to capture what I could never be, I feel that I grew up with the blows, and I missed enjoying more my skin color, my hair, to braid my braids. Today when I look at girls that look like me, I say to myself “those girls look so divine”.

Deinner S. Soachi G. (12 years old)



The Soccer Player

I made myself by being a soccer player, that's what I do in my free time and it's my favorite sport, the one I like the most.

Jhon Jairo Alzate (37 years old)

I made a palm of *chontaduro* and some handles that I made as a hobby.

On the farm where we lived, we had many *chontaduro* palms because my family and my grandfather liked them. I made it in his memory.



My Creativity

During the time of “*la chusma*” (a name given to poor people from the liberal party in Colombia during the period of violence in mid-twentieth century) we lost land because we had to move to Florencia, where I dedicated myself to knitting *manillas* to distract myself.

Yenny Tatiana Grisales (38 years old)



My Healing

I am a victim of the armed conflict, and I embroidered a basil, which is an aromatic and healing plant. We use it for any pain, it is a very important plant for our home. For me it represents the healing of many wounds I had in the past.

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Luz Neri Iquira (50 years old)

I identify myself as a Paez (Nasa) indigenous woman. I drew the Portal del Fragua, which channels a river rich in fish, and from which people take material to build their houses.



Portal del Fragua Reborn

El Portal del Fragua has a beautiful story about a man and a woman who belonged to two different indigenous communities and who were in love. Because they were from different tribes, they were not allowed to live their love, so they made a promise to the universe to always be close even though they could not be together, and their union was captured by nature in a mountain fragmented by a large crack where the Fragua river passes by.



The Moo Cow Ranch

This is a tourist site in Puerto Arango. At the entrance there is a butterfly and the Orteguzza River flows underneath. It is an important place where there are different animals and people fish in the river.

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Marli T. Ortega Marín (24 years old)



Libardo Ortega Marin

I made the sun and the moon with the name of my brother who was kidnapped in 2007. The sun is the light of the day, which represents him and I know that wherever he is, I can feel him. The moon is the light of the night, which represents his company when I had nightmares, because in those times he was the one who was with me.



Don Saul's Plot

This drum is allusive to the plot that Don Saúl has, where we meet and listen to the other people who suffer in some way. I started making the plot alone, but then I wanted them to join in and express what they wanted. So, we all started to make a tree: a canangucha, which is harvested a lot there, and a snake that lives near those palms.

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Martha Cecilia Alzate (57 years old)



Celebrating Life, Peace and Hope

Remembrance of the flowers and the butterfly that give us the sense of change and blossoming. The green of the leaves represents hope and the yellow of the flowers, peace.

Jhon S. Gómez M. (27 years old)



Country, Territory and Blood

This is the representation of Caquetá with its 16 municipalities, and of the department of Quindío, which is where I am from, with its 12 municipalities. I made the flag of Colombia with 32 asterisks that are the 32 departments and the two universities I attended: Quindío and Caquetá.



Four Elements and Life

I made a tree and around it I represented the four elements: fire, earth, water and wind.

Mary Luz Dussán Márquez



Medicinal Plants Foster Peace

Medicinal plants have been around all the time, during times of conflict and times of peace. I think that medicinal plants welcome peace. I want them and peace to be seen in the territories of the Amazon. The dove, instead of carrying an olive branch, carries a heliconia as a symbol of the territory.

When there were no medicines in the communities affected by the conflict and the war, the plants were the ones that managed to solve the health problems. I was out of the country for a long time and the Peace Accord helped me to return to this *Caqueteño* territory where my family has lived for more than 50 years.

My piece shows how medicinal plants have always been healing the armed conflict and how now they become more important at this time of peace after the pandemic.

Ángela F. Bahos C. (19 years old)



Toucan

The first piece shows a toucan that refers to the diversity of animals we have in Caquetá.



Skeleton Blooming

The second, is a part of the human skeleton, inside the skeleton there are flowers protruding, referring to life beyond death. The flowers embellish the skeleton.

Maria Odilia Escobar Claros



Hope

I was kidnaped, my husband was killed, and I am displaced. The art piece I made shows a humble little house, which is what I want most.

Manuel R. Morales O. (74 years old)

The new beginning towards a better future. With all the circumstances and obstacles that we have crossed in history, we cannot forget what our parents and grandparents taught us, because we have a sense of belonging. That is in our thoughts and in our hearts. Many of us yearn to have a little piece of land to be able to produce and return to have a quiet peace, because in the city we live in despair, and in despair, there is no tranquility.



Map of Caquetá



The New Beginning

Soveida Hernández G. (57 years old)



Peñas Coloradas

I am a victim of the armed conflict and was displaced from *Peñas Coloradas* in 2004; I drew it, and it hurts me because I grew up there. It was very painful for me to see it again, I almost died seeing the houses without roofs, without doors, everything turned into nothing. The little town that we built for six or seven years with our own effort, united as a family. There we all had a little house, there we were “*Los Peñunos del Bajo Caguán*”.



“Huilense” Landscape

This work captures the memory of a trip I made in Huila (a state in Colombia, adjacent to Caquetá). What I saw there, I drew it here. It was a moment in which I was very happy, and I represented it from my heart.

Paola A. Gamboa A. (38 years old)



The Pot

The hearth around which families gather to prepare food, share and celebrate life. It is the community pot that sustains the communities and in times of need, the social protest.

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Angela F. Prieto A. (24 years old)



Weaving Resilience

It is the map of Caquetá fragmented and mended with fabrics of different colors, threads and weavings. The work represents a new beginning. Caquetá used to be a uniform fabric, it was violated and torn. Now we, from each individuality, were able to weave it again. From love, solidarity and resilience we made that fabric again. Mending represents a revolutionary act, beyond all the dark and hard things that many victims of the armed conflict lived through, through art we transformed our Communal House, building a new reality.

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César Abadía Barrero



Hope

Amid so much pain and destruction that war has left us, nature always reminds us how wonderful and fragile life is. The hummingbird is a magical and spiritual animal. When we see and hear it, the world stands still, as its fluttering is so fast that it cannot be seen. The flower of paradise, that flower/bird, amazes by its beauty and perfection. Hope means that all efforts, no matter how little, are fundamental to nurture life.

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Gloria E. Galviz (54 years old)



The Longed-for Dreams of a New Beginning

I am a victim of forced displacement due to the armed conflict. After having a small plot of land, from one day to the next you leave with your arms crossed, with one hand in front and the other behind, leaving everything you have cultivated and worked hard for other people to take it over, it is very painful.

I made a little plot to rest, where you can be a nature lover and observe the firmament. A place where you can be with your children and grandchildren, a place you can leave for them.



Church

Not even the churches escaped the armed conflict, they were looted.



Cemetery

Many loved ones, peasants, and day laborers who fell in the conflict were buried there.

.....

Myriam Escobar C. (59 years old)



Parrots

I like parrots very much; they are animals that represent Caquetá. I wanted to bring the memory because in the city you don't see them much anymore, we see them more in paintings.



My Son's Roses

I made some roses because I am a flower lover. I have a sick son and he loves flowering plants. He is happy in the house seeing the garden in bloom.



Memories of the Caguán River

It is a memory of my childhood, the Caguán river where I bathed a lot when it was pretty.

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María Argensola Quintero B. (62 years old)



The Tambo

The *Tambo* of the *Embera* people is the house that represents the action of spinning and sweetening the word.



Mandala of Hope

The mandala brings the four elements: air, water, earth, fire, where truth, love, solidarity, justice, resilience and forgiveness are highlighted.



Abduction

This is the representation of a woman who is kidnapped and taken to concentration camps by the guerrilla, where they did not respect whether she was a child, an elderly woman, an indigenous woman, nothing. There they kept them, some for money and others for sexual services.

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Silvia L. Salazar Iquiria (11 years old)



I Like the Countryside

I love going to the countryside, seeing the palms and trees, the butterflies fluttering, sunbathing and bathing in the river. I like to listen to the birds singing.

.....
Lauren Vargas Quiñonez



The Landscape

The landscape I made has mountains. When I look at them, I want to run and play in them. It gives me joy when the birds fly, when the sun rises and also when it rains.

.....
Viviana A. Bolaños G. (16 years old)



The Inspiration of a Tree with the Family

I wanted to get ahead because of my daughter. I wanted to make the tree, because one feels free, to go to the tree to sit and listen to the river and see the mountain. It's like being with my daughter, being with my family.

.....
Ma. Antonieta Alfaro (37 years old)



Cosmos

The cosmos is the place that contains us, where all forms of life dwell and where it is possible to coexist in infinity and endless abundance. The cosmos is our home from where we emerge and where our energy transmutes and transforms... the cosmic soul is our mother and our father.

.....
Maria T. Buitrago Echeverri



Bridges

In the Communal House we weave bridges, we cross bridges, we build bridges for peace.



Sun of the Common House

There is only one sun that shelters us, and our common home is our land, which welcomes us without distinction.



We All Fit Here

The Communal House belongs to all of us, it belongs to all humanity and all species, and at the same time we belong to it. It is the Earth, our planet, our greatest and common home.

.....
Roobelth Tapiero A. (46 years old)



Peasant Landscape

It is the landscape of the countryside that I bring from my childhood. It is what we no longer have, but what we remember and want to have again.



The Cachama

The traditional *cachama* (the *Colossoma macropomum* fish) as we all know it: fried or sweated, with yucca and fried plantains.



Fish Sales

Fish is a food resource for human beings and in its natural environment it is affected by water pollution and overfishing. For this reason, it is very important to undertake conservation actions for this and other aquatic species.

.....
Isabel Cristina Gil V. (40 years old)



Love Our Common Home

Love is our common home. Mother/father our planet Earth, our natural vessel, is the ultimate expression of love. It shelters us indiscriminately, sustains us, sustains us. Beyond any system that exceeds the limits of Mother Earth, the planet is the home in which we travel. To her, Mother, we owe all respect and devotion... As one who cares for her home, her own loving body.

.....
Juan Kinzá Laserna A (12 years old)



Children's Fun

This work represents children's fun, the soccer ball, chess and a rubik's cube to concentrate. Also writing and reading to learn, and clothes because dressing is fundamental to live well.

.....
Lina Ma. Archila L. (43 years old)



Abundant Rainforest

The Orteguzza River is a fundamental part of the ancestral territory of the Korebaju people in Caquetá. It is an important waterway that connects the foothills with the Amazonian plain until it flows into the Caquetá River. The canoe is the main means of communication where food such as *chontaduro*, pineapple and yucca are taken to the communities to be exchanged and shared. The fish represent the women in the origin of the *Tukano* people myth in the Amazon.

.....
Danna J. Montoya B. (23 years old)



Sunflowers

In the symbolism of resilience and energy, sunflowers fulfill this analogy. Moving to the beat of the sun, they blossom alone, full of determination.

.....

Amparo Velasco (52 years old)



Magenta Flowers

This little flower because I like the garden, all the pretty things. I like the eye-catcher.

.....

Aura Nancy Capera Silva



Love of Nature

It is incredible that nature cries out for help, but the most incredible thing is that no one listens to her. Please, let's love and take care of nature, she needs us, and we need her to live.

.....

Jimena Rivera Renza (26 years old)



Youth Empowerment

This is a *canangucha* palm that is part of the non-timber products of the Amazon, useful for human and animal consumption.

We young people want the flora and fauna to never run out.

.....

Martha Gálviz



The Farm

The farm shows everything we had to work and sustain the lives of our families. All this remained illusions because the armed conflict took it away from us.



The Sewing Kit

This sewing machine has the tools to mend the wounds left by the armed conflict.

.....

Elcy Yulieth Lozano Velasco (26 years old)



Red Silhouette of Woman with Plants

They represent how important we women are in the world, so we should be valued and respected above all things. We must be proud to be women of faith and courage, that no matter how much we suffer in adverse circumstances, we can get up and keep going, giving the best of ourselves every day. If we fall, we get up. If we make mistakes, we learn. If we are hurt or mistreated, we move on. Even though we have to say: no to violence against women!

We are not perfect, but we love, value and accept ourselves as we are.

Women are the most beautiful beings thanks to having the privilege of giving birth, giving life and filling the world with respect, joy and love.



Woman and Flowers



The Colors of Life

The peacock with recyclable materials represents the colors of life, as well as the macaw and the orchid. Even if one suffers, one must bring color and laughter to the world, because we must leave our own little footprint of love.



The Voice of Kidnapping and Forced Displacement

The Colombian flag with the dove of peace. I wanted to highlight this because since I was a child I suffered because of my father's kidnapping, which was very hard. And although many things have happened that have made us suffer, we have to be radiant, show joy and laugh.

.....

Miller Galindez (51 years old)



Tapir and Chigüiro in the River.

This is how I remember the territory I inhabited before being dispossessed by the armed conflict: abundant, peaceful, beautiful.

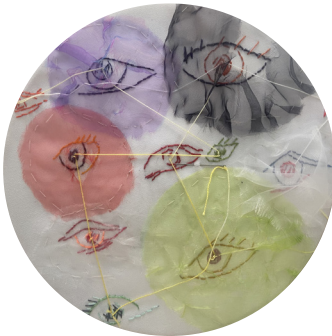
Colectivo Des-Tejiendo

All the drums allude to the gaze because the objective of the project is to stop the enemy's gaze in order to move forward with peace.

Un-Stitching Gazes (<https://des-tejiendomiradas.com/en/inicio-english/>) is another art-based project that worked with former FARC-EP combatants to present their perspectives. This work serves as a textile metaphor to “un-stitch and restitch views on others and ourselves.” Members of Un-Stitching Gazes created and donated these drums to “Communal House.”



Camila Londoño Román



Beatriz Elena Arias López



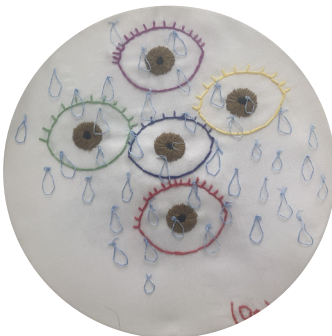
Berena Torres Marin



Maria T. Buitrago Echeverri



Laura A. Coral Velásquez



Jessica Valencia



Amaya Querejatzu Escobari

.....

Teresa Santos Rojas



Hearts of Peace

The union of Colombian hearts will lead us to weave peace among people and with nature.

.....

Association Of Victims of Forced Displacement



Collective piece

.....

Credits

Associations

Asociación Sobrevivientes Tejiendo Memoria
Fusión Tropical de la Amazonia

Professional Artist

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Artistic Support Team

Lina Maria Archila León
Angela Floreth Prieto Alvarado
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Research Support

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University of Connecticut (SCHARP award)
Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute,
University of Connecticut
CAPAZ (German Colombian Peace Institute)
Fulbright Colombia
Colombia Connect
Universidad de la Amazonia

Catalog Design

John Khatib

March / 2023

“The Team”



Casa Común (Communal House) is a collaborative art exercise made by survivors of the Colombian armed conflict. The work was created in the Colombian Amazonian foothills; a fertile area with abundant water, a hinge between the Andes and the Amazon where the women and men who carry out this creative, communitarian, affectionate and supportive process live. We, the artists who have suffered the devastation of war, offer the public this “communal house”. A poetic space to recreate dreams and memories guided by the idea of *Buen Vivir* (a good, harmonious and beautiful living) and *Vivir Sabroso* (living joyfully and deliciously), a place of healing and reconciliation with violent pasts and presents where peasant life, water, plants and animals play a leading role. In this work, through embroidery and painting, we capture ideas of more harmonious and serene futures, as opposed to those proposed by violence. The Communal House has on its exterior walls colorful flowers interspersed with medicinal plants used to heal personal and collective wounds and to repair our relationship with the earth. From each piece we build, but above all from the strength of collective creation, we want to transmit the hope that the atrocities of war will not be repeated.

