



The Africa Quilt

Specially made for *Museum Frauenkultur Regional International*, Germany for the exhibition *Threads of destiny: Testimonies of violence, hope and survival*, May-July 2009.

Made by Roland Agbage, a young quilt-maker from Kogi State in Nigeria and Polly Eaton who lives in Abuja Nigeria, though she is from Britain. They worked on the design of the quilt once they had discussed the ideas they wanted to express.

Africa's great mineral and agricultural wealth should have helped make it a continent free of hunger, war and need. Instead, it has been the cause of persistent war, political conflict, and injustice ever since the first colonialists realised the potential for its exploitation.

Tragically, it has been the people of the countries endowed with the greatest mineral wealth that have suffered the most. Congo and Liberia have both suffered from the West's dependence on rubber, and the forests of Africa continue to be exported for making furniture and housing abroad. Sierra Leone's wars were fuelled by diamond money. The wars in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo continue because of the profits to be made from stripping the land of coltan (essential in mobile phones), copper, gold, tin and diamonds. Probably the single resource that has done more to cripple fragile democracies is oil. In Nigeria for example its extraction has caused terrible environmental damage while the people who once owned the land have gained little of the vast revenues generated, most of which leave the country.

The abundance of Africa has gone a long way to support the lifestyles of those in the wealthier nations of the world. Now is the time for the effects on the real source of this wealth to be acknowledged.

This quilt on display at the Verbal Arts Centre from Thursday 22nd October until Monday 30th November is part of a continuous series of quilt exhibits curated by Roberta Bacic in Derry, which started March 8th 2008 and lead up to International Women's Day 2009 and beyond.

