

ESCALA Research Papers

NO. 2

Unravelling Threads

Valeria Paz Moscoso

ESCALA

ESCALA Research Papers are investigations into the artworks and artists in the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America. ESCALA commissions these papers from authors who explore the Collection in relation to exhibitions, conferences and their own research. We intend to commission ESCALA Research Papers regularly, publishing them in hard copy and making them available on our website.

ESCALA Research Papers

ISSN 2049-1085 (Print)

ISSN 2049-1093 (Online)

Number: 2

Title: *Unravelling Threads*

Author: Valeria Paz Moscoso

Editor: Joanne Harwood

Publisher: Essex Collection of Art from Latin America,

University of Essex, Colchester

Date: 2012

Text © Valeria Paz Moscoso

Note on the author

Valeria Paz Moscoso is the curator of *Unravelling Threads* and a PhD candidate in the School of Philosophy and Art History at the University of Essex where she is researching art as an emancipating device in the work of Bolivian conceptual artist Roberto Valcárcel. In Bolivia she was Head of the Museum Section and Curator of Exhibitions at the National Museum of Art in La Paz. Valeria has also worked as an independent curator and undertaken research into Bolivian contemporary art. She recently co-authored the first survey publication of Bolivian sculpture: *Bolivia: Los caminos de la escultura*.

Designer: Red Leader

Printer: Print Essex

Unravelling Threads

Unravelling Threads seeks to explore aspects of textiles from the Andean region of South America and to unravel their possible relationship to artworks in the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA).

The structure and the themes of *Unravelling Threads* derive from a contemporary *chumpi*, an indigenous belt from Bolivia, of unknown authorship (illustrated at the end of this research paper). *Chumpis* date to pre-Inca times² and are worn by indigenous men and women in the Andes in a variety of ways. The contemporary *chumpi* I refer to, and which inspired the sign for *Unravelling Threads*, belongs to aruma-Sandra De Berduccy (Bolivia, 1975), a contemporary artist whose work is inspired by Andean weaving and weavers. De Berduccy is represented here by ESCALA's most recent acquisition, *Efectivo* (2011).

The starting point of *Unravelling Threads* was, however, another artist: Cecilia Vicuña [Chile, 1948], whose work is also inspired by Andean indigenous textiles. Vicuña was invited to participate in an international conference on this subject at Birkbeck, University of London³ and ESCALA invited her to present her performance *Fiber of Prayer/Fiber of Gold* at firstsite, giving us the opportunity to reflect on the Collection's holdings from a different perspective⁴.

In Cecilia Vicuña's work, textiles and words are closely related. Also a poet, Vicuña has often introduced words into her artworks, and thread into her site-specific interventions, sometimes to establish poetic connections between objects, roads, walls and even river banks.

¹ The Andean region comprises the territory around the Andes mountain range, located in the western part of South America; running from Chile in the south to Venezuela in its most northern part and across Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. The Andes is frequently associated with its indigenous inhabitants, particularly the Quechua and Aymara, the largest groups.

² The Inca empire, the Tawantinsuyu, developed from c.1450 and by the time of the Spanish conquest of Peru in 1532 extended along the Andean mountain range. Under colonial rule the Inca people were integrated into the Spanish empire's administration, mostly as lower status vassals paying labour duty (*mita*). Today, indigenous people still constitute an important segment of the Andean countries, particularly in Bolivia where two thirds of the population identify themselves as indigenous.

³ The conference is *Textiles, Techne and Power in the Andes* and Vicuña will participate on March 16, 2012, in the 'Roundtable on Andean Textiles and Contemporary Art' chaired by Professor Valerie Fraser (Chair of ESCALA and Professor of Art History at the University of Essex).

⁴ *Fiber of prayer/ Fiber of gold*, performed at firstsite on March 18, will explore the relationship between word and thread, while revisiting her exile in London after the military coup in Chile in 1973.

She has also often referred to *quipus* in her artworks. *Quipus* are an Andean recording device used by the Incas made from coloured and spun threads from llama or alpaca hair. *Quipu* (sometimes *Khipu* or *kipu*) means 'knot' in Quechua⁵, the official language of the Inca empire the Tawantinsuyu, in reference to the knotting of threads using a decimal positional system to record numeric values and narratives. Up to 2,000 strands have been found on a single *quipu* and the complexity of the system is only beginning to be unravelled⁶.

Vicuña borrows from *quipus* both in technique and in metaphor to reinvent the strong ties between textiles and text in the Andean world. For example, she has coined a new word, *quipoem*, from 'quipu' and 'poem', for the title of a book on her life and work⁷. She also made frequent references to *quipu* techniques in *El Quipu Menstrual (2006)*⁸ and, more recently, in what she calls her first *quipu/book* entitled *Chanccani Quipu* (Granary Books, 2012)⁹.

I immediately associated Vicuña's take on indigenous Andean textiles with the work of aruma-Sandra De Berduccy. De Berduccy's extensive research on textiles has inspired her to examine common points between textiles, text and computer technology. Her 2011 digital mappings, *Texto Textil Código*¹⁰, recreate Inca *tocapus*, a pictorial system of codes consisting of abstract signs contained in squares, to inscribe contemporary flirtatious compliments in Quechua onto the façade of several emblematic buildings in La Paz, Bolivia's capital.

My virtual conversations with De Berduccy brought to my attention the contemporary *chumpi* that had inspired her work and was useful in solving her questions about her identity as a contemporary artist working with traditional Andean textiles.

The *chumpi* is remarkable for its inclusion of a sentence in Spanish, woven into the belt. The sentence reads 'ase savin tegir los campesinas volevianas' which roughly translates as 'thus the rural women of Bolivia know how to weave'. There are several orthographic errors in the sentence. If written 'correctly' it should read 'asi saben tejer las campesinas bolivianas'. The errors perhaps identify the unknown author as someone whose first language is not Spanish, as does the use of the structure 'saben tejer' in which the central verb 'tejer' ('to weave') denotes an action currently taking place. The use of the active infinitive verb 'tejer' in this *chumpi* has triggered De Berduccy's adoption of an artistic identity in which action and transformation are constituent elements¹¹.

Ase savin tegir...

In order to further explore the issues connected with indigenous Andean textiles, I decided to look first at De Berduccy's *chumpi* through the history of textiles in the Andean region and their long tradition as text.

In Quechua, still the most widely spoken indigenous language in the Andean region today, textiles are associated etymologically with text. As Cecilia Vicuña notes, the origin of the word Quechua [q'eswa] is 'rope or cord made from straw'¹². Furthermore, the mythological origins of Inca civilization are connected with weaving as it was believed that textiles, knowledge, and skills had been taught by Mama Ocllo, the first Inca queen¹³.

For the Incas and many of their predecessors, textiles were deemed to be the most prized of all possessions; central to their system of reciprocity. As such, they were offered as precious gifts to the Spanish conquistadors. While the Spanish coveted gold more than any other 'treasure' they soon realized that the woven clothing and costumes of the Andean indigenous people contained important information about the wearer's identity and community.

As described earlier, throughout the Tawantinsuyu, the Inca used *tocapus* as a means to record information, inscribing these abstract signs on their *unkus* (ponchos), *llicllas* (woman's mantles), and *kerus* (ceramic or wooden ceremonial vases). During the height of the Tawantinsuyu, *quipus* acquired a high degree of sophistication. *Quipus* as a recording system are still being deciphered but current research shows that, as well as registering data on

⁵ As well as the name of an indigenous group, Quechua, like Aymara is a language spoken by more than eight million people in the Southern Andes. Before the arrival of the Spanish it was the official language of the Tawantinsuyu.

⁶ See, for example, the Khipu Database Project led by Dr. Gary Urton, Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Pre-Columbian Studies in the Archeology Department at Harvard University. <http://khipukamayuc.fas.harvard.edu>

⁷ *Quipoem* is one of a two part book *The precarious: the art and poetry of Cecilia Vicuña/Quipoem*, the first edited by Catherine M. de Zegher and the second written by Vicuña, Cecilia (translated by Esther Allen, Hanover, N.H., London: University Press of New England, c1997).

⁸ <http://www.ceciliavicuna.org/>

⁹ Vicuña's pairing of textile and word occurs in the titles of her other poetry books such as *Unravelling Words and the Weaving of Water* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1992) and *Palabra e Hilo (Word and Thread)* (Edinburgh, Scotland; Royal Botanical Gardens, 1996).

¹⁰ For more information please see <http://textotextilcodigo.blogspot.com/>

¹¹ Email from De Berduccy, 30/ 12/ 2012. For more information on her artistic process and identity see <http://www.expodesenvolver.blogspot.com/>

¹² Cecilia Vicuña in *Quipoem*, p. 133.

¹³ Elena Phipps et al. *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004, p.18.

population, family, and goods they may have been used as instruments for administrative planning¹⁴.

The ability of textiles to record and convey detailed information, especially regarding hierarchies and pre-Hispanic indigenous authority, using systems little understood by the Spanish, meant that they posed a significant threat to Spanish control. In 1575 this led Peru's Viceroy, Francisco de Toledo, to decree the abolishment of Inca indigenous dress¹⁵.

Despite this prohibition, the weaving of textiles in the Andes persisted, its meaning often only understood within the specific community of origin¹⁶. As in Inca times, textiles today contain information on the person's history, ethnic identity, tribute categories and social status¹⁷.

This strong historic and contemporary connection between textiles and text led me to believe that the 'ase savin...' *chumpi* could be useful for understanding the role of textiles today and their possible relationship to artworks in ESCALA.

The *chumpi* is unique because as noted before, in addition to the usual textile codes: different types of stripes, colours, and abstract and geometric symbols, it includes alphabetic writing. While textiles have long been associated with text, it is unusual for them to include alphabetic script¹⁸.

The *chumpi* also caught my attention because, not knowing much about textile aesthetics, the text seemed to provide an interesting key from which to decipher the object. As mentioned earlier, contemporary Andean textiles are still codified pieces of clothing incorporating both group and personal emblems such the history, social status, and the provenance of the wearer. Moreover *chumpis* are usually associated with the name and identity of the wearer. I wondered what had happened to the owner of this really very personal piece of clothing that Sandra De Berduccy found on sale in a tourist shop in La Paz, removed from its likely rural indigenous origins.

The orthographic errors described before suggest that the weaver's first language was either Aymara or Quechua¹⁹. At the same time, the mistakes do not undermine the extraordinary skill and design with which she has painstakingly 'drawn', through weaving, every single letter of the sentence.

The weaver's estrangement with Spanish highlights her interest in the shape of the letters above the conventions of language. The weaver uses text not only to communicate an important message but also to show her calligraphic ability and her prowess in weaving difficult motifs. The author's apparent desire to 'show off' her skills possibly also speaks about her desire to demonstrate her womanly aptitudes, since weaving is an activity generally connected with gender²⁰. Furthermore, the connection between writing and textiles reflects her belonging to two parallel nations, which have contributed to her education: that of her community and that of the Bolivian state²¹.

While considering this *chumpi*, I realized that textiles have certain qualities that are similar to the ways in which art has traditionally been understood in the West. That is, they are highly valued possessions that require high skills or expertise; they represent views of the world; and they have their own aesthetic codes, with layers of meaning conveyed in often intricate ways.

This analogy and the many layers of meaning of the *chumpi*, many of which are left unravelled²² (as this task exceeds the objective of this paper), inspired me to attempt a reading of the artworks in *Unravelling Threads* from the imaginary point of view of the weaver or, at least, to take into account issues of relevance to her. This approach seemed to offer an interesting opportunity to temporarily, and partially, invert the European's view of the non-West by fictitiously 'granting' the indigenous artist/weaver a voice, and so to explore unexpected meanings.

¹⁴ Denise Y. Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita in *The Metamorphosis of heads. Textual struggles, education and land in the Andes*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006, p. 25.

¹⁵ Phipps in *Op. Cit.* p. 27.

¹⁶ Denise Y. Arnold, Juan de Dios Yapita and Elvira Espejo Ayca. *Hilos sueltos: los Andes desde el textil*. La Paz: ILCA and Plural Editores, c2007.

¹⁷ Arnold and Yapita in *The Metamorphosis of heads...* p.23.

¹⁸ There are a few examples in Teresa Gisbert, Silvia Arze and Martha Cajías. *Arte textil y mundo andino*. Buenos Aires: Tipográfica Editora Argentina, 1992.

¹⁹ For example, the fact that there is no 'i' in Aymara would explain the unconventional use of the 'i', replaced by the 'e', in the writing, and *vice versa*. Furthermore, in the phrase there is no accordance between the feminine noun 'campesinas' [rural women] and its qualifying article 'los' which appears in the masculine form. Additionally in two words 'v' is used instead of the Spanish spelling with a 'b' and it is particularly remarkable the misspelling of 'volivianas' (Bolivian women). This has to do again with the fact that in Spanish 'v' and 'b' have the same sound and that, these letters do not exist in Aymara (the closest one would be 'w'). Because nowadays textile weaving is widespread both among Quechua and Aymara speakers, and that in many indigenous communities both languages are spoken, it is difficult for a non specialist, like myself, to establish the original language of the author.

²⁰ Arnold and Yapita in *Op. Cit.*, p. 128.

²¹ An interesting analysis of what learning means in Bolivia's indigenous rural communities today may be found in Arnold and Yapita in *The Metamorphosis of heads*, pp. 124-128.

²² Extrapolating concepts from research on textiles, the three strands might, for example, be read in terms of their colour analogies or contrasting qualities (as pointed by Verónica Cereceda in Bouysse-Cassagne, Thérèse et al. *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*. La Paz: Hisbol, 1987, pp. 184-223). The use of red is connected with womanhood since the first menstrual period of girls is often evidenced in the use of this colour in their weaving (Arnold et. al in *Hilos Suelos...* p.61). Furthermore, the legacy of the dual Inca *Hanan/Hurin* (Upper/Lower) view of the world might be alluded in the appearance of the bird at the extreme left, representing Hurin moiety, and the geometric designs at the right the Hanan moiety, as noted by Catheryn N. Longmore in 'Conquest and Conversion: How the artistic embodiments of the Hanan/Hurin theory can be used as an indicator of changes to Andean society after the Spanish Conquest' [M.A. Dissertation in the History of Art, University of Aberdeen, 2010].

Unravelling Threads is thus an exhibition that brings issues of importance in the indigenous world to new audiences. In some cases, it illustrates, without taking itself too seriously, how it would be to look at the world from an alternate point of view.

Using the perspective of the weaver, I started to look at contemporary artworks in the collection that dealt with text, indigenous views of the world, and textiles. As expected, the works exceeded these categories and differed greatly in perspective, leading me to explore issues that transcend the Andean indigenous world.

In my attempt to explore possible relations between contemporary art from Latin America and Andean textiles, I found a remarkable group of works related to text; others more directly engaged with indigenous textiles and, finally, a group of artworks that use fabric and textile techniques but which make no reference to the previous groups.

As a result, *Unravelling Threads* includes diverse artworks, some of which do not have textile supports but which include or refer to writing. At the same time other works explore textile aesthetics using a variety of techniques including weaving, unpicking, painting, simulation of threading, patching, cutting and pasting of textiles, hand and machine sewing and embroidery.

As with many artworks from Latin America, a common thread is the commitment of some of the artists here to addressing the status of their countries as former colonies; an issue which is often expressed through their interest in indigenous legacy.

Simultaneously, another group of artists is more interested in examining themes that are present in today's daily urban life, such as gender roles, textiles as commodities, physical disabilities, romanticizing and stereotypes of ethnic groups which are different to one's own.

Un-textile texts

The importance of the idea of textiles as codified objects in the Andes led me, beyond artworks in ESCALA that related directly to fiber and thread, to explore other artworks with references to text and writing. Some of them related neither to textiles nor to indigenous Andean issues, but their textual content triggered some unexpected points of coincidence. Most of them coincided with the author of the *chumpi* in their interest in text as an aesthetic form.

The works of Felipe Ehrenberg (Mexico, 1943) and Warmi (Peru, 1945), respectively, refer to the textual indigenous legacy evidenced in the Mexican codices and in the *tocapus* and *quipus*.

The Mexican codices, or painted books, like *quipus*, contain and convey information in non-alphabetic form. Before the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1521 the Aztecs²³, and their predecessors, developed a sophisticated pictorial or iconic script that combined image, mathematics and phonetics. This iconic script, which could itself be considered art, was used to record a wide range of information in different genres of books made from deerskin *amatl*²⁴ or bark paper. The system was adapted under Spanish colonial rule and the colonial manuscripts, together with the few remaining pre-Hispanic examples, reveal the breadth and depth of information they recorded from genealogical data, historical narratives and biographies, to tribute and census information as well as ritual almanacs²⁵.

Like the *chumpi*, Ehrenberg's *Curiosamente estrepitoso artefacto para leer códices* (Curiously Clattery Codex Reading Contraption, 2009) removed from its original context as part of a performance at Lakeside Theatre, University of Essex²⁶, has become a relic, an object with aesthetic qualities whose Nahuatl, Maya and Spanish script nevertheless once guided the artist's actions.

Similarly, Warmi's *Chuwas* (Plates, 1995) are ceramic vessels that merge traditional Andean materials and methods with alphabetic script. In another parallel, Warmi uses the letters not simply to communicate meaning but as important elements in the design and pattern of the plates.

Moreover, in his untitled work (1997), León Ferrari (Argentina, 1920) has transformed excerpts of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges' poem on the loss of his sight, *Elogio de la sombra* (In Praise of Darkness, 1969), into lines which, although still legible to those who can see, additionally form a curvy abstract drawing on a piece of paper, the melding of text and image highlighted by the use of corrective fluid.

²³ The Aztec empire had its beginnings in the formation of a Triple Alliance of city states in 1427. Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, was the dominant city and the centre of a vast tribute empire which, at the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, dominated an area from what is now northern Mexico to Nicaragua and stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

²⁴ *Amatl* is from Nahuatl, the official language of the Aztec empire, which continued to be the lingua franca under Spanish rule and is still spoken by more than 1.45 million Mexicans.

²⁵ Information provided by Dr Joanne Harwood in reference to Gordon Brotherston's *Painted books from Mexico: codices in UK collections and the world they represent*. London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, c1995.

²⁶ *Xocoyotzin, the Penultimate* was commissioned by the Lakeside Theatre, Art Exchange and ESCALA with support from the University's International Office and the Mexican Embassy in London. It was performed at the Lakeside Theatre, University of Essex, on 5 December 2009 and in 2010 was taken to the Museum of Latin American Art (Long Beach, California), where it had its U.S. premiere as *Xocoyotzin, the Antepenultimate*.

Indigenous textiles

Some of the artists included in *Unravelling Threads* have engaged with indigenous textiles directly, albeit in different ways. While some of the artworks stem from researching techniques and aesthetics, others are interested in exposing hierarchies in art and culture.

In *Efectivo* (2010), Sandra De Berduccy has adapted the indigenous Andean loom to reweave such quotidian objects as banknotes, removing their value while creating equivalences between textiles and money and *vice versa*. César Paternosto (Argentina, 1931) has published his research on Andean aesthetics in *The Stone and the Thread*²⁷, where he establishes the contribution of indigenous architecture and textiles to twentieth century avant-garde abstraction in the US and Europe. The geometry of his painting *Marginality and Displacement #7* (2002) seems to embody this contribution.

Other artists simply reutilize emblematic textile pieces from the popular traditions of their countries. In *Poncho* (2000) Esteban Álvarez (Argentina, 1966) takes as his starting point the *poncho salteño*, from the northern Argentinean province of Salta, at the foothills of the Andes. The *poncho* is an emblematic national garment derived from indigenous textiles. By adding a further two openings to the central opening of the *Poncho* Álvarez imitates Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases from the 1950s and 1960s to make an ironic statement about the prejudices regarding 'high' and 'low' culture and art that predominate in the international art system generally and Argentinean art world specifically.

Oswaldo Viteri (Ecuador, 1931) also shares an interest in folklore and was involved during the sixties with the research and promotion of popular traditions in Ecuador. In *Sol y misterio sobre silencio* (Sun and Mystery over Silence), 2002 he pastes Ecuadorian folk cloth dolls on to a background of liturgical fabrics in an attempt, perhaps, to subvert the division in Ecuadorian culture between popular culture and European heritage, represented by Catholicism.

Textiles and stereotypes

A last group of works, made out of textiles, but unrelated to text or to the Andes, displays a particular interest in the construction of identities in terms of gender and ethnicity. Again, their ironic approach toward these issues differs from the celebratory view of the weaver.

María Ezcurra (Mexico, 1973), in her work *Leopard Swimsuit* (2002), has unpicked a piece of female clothing to make a strong statement regarding gender codification in fashion trends. In choosing a leopard print design, she

layers meaning in reference to skin covering skin which, from an indigenous point of view, could even be interpreted as a reference to the jaguar skins used to cover books in pre-Hispanic Mexico.

With related interests, Anna Maria Maiolino (Brazil, 1942) in *Por um fio* (By a Thread, 1976) represents ambivalent female ties of three generations attached by cord that both 'feeds' and obstructs the passage of anything to and from the mouth.

Similarly, f.marquespenteado (Brazil, 1955) in *butched in* (2002) makes visible the construction of identities as reflected in the coining of new language, the codes of prison life, which extend the definition of masculinity in today's urban British society; an intention which is ironically emphasized by the artist's use of sewing and other related activities, tasks traditionally associated with women.

Lastly, in *Tapete Voador* (Flying Carpet, 2004), by transforming Persian rugs, another long textile tradition with rich symbolism, into airplanes, Alex Flemming (Brazil, 1954) perhaps questions Western hegemony on the rest of the world and its ambivalent relation with the Middle East post-9/11.

This text and the associated exhibition constitute only a starting point, an initial unravelling of threads from which to explore new issues and perspectives in the study of art from Latin America. The possible points of convergence between indigenous textiles (or indeed other complex indigenous forms of art/text), and contemporary art practice in Latin America is a relatively under-examined area of research which is largely absent still in the historiography of the region. This is so despite the historical importance of textiles, their currency and, most importantly, the fact that they have inspired the practice of outstanding artists from Latin America. I hope that visitors will enjoy the works of some of these artists in *Unravelling Threads*, and that they will continue to add their own strands to those already explored.

Valeria Paz Moscoso

²⁷ César Paternosto. *The Stone and the Thread. Andean Roots of Abstract Art*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.

Sources

Arnold, Denise Y. and Juan de Dios Yapita. *The Metamorphosis of heads. Textual struggles, education and land in the Andes*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

Arnold, Denise Y., Juan de Dios Yapita and Elvira Espejo Ayca. *Hilos sueltos: los Andes desde el textil*. La Paz: ILCA and Plural Editores, c2007.

Bouysson-Cassagne, Thérèse et al. *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*. La Paz: Hisbol, 1987.

Brotherston, Gordon. *Painted books from Mexico: codices in UK collections and the world they represent*. London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, c1995.

Cecilia Vicuña: <http://www.ceciliavicuna.org/>

De Zegher, Catherine M, ed. and Cecilia Vicuña. *Quiipoem/ The Precarious: the art and poetry of Cecilia Vicuña*. Hanover, N.H., London: University Press of New England, c1997.

Gisbert, Teresa, Silvia Arze and Martha Cajías. *Arte textil y mundo andino*, Buenos Aires: Tipográfica Editora Argentina, 1992.

Khipu Database project. <http://khipukamayuq.fas.harvard.edu/>

Longmore, Catheryn N. 'Conquest and Conversion: How the artistic embodiments of the *Hanan/Hurin* theory can be used as an indicator of changes to Andean society after the Spanish Conquest', M.A. Dissertation. History of Art. University of Aberdeen, 2010.

Paternosto, César. *The Stone and the Thread. Andean Roots of Abstract Art*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.

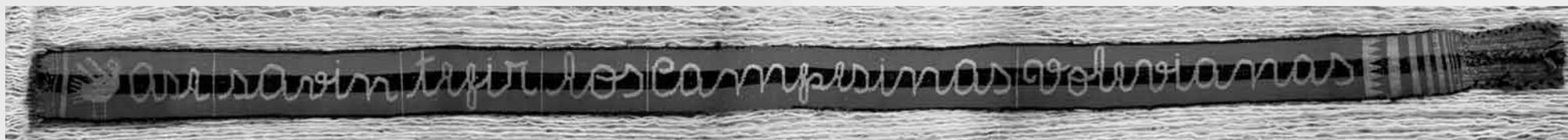
Phipps, Elena et al. *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.

Sandra de Berduccy: <http://www.expodesenvolver.blogspot.com/>

Texto Textil Código: <http://textotextilcodigo.blogspot.com/>

Vicuña, Cecilia, *Palabra e Hilo (Word and Thread)*, Edinburgh, Scotland; Royal Botanical Gardens, 1996.

Vicuña, Cecilia. *Unravelling Words and the Weaving of Water*. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1992.



Unravelling Threads is the second in the series of ESCALA Research Papers and has been produced for the exhibition of the same name at firstsite in Colchester.

The exhibition is open from 18 February to 17 June 2012 and is free.

Artists in *Unravelling Threads*

Álvarez, Esteban
aruma – Sandra De Berduccy
Ehrenberg, Felipe
Ezcurra, María
Ferrari, León
Flemming, Alex
Maiolino, Anna Maria
marquesepeñateado, f.
Paternosto, César
Viteri, Oswaldo
Warmi

Curator: Valeria Paz Moscoso

Curatorial support: Joanne Harwood, ESCALA Director

Exhibition organisation: Sarah Demelo, ESCALA Collections Assistant

Technical support: Phil Gardner

Acknowledgements:

ESCALA would like to thank aruma-Sandra De Berduccy, Kate Beckwith, Laura Davison, Rachel Earle, Laura Earley, Valerie Fraser, Phil Gardner, Kate Hawkins, Catheryn N. Longmore, Luciana Martins, Judith Merritt, Valeria Paz Moscoso, Clare Shortcook, Cecilia Vicuña and Kath Wood.

Valeria Paz Moscoso would like to thank Joanne Harwood for her insight into the collection and indigenous textiles and codices and Sarah Demelo for her installation expertise and advice. She would also like to thank Valerie Fraser, aruma-Sandra de Berduccy, Cecilia Vicuña and Catheryn N. Longmore for their feedback and for sharing their knowledge of indigenous textiles from the Andes.

Image opposite: aruma-Sandra De Berduccy, *Efectivo*, detail, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Image © aruma-Sandra De Berduccy

Image on previous pages: Anonymous, woven *chumpi* (belt), purchased in La Paz, Bolivia, wool, 5 x 100 cm. Image © aruma-Sandra De Berduccy

firstsite

ESCALA stimulates research, awareness
and appreciation of art from Latin America
www.escala.org.uk

