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**Creative Acts of Survival, Conscious Acts of Subversion:
Textile Pictures by the Peruvian Women of the Pamplona Alta**

Latin American women have a long history of confronting enormous economic, social and personal hardship. Their contemporary struggles for survival and dignity have taken place within a space of tumultuous political change and ingrained cultural and social attitudes regarding gender roles. In the process of negotiating safe public and personal space, women have sought out each other as a means of support. Many women's groups that were initially created as a means of support and to share basic resources later evolved into associations that fostered consciousness-raising and empowerment. Here is where group identity was often shaped and a sense of common purpose was formed.

The women of Peru, specifically those of the Pamplona Alta, are no exception to this phenomenon. Many of these women, along with their families, were dislocated from the countryside beginning in the 1980s. Caught between the militia of the right-wing government and the guerilla tactics of the left-wing Shining Path, peasant women and their families were often witnesses to brutal violence or targets of terrorist aggression. Seeking a safe haven and better opportunities for themselves and their families, they made their way to Lima, settling in the shantytowns that ring the city. Struggling to feed and care for children and family, these women sought creative ways to make a livelihood. What emerged were textile workshops organized for the purpose of making hand-stitched appliquéd and embroidered pictures, called *cuadros*. Some of the images in the *cuadros* represent memories of their former lives in the countryside, but many themes carry highly charged political messages that reflect the women's concerns with unemployment, healthcare, safety, education, and government corruption.

This presentation highlights the *cuadros* and places the textile work of these women into a framework of resistance as outlined in James Scott's book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. A three-week research and fieldwork visit to the Pamplona Alta in Lima, Peru in January 2006 will shed new light on the lives of these women and whether their work continues in the tradition of resistance. The findings seek to draw attention to the experience of the women of the Pamplona Alta and the creative ways they survive, while constructing change and in doing so raise awareness through the arts.