Photographer uses pain, tragedy to create beauty

Women recall experiences from Colombia’s guerrilla war

By Uriel J. Garcia
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As a woman retold the story of how she was forced to witness her mother’s tongue cut off and eyes gouged out by soldiers, she closed her eyes. Erika Diettes took a photo of the woman as she remembered the horrific experience.

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Diettes did the same with women who shared their experiences, during a therapy session, about massacres they had witnessed during Colombia’s war between paramilitary soldiers, the country’s armed forces and guerrilla organizations.

“I was using this image to represent what more than once witnesses of violence have told me — that after the violence, they were walking dead,” said Diettes, a Colorado-based photographer from Santa Fe.

Participants in a Stone Foundation workshop construct a freestanding stone wall Thursday at the United Church of Santa Fe on the southeast corner of the intersection of Hurley-Chamizo Road with St. Michael’s Drive. Using a building technique from Britain, the workers will use 28 tons of native limestone to make the 45-foot-long wall. Stonecutters from all over the world are converging in Santa Fe next week for an annual symposium. PHOTO BY DOUG KOEHLER, THE NEW MEXICAN

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