

AUSTRALIAN JOURNEYS GALLERY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD WALL HANGING

Curator's Notes

The Little Red Riding Hood wall hanging was made by Olga Basylewycz, a Ukrainian woman living at a Displaced Persons camp at Neu-Ulm, Germany, around 1945. Basylewycz used a variety of fabrics and techniques to make the wall hanging. The backing is a blanket issued to her by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). She created the image with fabrics, felt, different kinds of fur, paper and a pine cone. She used long stitch to create the bark on the trees and employed stumpwork, where fabric is padded before being sewn onto the backing, to create a three-dimensional effect.

The Little Red Riding Hood wall hanging is now on display in the Australian Journeys Gallery at the National Museum of Australia.

Photo: George Serras, National Museum of Australia

Note: The Museum has unsuccessfully tried to trace the copyright owner of this wall hanging and invites the copyright owner or their representative to contact them.



Object Biography

In the aftermath of the Second World War Valerie Paling, an Australian teacher from Toorak in Victoria, traveled to Germany to work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Paling encouraged men and women to keep busy and develop skills through activities such as tailoring, embroidery, wood carving, painting, repairing cars and learning English. As an Australian aid worker her job was to help re-settle some of the thousands of people displaced from their homes by the conflict.

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Paling received the wall hanging, made from a United Nations issue blanket and bits of fabric and fur in thanks for her work at Neu Ulm Displaced Persons Camp*. Paling returned to Australia with the wall hanging, and later donated it to the Forest Hill Kindergarten in Melbourne where it was displayed until 1990.

The Forest Hill Kindergarten was established in the 1920s to provide poor children from inner city Melbourne with a few weeks holiday in the country. The wall hanging was displayed in the entrance hall of the Kindergarten and was donated to the National Museum in 1991 after the Kindergarten closed.

* **Australian Journey: Relief and Rehabilitation for Displaced Persons**

Displaced Persons camps were established in Europe to house thousands of refugees, and in 1943, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (later the International Refugee Organisation) was created to administer their re-settlement. Most people were returned to their original countries, but around one million refugees needed new homes. Between 1947 and 1954, Australia accepted around 180,000 Displaced Persons.

Visit The Australian Journeys gallery at www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/australian_journeys/little_red_riding_hood_animation/ to view an animation of the Little Red riding Hood tapestry.



This animation is based on the *Little Red Riding Hood* wall-hanging from the National Museum. Join Little Red Riding Hood as she walks through the forest to visit her grandmother. Meet the hunter and watch out for the wolf! Can you find the owl and the mushrooms that Little Red Riding Hood sees in the forest?