

HAND & I Mending the World One Stitch at a Time

The *Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time* exhibition at Florida Atlantic University Galleries brings together 22 artists who use the delicate medium of embroidery to address society's most pressing issues. While the 'Hand' patiently makes stitch after stitch — straight, backwards, stem, chain or blind — the 'I' presides over a resounding call for resistance to inhumane social policy.



Defining Terms

Domestic Arts What are the domestic arts? What are some examples?

Embroidery This exhibition focuses on embroidery, what is embroidery?

Activism What is activism? What does it mean to be an activist?

Craftivism With this definition of activism in mind, can we break down this last term? What can we infer about its meaning through its parts, craft and activism? What are some examples of Craftivism?

Issues Addressed

Artists included in the Hand & I exhibition are craftivists, working to address social and political issues through their artwork.

Listed to the right are some of the issues they address through their work. By a show of hands, how many of you are affected on a daily basis by one or more of these issues?

Let's take a look at the exhibition to see if we can identify some of these issues in the artworks.

Social Justice / Injustice

Gender

Immigration

Climate

Race

US Prison System

Blanka Amezkua



Re-Konztrukt: women and Tools (Drill), 2017
Embroidery on cotton fabric with Mexican lace



Re-Konztrukt: women and Tools (Machete), 2017
Embroidery on cotton fabric with Mexican lace

Blanka Amezkua

Re-Konztrukt: Women and Tools (2017) are larger-than-life embroideries that feature Amazon-like figures armed with tools sacred to the masculine universe. Amezkua collaborated with comic book artist Luis Sierra to expand the mythos of “Wonder Woman” into the domestic world. Her super-heroines wear overalls instead of revealing costumes, holding their tools as weapons. With her needle, she sketches the outline of her monumental figures, leaves the rest of the canvas untouched and uses wide Mexican lace with Mayan patterns to border the canvases. Gender parity may lie in the distance, but Amezkua’s work takes us a big step forward towards that goal.

Pip Brant



Keep Going North -- Central American Migration Route, 2019
Embroidery on vintage rug



(detail)

Pip Brant

Pip Brant, who teaches at Florida International University and creates installations using fiber and fabric to address social and environmental issues, created *Keep Going North* (2019) expressly for our exhibition. She uses a long, narrow vintage wool runner as the support for crewel French knots embroidered with vintage Bucilla Persian wool. This meditative act is a map of the routes taken by various Central American asylum seekers. These routes are from as far south as Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. The percussive French knots honor the steps taken by these refugees to escape a failed and perilous homeland.

Rachel Breen



Rana Plaza Factory Collapse, Evidence #4; Blue Shirt, 2016
Paper scraps

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, Evidence #5; Burnt Dress, 2016
Paper scraps

Rachel Breen

Minneapolis-based artist-activist Rachel Breen has created a new artwork titled *Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire*, to reference the 1911 garment factory fire where 123 primarily young Jewish and Italian immigrant women perished. Breen's Jewish roots link her to the predominantly Jewish influx that built New York's garment industry. She pays homage to the victims through her semi-abstract, distressed paper assemblages. Repeatedly, Breen runs paper through the sewing machine to achieve the textured effect of burned fabric. She stitches the pieces by hand until the shape of piled discarded cloth emerges. Breen's ongoing *Garment Solidarity Project* is a social justice initiative in response to labor conditions, overproduction, and the rampant consumerism of our society.

Liz Collins



Skins, 2010-2019
Knit and stitched yarns and textiles, steel and wood frames

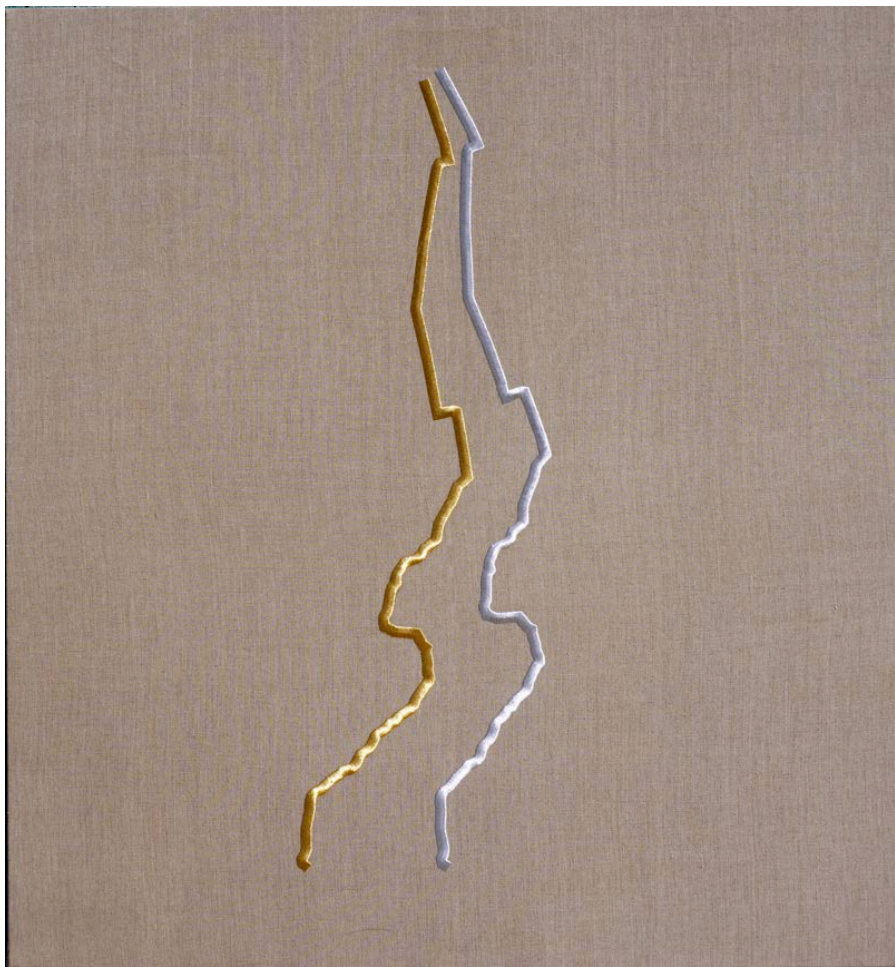


(detail)

Liz Collins

In her new sculpture for this exhibition, Liz Collins utilizes a metal frame that stretches fiber as if it were wrestling with its mount. Each space that her work occupies becomes a space for the artist's body, where resistance and assimilation are challenges to both her fiber and her body. In her words: "This piece is comprised of three textiles I made during years where I was deeply excavating my own landscape of emotions in a visceral way, through anatomy and skin, talking about pain and pleasure through the cloth. I see them as bodies of my personal history."

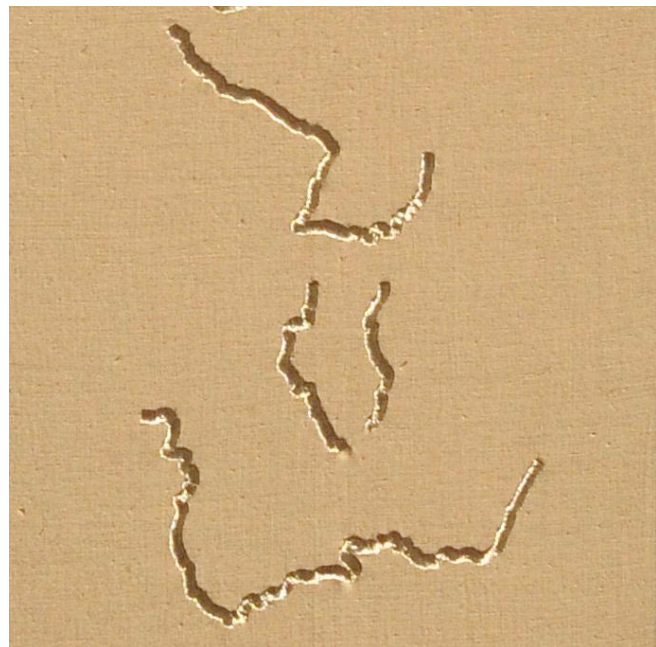
Ana De La Cueva



Rio Grande Oro y Plata, 2018
Embroidery on linen, metallic thread



Cuaderno 1, 2015
Embroidery on linen



(detail)

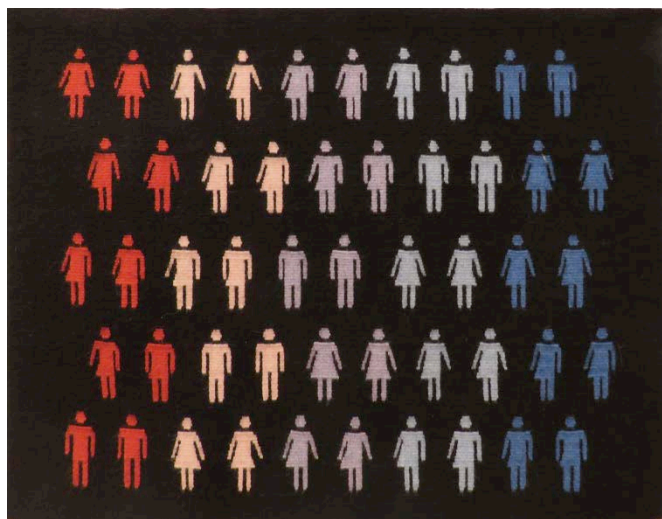
Ana De La Cueva

Ana De La Cueva uses extremely precise and finely stitched embroidery to signal the arbitrary, but rigid, nature of international borders in North and South America. With a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico making daily headlines, the message of her work is invaluable, universal, and timely. *La ruta de la bestia* (2013) is a series of embroideries that features the borders of all the South and Central American countries in silver thread, surmounted by the Mexican-U.S. border in gold thread symbolizing both the mythic wealth of the American dream and the omnipotent weight of American exceptionalism.

Erika Diamond



Caution: (HB2 Gold 20 Figure), 2016
Hand-woven alpaca tapestry



Fifty States, 2016
Hand-woven alpaca tapestry



Run/Hide/Fight, 2018
Hand-woven alpaca tapestry

Erika Diamond

Erika Diamond utilizes embroidery for its healing and empathic qualities. Textiles care, she declares; they are metaphors for fragility and resilience of both the human body and our relations with each other. In an emergency, these connections are tested. Diamond explores the communicative power of pictograms from emergency instructions, first aid manuals, and in-flight safety cards. *Caution: HB2 Series* (2016) specifically responds to House Bill 2 (aka “Bathroom Bill”) passed two years ago in Diamond’s home state of North Carolina that nullified existing state anti-discrimination ordinances and that targeted the LGBTQ community and transgender people. The ubiquitous male/female bathroom signs inspired Diamond to hand weave tapestries illustrating a continuum of gender and sexual identity. *HB2 Series* highlights the value of individual lives and our responsibility to protect one another.

Fanny Allié



Man Bare Feet, 2018
Trash bags sewn on canvas



Man-Shield, 2018
Trash bags sewn on canvas

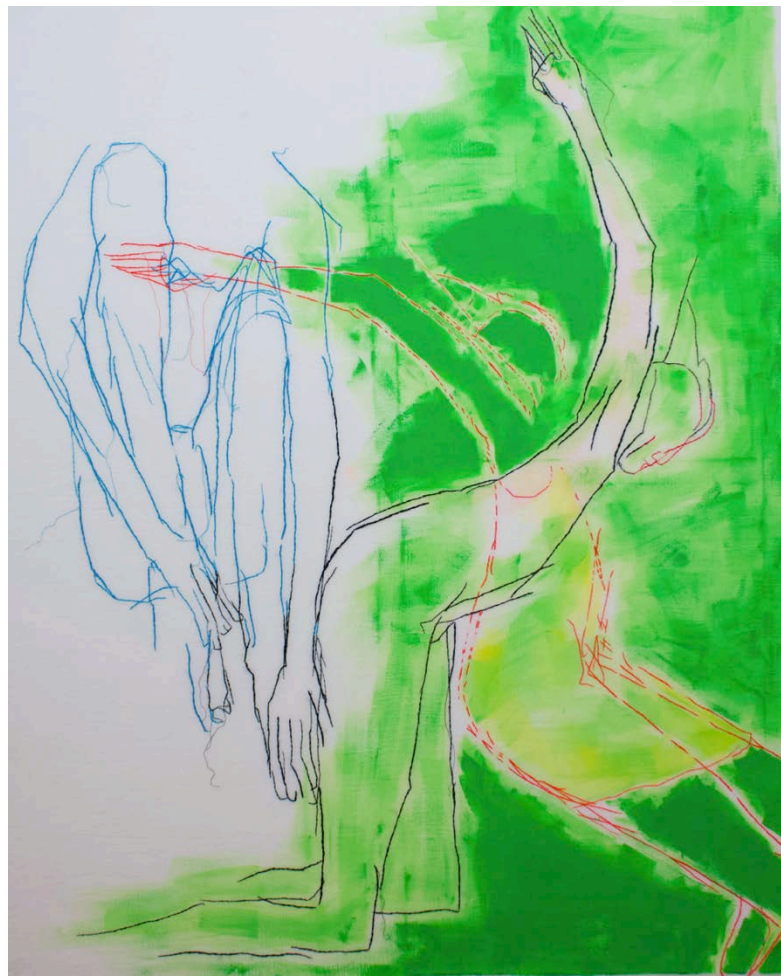
Fanny Allié

Fanny Allié evokes compassion for the victims of economic hardship. *Man-Shield* and *Man-Bare Feet* (2018) are life-size embroideries of people burdened by their desperate condition, a bag on each shoulder, each of them on the go. Allié drapes and stitches black plastic to canvas in such a way that the line of the body, and the weight it carries, become one. These figures are inspired by the artist's observations of the dispossessed inhabitants of New York City. Originally from France, Allié reflects on her own experience as an immigrant artist in New York. The artist blurs the line between individual and collective, and makes us shiver in recognition.

Gabriele Fulterer & Christine Scherrer



As if, Untitled #1, 2013
Cotton embroidery on canvas



As if, Untitled #12, 2013
Cotton embroidery on canvas

Gabriele Fulterer & Christine Scherrer

Christine Scherrer & Gabriele Fulterer — art partners from Vienna — attempt to resolve the politics of female identities and bodies when situated within public and private space. *As if* is a series of embroideries accompanied by wall drawings of larger-than-life-size elongated and distorted figures that stretch beyond the canvas. These rampantly growing bodies literally break through their frame, fall out of balance, grasp at nothing and stagger on the wall. Fulterer & Scherrer leave their protagonists in odd, absurd positions and restrict their attempts to gain freedom.

Shannon Gross



Trans Murder Victims, 2017

Embroidery on cotton



(detail)

Shannon Gross

Shannon Gross has created a memorial to victims of transgender violence by embroidering the names of twenty recent victims on a torn, seven-foot tall fabric. Gross described her process: “The physical process of sewing each name is loving work, my trans heart mourns that there were any names to stitch in the first place. I do not want to forget their names. I’ll remember them here, nestled safely among stitches and a bedding of leaves.” *Trans Murder Victims* is a personal act of grieving for the transgender individuals whose lives were cut short in 2017.

Barb Hunt



#Me Too – Tarana Burke, 2015
Vintage apron



Why on earth have I, because I'm a woman, got to be nice to everyone? - Caitlin Moran, 2015
Vintage apron

Barb Hunt

Barb Hunt explores the domestic needlework tradition of European and North American settlers while also carrying a strong feminist message that challenges the social and cultural misogyny directed towards this medium. Since the 1970s, Hunt has been collecting vintage “hostess” aprons, fascinated by their signifier of domesticity and “wifedom” and their not so latent erotic appeal. A quote by Laurie Penny states, “We grow up learning that someone is always looking at us and checking for misbehavior,” adorns a white chiffon apron with two pockets in the shape of juicy red and pink roses. In this series, Hunt plays with the contrast between the attractive, docile appearance of the apron and the powerful text that accompanies it.

Merritt Johnson



Door Between Worlds, 2018
Hand woven palm fiber



Trade Object (container), 2017
Hand woven palm fiber, dentalium shells



Intersectional Seed Basket, 2018

Hand woven palm fiber

Merritt Johnson

Merritt Johnson is a mixed Indigenous multidisciplinary artist whose work represents the fluidity of creation. Art, for her, is about “being.” She utilizes sculpture, painting, performance, videos, and more. Themes of her work include engagement with the past, present, future, between space and body, and the bridge between culture and land—which is largely rooted in her Mohawk heritage. For example, *Fetish (object/object/object)* (2017) is a woven basket created from palm fiber, buffalo fur, and faux teeth shaped to mimic the most desirable and fetishized features of the female body.

Swati Khurana



Monthly Cycle, 2010-2019

Mixed media embroidery on linen in wooden hoops

Swati Khurana

Swati Khurana's *Monthly Cycle* (2011) is an installation of 28 embroideries representing the grid of a birth control container. Three rows of high heels represent the contraceptive hormones and the final row of flats represent the hormone-free placebo week. Khurana explains, "*Monthly Cycle* started with my own ink drawings. I gave half of the project to one grandmother, and the other half to the other. My grandmothers—who did not have much contact with each other, as one lives in America and the other in India—communicated through collaborative embroideries. I loved how differently they worked and then how their styles influenced each other. Working with my grandmothers was a way to re-examine the dowry, and place it in a feminist, groom-less context. Textiles have long been passed from grandmothers to daughters, and dowries in India once comprised oshawls, razais, saris." *Monthly Cycle* was the last of the collaborations, as Pushpa Khurana passed away in 2018.

Sibel Kocabasi



Lost Sanctuary, 2018
Embroidery on Turkish rug



On the Move, 2019
Embroidery on Inka rug

Sibel Kocabasi

Sibel Kocabasi embroiders on antique Turkish rugs in *On the Move* and *Lost Sanctuary* (2018). She reflects on the personal and collective experience of perpetual transition and alienation. Originally from Turkey, Kocabasi celebrates women's power to withstand the challenges of displacement and relocation.

Annie Lucas



Samson Wrestling the Lion, 1999
Acrylic and thread on canvas

Annie Lucas

Annie Lucas continues the visionary tradition of Alabama's outsider artists. Lucas grew up in rural Autauga County, one of fifteen children. She married Charlie Lucas, the legendary Tin Man. Lucas practiced her craft in between taking care of their four children and her husband. *Samson Wrestling the Lion* (1999) is a "revelation" of her devotion. Lucas's work is a testament to creativity and innovation that seek to "embroider" day-to-day life. Her story is an important contribution to the traditions of craftivism.

Katrina Majkut

Mixed Race Card

DIY Counted Cross-Stitch Kit

by Julie Marie Seibert

Mixed Race Card
BECAUSE IDENTITY IS
MORE COMPLEX THAN
A SINGLE BOX
YOUR NAME HERE BIRTH YEAR

Define
yourself
the way
you want.

**SELECT ALL THAT
APPLY**

• ASIAN • PACIFIC ISLANDER • LATINK
• MIDDLE EASTERN • DOES IT MATTER
• NATIVE AMERICAN • OTHER • WHITE
• ALL OF THE ABOVE • NO EFFING CLUE
• NONE OF THE ABOVE • OTHER

in collaboration with Katrina Majkut's

Stitch Bitch Subversives

Stab Out Stereotypes



Mixed Race Card by Julie Marie Seibert: Stitch Bitch Subversives DIY Embroidery Kit Collection, 2019
Limited Editions

Preggo Rewards Card

DIY Counted Cross-Stitch Kit

In collaboration between
Aimee Gilmore & Katrina Majkut

Preggo
REWARDS CARD
YOUR NAME HERE
DUE DATE MONTH/YEAR

Vulvas not
required for
assembly.

1 2 3 4 5 6
YOUR
MESSAGE ABOUT THE
POINTS OF PREGNANCY HERE
10 9 8 7

Stitch Bitch Subversives

Stab Out Stereotypes



Preggo Rewards Card by Aimee Gilmore and Katrina Majkut: Stitch Bitch Subversives DIY Embroidery Kit Collection, 2019
Limited Editions

Woman Card

Stab Out Stereotypes

¡También incluye instrucciones en español!

Designed by Katrina Majkut

WOMAN CARD
YOUR NAME HERE
W00T010-003015 V4L015 T100101

Vulvas not
required for
assembly.

YOUR MESSAGE ABOUT
SEXIST BULL SHIT
HERE.

Stitch Bitch Subversives

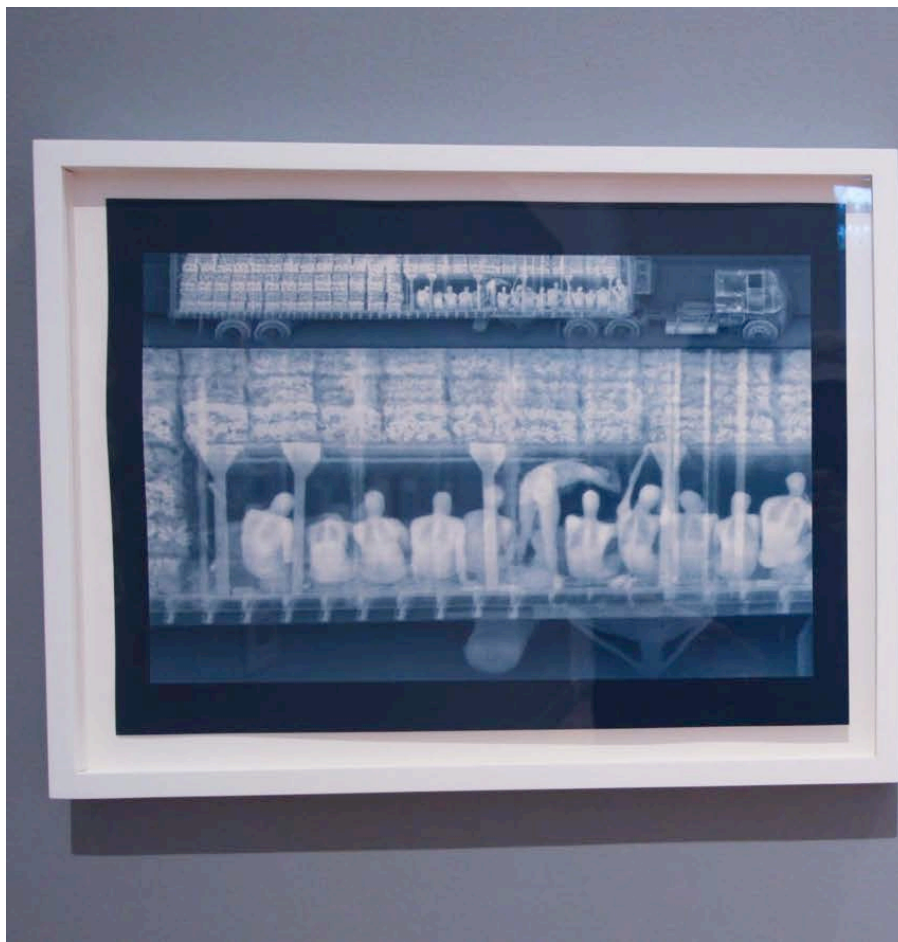
DIY Counted Cross-Stitch Kit

Woman Card Kit: Stitch Bitch Subversives DIY Embroidery Kit Collection, 2019
Limited Editions

Katrina Majkut

Katrina Majkut's needle takes on the difficult issues of sex education and birth control—highly personal subjects that are aligned with the “intimacy” that is a defining trait of traditional embroidery. Her *Stitch Bitch Subversives DIY Embroidery Kit(s)* are a chance for embroiderers and concerned citizens to stab out stereotypes of minority demographics with humor and needle art. The work is an attempt to insert feminism, humor and politics into contemporary mass-produced kits that continue to assert cross-stitch as a passive, stereotypically gendered and conservative domestic craft.

Noelle Mason



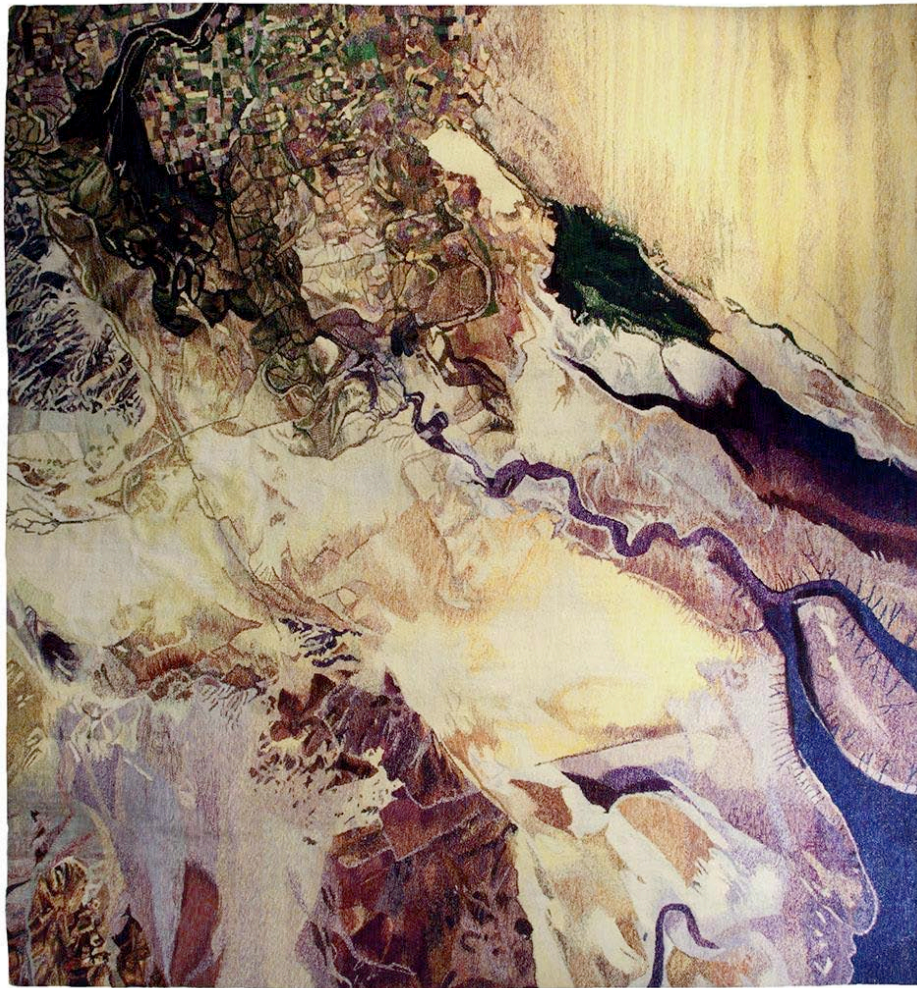
Backscatter Blueprint (Ultima Cena), 2019
Cyanotype



Coyotaje (La Columna Rota), 2019
Hand embroidered cotton



Coyotaje (Los Conocidos), 2015
Hand embroidered cotton

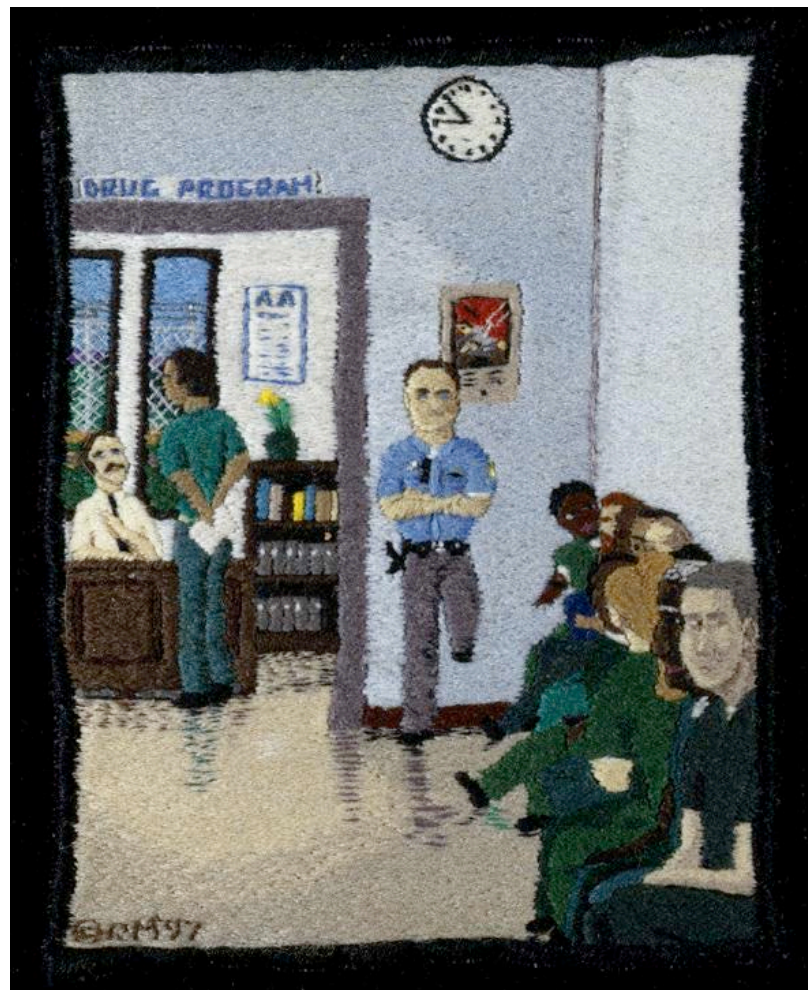


Ground Control (Colorado River Delta), 2015
Handwoven wool Gobelin tapestry

Noelle Mason

Noelle Mason challenges the voyeuristic nature of surveillance technologies and its photographic and video mediation of our responses to traumatic events and tragedies. This body of work consists of the cyanotypes that are backscatter blueprints of people in trucks and cross-stitch embroideries titled *Coyotaje* (2014) based on these images. Mason uses cross-stitching as an analog to the pixilation seen on the screen of a security camera. She painstakingly embroiders figures one pixel at a time over several hours. In making this work she connects to a migrant journey pre-destined to fail. Mason teaches us that the forensic and deadly precision of new radar technology is more powerful than any concrete wall.

Ray Materson

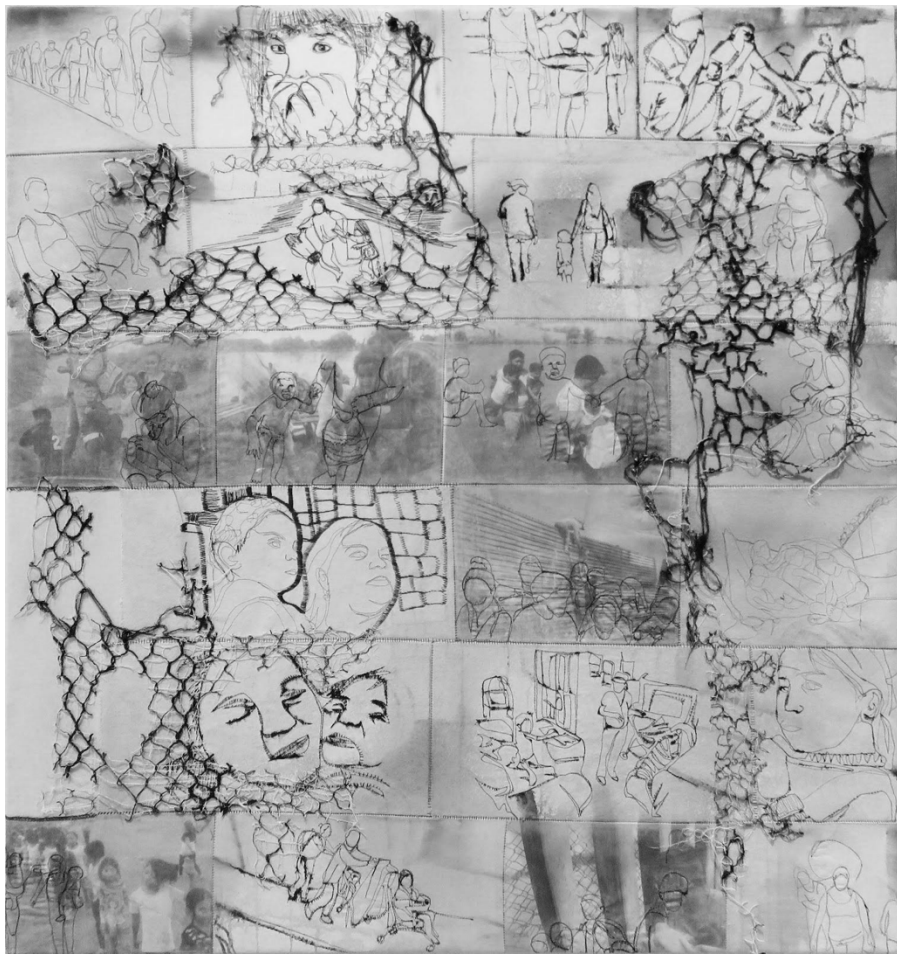


Waiting for the Man, 1997
Needlepoint from unraveled sock threads

Ray Materson

Since his first stitch, Ray Materson has used the healing qualities of embroidery to depict scenes of violence, abuse, and degradation that he witnessed during his long years in prison. Amazingly, he created these embroideries with sock threads, the only material available to him. Materson's embroideries are small enough to fit in your hand and astonish with their precision: thousands of stitches representing more than 40 hours per image, and their meticulous pictorial detail. In 2005, Materson published *Sins and Needles*, a poignant account of his journey through a tumultuous life and his rehabilitation through embroidery.

Aurora Molina



(detail)

Children of immigration are forgotten, 2019
Embroidery on canvas and photo transfer

Aurora Molina

Aurora Molina's *Children of immigration are forgotten*, responds to the Zero Tolerance policy that required all families who crossed the border without inspection to be separated, and hundreds of separated children have ended up in emergency shelters across our country. Because of poor documentation, many children can no longer be located in this national web of emergency shelters, their faces slowly but inexorably disappearing along with the prospects of reunification with their families. We cannot allow these traumatized children to be forgotten. Working with So (Sew), America Cares, the artist states, "Our plan is to "sew" them back, to never allow them to be lost again," and believes Art can be a powerful tool in starting an open dialogue about Zero Tolerance in our community and in the rest of the country.

Judy Polstra

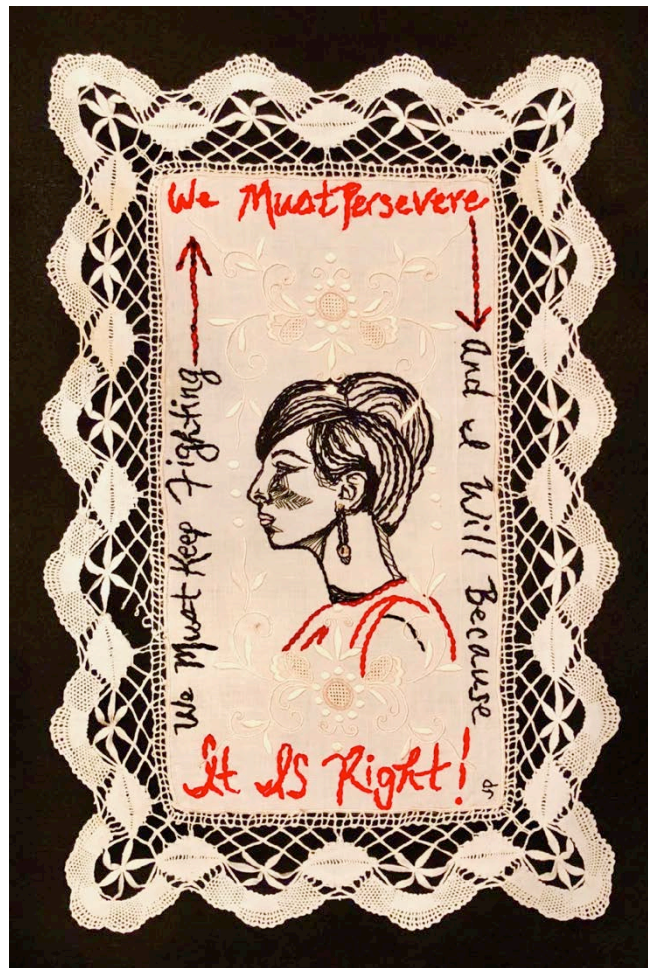


A Woman's Place is in the House and in the Senate, 2018, updated 2019
Embroidery on vintage Cotton Slip



We Have Decided, 2018

Acrylic and marker on vintage textile



We Must Persevere, 2018
Hand embroidery on vintage textile

Judy Polstra

Miami-based Judy Polstra has returned to embroidery during the last three years, attracted to its slowness and deliberateness—her meditation in a chaotic, frenetic world. Most of the women through the generations in her family were skilled at one or more of the needle arts. Her bejeweled mannequin sculptural assemblages began during a bout of insomnia in 2002 after the deaths of her mother and both grandmothers, from whom she inherited vast accumulations of costume jewelry, textiles, and other assorted objects. She engages private feelings and dreams, often with a glimpse of humor, darkness, or sarcasm, and believes that hand embroidery is no less a fine art than more traditional forms.

Miriam Schaer



Babies Are (Not) On Board, Your not having children ... , 2010 - 2019
Brown-haired baby doll, hand-embroidered garment



Babies Are (Not) On Board, Why Don't you think it is...., 2010 - 2019
Straight brown-haired white baby doll

Miriam Schaer

Miriam Schaer addresses imposed gender roles from her own “personal is political” perspective. The series of antique baby dresses, *Babies (Not) on Board: The Last Prejudice?* (2010), reflects on the criticism directed at women who refuse motherhood. White and lacy, with graceful red script lovingly embroidered on the surface, her toddler dresses seem sweet at first glance. Schaer interviewed many childless women, performed online research, and drew from her personal experience for the texts she hand embroiders on the dresses. Their words are harsh: “Your not having children was the biggest disappointment of our life” or “Childless women lack an essential humanity.” *Baby (Not) on Board: The Last Prejudice?* is an example of Schaer deploying her talents at book art—her primary medium—whereby the dresses are like the pages of a book. Perhaps the most compelling interpretation is that for a woman artist (at least this one), the (art) work she creates demands the same respect as motherhood.

Micki Spiller



Book Jacket: The Woman in the Water 2019
Embroidery on cotton, wire, books

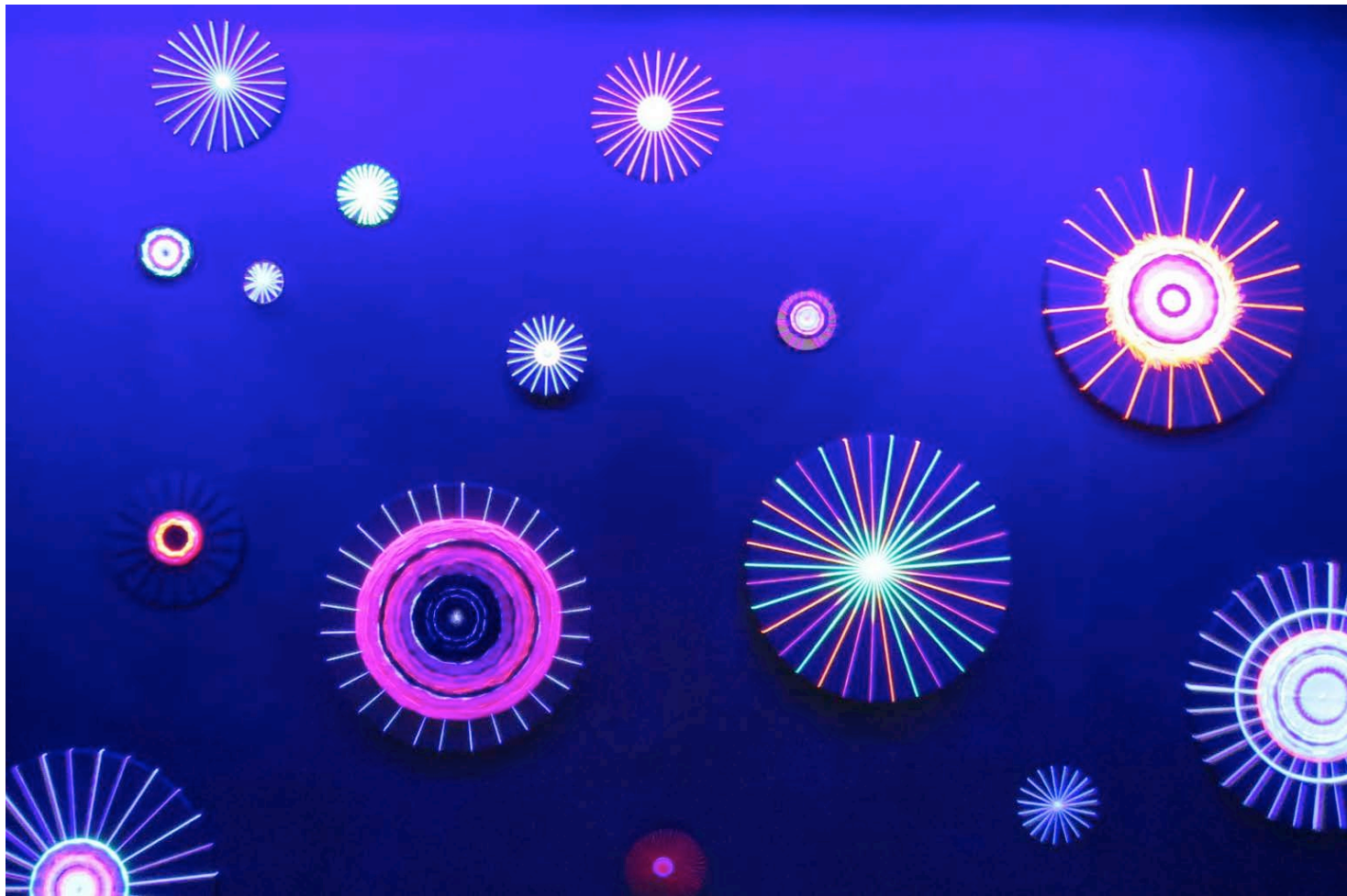


(detail)

Micki Spiller

Micki Watanabe Spiller's *The Woman in The Water* (book jacket) was made during her residency on Governors Island, NYC where she spent the summer of 2018 reading novels with the word "Water" in the titles. The first book she picked up for this "self imposed island isolation sentence" was by Paula Hawkins titled *Into The Water*, which was structurally similar to the author's earlier dark mystery, *The Girl on the Train*. Many of the works she read were macabre, with murders and suicides, and many women perished in the waters. "The water is an ominous place," concludes Spiller. In total she "consumed" twenty two books which all fit into the pockets of the book jacket she has created, which was inspired by a French diving costume from the 1800's.

Angie Wilson



Luminous Matter, 2015

Canvas, wood, yarn, thread, mason twine, acrylic paint, black light

Angie Wilson

Angie Wilson uses embroidery as a symbol of human interconnectedness. *The Universe Within* is an immersive installation of black lights, yarn, and embroidery that transforms the gallery into a constellation of stars in various states of formation and explosion. The impetus for this imagery was the time Wilson spent in radiation treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma. During each session, she slid into what looked like a space pod, a strange, cold place where she began to contemplate making work about outer space. Wilson says, "By creating public, shared space where people create together, we connect to a long history of collective hand-making. When we make and move together, we become a connected thread and weave a united vision for our local communities and our world."