

Gathering:

Community Stories Through a Global Collection



Dress

Swat, Northwest Frontier Province, Pakistan, 1980-1990
cotton, silk; plain woven, embroidered, machine-sewn
From the Opekar / Webster Collection, T94.0873

Gathering is the inaugural installation of our new Collection Gallery, featuring community stories told through our global collection.

Grounded in community participation, the installation presents over 40 pieces from the Museum's permanent collection of over 15,000 objects from around the world.

Choices of objects, responses, and retellings were gathered via open online calls for reflection, through partnerships with local organizations, and through artists' interventions.

Gathering explores themes related to migration and diaspora, the search for comfort in the domestic and familial, reclamation of ancestral traditions through contemporary artistic responses, and the relationship between textiles and the environment.

In the digital version of this guide, the colour yellow indicates where you can click to learn more!

Migration and Diaspora



Jacket

Zaanstreek, Netherlands, 1775-1780
cotton, linen, metal; plain woven, block-
printed, painted, hand-sewn
Gift of Dr. Howard Gorman, T92.0318

This type of short jacket was initially a working-class garment, and like the printed cotton that moved from being worn at home to public spaces, a version of this was adopted as fashionable day wear. Indian painted cottons, used here, were valued for their vivid colourfast dyes.

Both the inner and outer fabrics are pieced from fragments, likely previously used, and heavily mended and repaired. The inner lining is made of linen and presumably of Dutch manufacture, while the printed outer fabric is cotton chintz, painted in India for the Dutch market.

In our video, artist and writer Sarah Larock responds to the jacket [T92.0318]. As a second generation Canadian, Sarah has been working on reproducing a klederdracht or Dutch historical outfit as a way to connect with her Oma (grandmother) and learn more about her Dutch heritage. Sarah believes that garments like this one in the Museum's collection can teach so much about culture and history.

Sarah's Oma is her last living grandparent, who immigrated to Canada with her sister in the 50s from the Netherlands. The sisters worked as seamstresses in Toronto for theatre companies, until Oma met Sarah's Opa (grandfather) and they moved to a farm in rural Ontario. She taught Sarah's mother to sew, who then taught her daughter. Sewing is one of the ways Oma and Sarah connect despite language barriers, hearing loss, dementia, and distance.

In response to Sarah's correspondence, the Muzee Scheveningen in the Netherlands generously invited Sarah's mother into their archives to take a closer look at garments from the early 19th century. Sarah is interested in comparing the jacket from the Textile Museum's collection to the 1750s-1830s Dutch working women's outfits from Scheveningen.



Dress
Waziristan,
North-West Frontier Province,
Pakistan, c. 1930 – 1980
cotton, silk, metal; plain woven,
satin, embroidered, printed,
appliqued, hand-sewn
From the Fitzgerald Collection,
T00.45.169

Dress
Swat,
North-West Frontier Province,
Pakistan, late 20th century
cotton, silk; plain woven,
embroidered, machine-sewn
From the Opekar / Webster
Collection, T94.0873

The embroidered textiles of the North-West Frontier Province illustrate a complex story of trade and migration, within and outside the Province, and of intermingling with nomad peoples of Afghanistan and Central Asia, and the Punjab.

This woman's dress (left) incorporates elements from parts of North-West Frontier Province and neighbouring Afghanistan. The embroidered decorations feature phulkari-type silk floss embroidery, which is associated with Swat Valley and its neighbour Hazara, while the numerous triangular inserts of the skirt suggest contact with Indus Kohistan. It has been assembled from different pieces and made into a single garment with additional embroidery.

Some of the stitches to embellish this dress include buttonhole stitch, satin stitch, and stems stitch – long stitches which add shine to the garment. It is also decorated with coins and beads.

The finely embroidered bright pink geometric designs of this dress (right) are typical features of Swat Valley embroidery, with the use of floss silk and dense patterns where the ground cloth is scarcely visible. While local styles of embroidery still survive in some areas of North-West Frontier Province, mostly through women embroidering for their families, in many areas ready-made clothing has replaced handmade.





Rug
Afghanistan, 2007
wool; knotted pile, plain woven, fringed
Gift of Max Allen, T2008.1.108

Weaving Journeys is a digital project produced by **Afghan Women's Organization Refugee and Immigrant Services (AWO)** in partnership with the Museum. The project features six women and their stories as told through objects they selected from the Museum's collection.

The participants from AWO represent immigrants and refugee women in Canada, some of whom escaped the uncertainty and the violence faced by families for generations in Afghanistan.

These women share their stories and bring up the difficult truths about the real costs of making these rugs.

Featured are:

Shahla Masou - *An Act of Kindness* (6m 45s)

Spozhmai Wardak - *The Real Cost of Afghan Carpets* (5m 7s)

Naijla Rahee - *Education - Work - Freedom* (5m 52s)

Masuda Najafie - *The Road from Afghanistan* (7m 41s)

These videos are part of a digital project generously supported by the Canada council for the Arts Digital Now Initiative.

Global Textiles in Everyday Life

Women's art forms have often taken the form of household objects such like tablecloths, napkins, tea towels, dishcloths, table runners, trivets, and oven mitts. In our recording, textile artist and illustrator **Tania Denyer** invites listeners to look into the hidden history, stories and meaning behind a tea cosy from Ontario, Canada.

Tania asks the question — why are familiar household items, traditionally made by women with so much labour, skill, time and thought involved in their making, so often overlooked?



Baby blanket (detail)
Turkiye, 1930-1940
wool; plain woven, embroidered
From the Fitzgerald Collection, T03.55.3



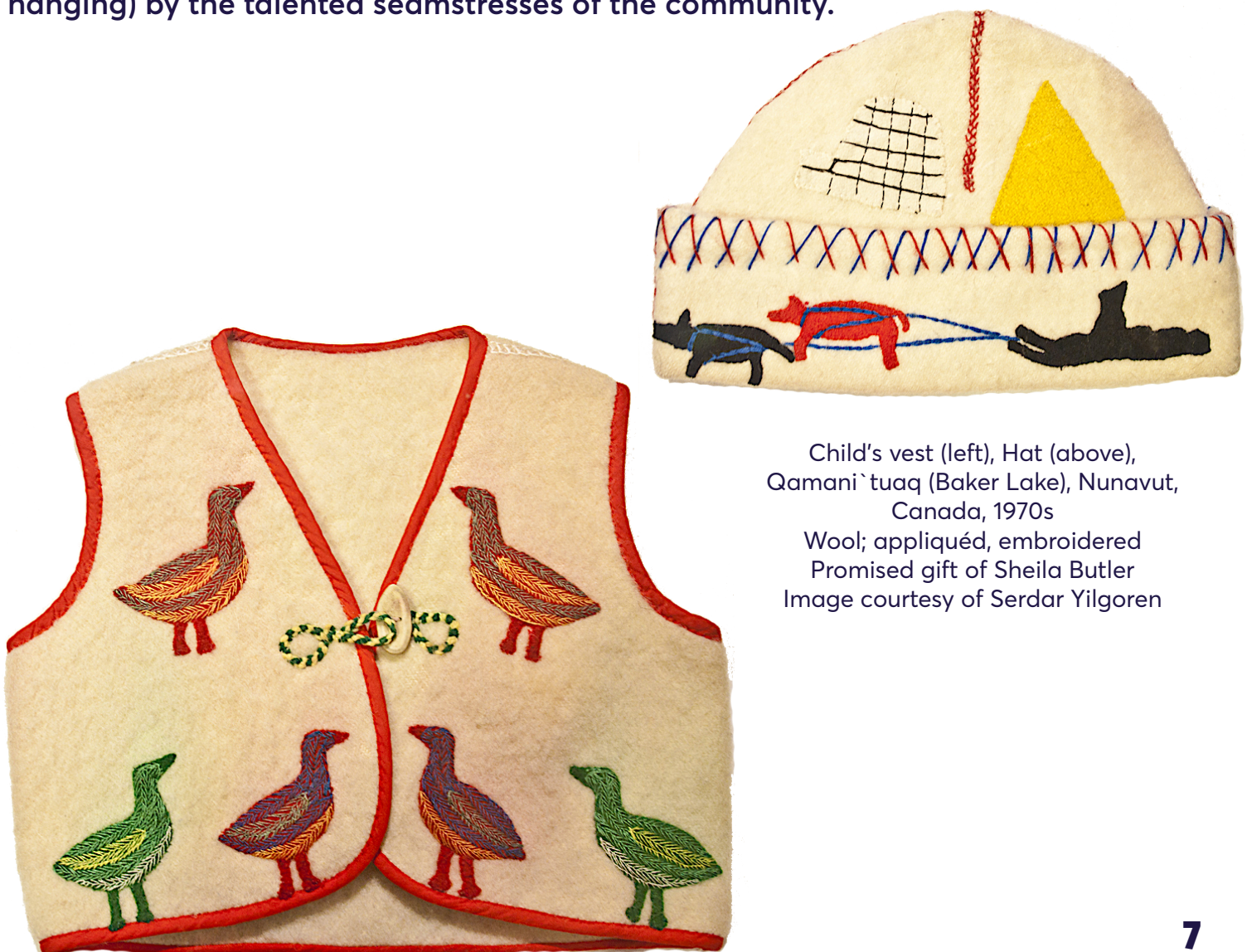
Tea cosy
Ontario, Canada, 1933
silk, satin; hand-sewn, embroidered
Gift of Joan Forsey, T93.0144

Inuit women were skilled sewers, the survival of the family in the harsh northern climate depended on having expertly crafted clothing. In the early 1950s, women's craftsmanship and design skills provided them with the opportunity to pursue arts and craft production as an economic activity.

In 1970, Jack and Sheila Butler, both artists, arrived in Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake) to develop arts and crafts in the community.

Local women soon began bringing in handsewn items in the hopes of selling them to the craft shop. The Butlers purchased some items and sold most of them locally, including these examples here. Encouraged, the women brought more, including the occasional wall hanging— stitched and appliquéd pictures made from scraps left over from the cutting of garments.

Realizing the potential of these hangings Sheila Butler ordered large quantities of felt and duffle to be shipped to Qamani'tuaq. This was the beginning of the Qamani'tuaq wall-hanging initiative, and the invention of **nivingajuliat** (wall-hanging) by the talented seamstresses of the community.



Child's vest (left), Hat (above),
Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake), Nunavut,
Canada, 1970s
Wool; appliquéd, embroidered
Promised gift of Sheila Butler
Image courtesy of Serdar Yilgoren

Ancestral Reclamation and Artist Responses

The works in this gallery explore themes of ancestral reclamation through contemporary textile practice and include artists' responses to works in the collection.

Before the Spanish conquest of Peru, clothing was commonly woven on the backstrap loom, which continues to be used today. **Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez**, a Quechua weaver and scholar from Chinchero in the southern highlands of Peru, found that many of the ancient weaving techniques she learned from her elders were in danger of disappearing. In response, Nilda founded the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (CTTC) in 1996. The CTTC supports weavers from several highland villages, who are reviving these skills and practices and producing weavings for sale through the Center.

One of the traditional techniques is **discontinuous warp** or **warp scaffolding**; it is used where the warp is discontinuous for the sake of patterning—the warp yarns meet, change direction and turn back at the edge of each colour area. Examples of ancient textiles woven with discontinuous warp exist that are almost 2000 years old.

Nilda worked with the weavers in Pitumarca to revive the discontinuous warp technique, and this example, woven in c. 2000 (below), was purchased for the Museum.



Lliclla or carrying cloth
Pitumarca, Cuzco, Peru, 2000-2002
Quechua

Wool; warp faced, discontinuous warp
Textile Museum of Canada purchase, T02.12.50



Portrait: Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez
Image: © David VanBuskirk,
www.incas.org



Patolu sari
Gujarat, India, early to mid 20th century
Silk, double ikat, warp faced
From the Opekar/Webster Collection, T94.0835



Par Nair (the artist) and her embroidered sari,
image courtesy of Serdar Yilgoren

The patolu sari is created by master textile artisans in Gujarat, India, who use the **double ikat** technique. In this process they colour both the lengthwise and widthwise threads by tie-dyeing them in intricate patterns which, when woven, form networks of stepped motifs or patterns.

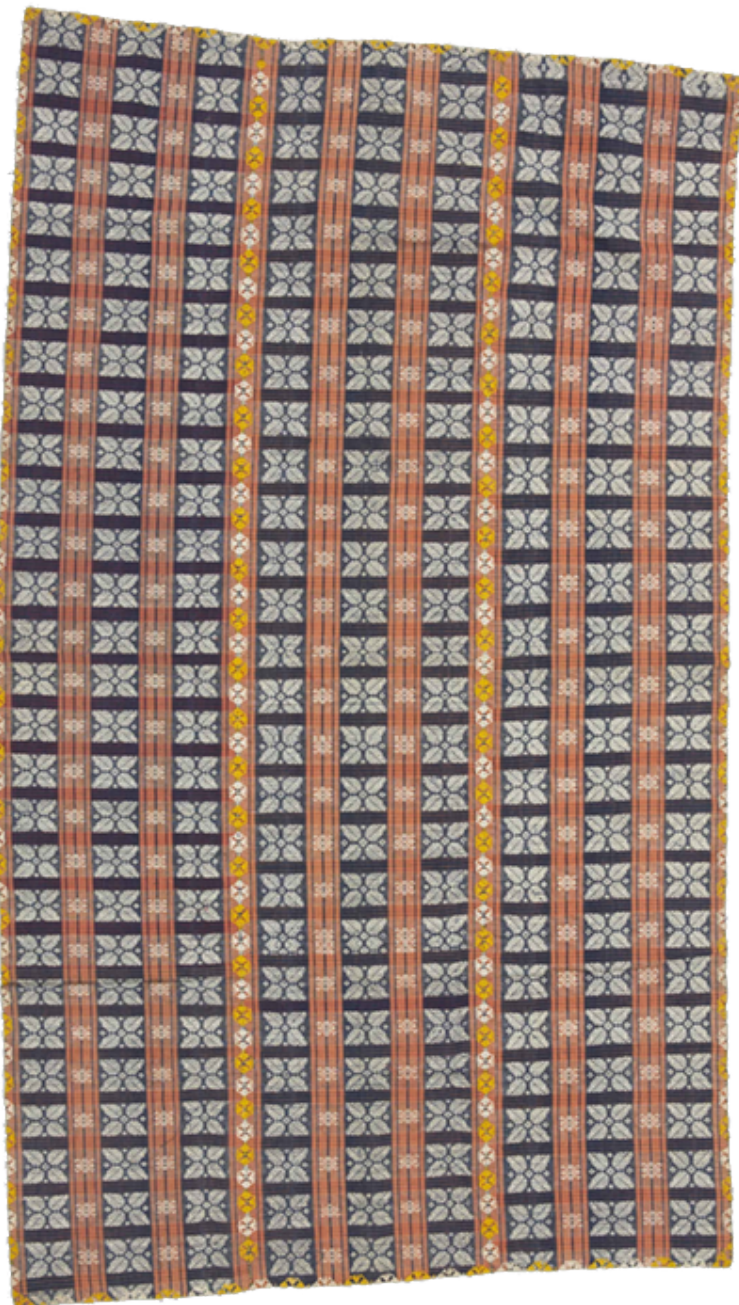
Par Nair shared the longing and homesickness to speak to her mother in India by reflecting on the sari from Gujarat, and by embroidering text-based correspondence onto a contemporary sari her mother had sent her as a gift from home.

In her response to a Tinguian blanket from the Philippines, second generation Filipinx weaver **Carol Ann Apilado**, revived an Indigenous motif of her ancestors, the Ilocano people, into a new interpretation of an ancestral work.

She spoke of textiles as worldview:

"In the Philippines textiles act as a visual representation of worldviews and belief systems. The warp and weft threads that create the fabric are representative of heaven and earth. The warp or vertical threads generally stand for things of heaven; the weft or horizontal threads represent the things of earth.

"As the weaver weaves and unites the warp and weft, the weaver acts as a mediator between heaven and earth or as an interpreter of the order of nature."



Blanket
Asia: South East Asia, Philippines,
Luzon area, Cordillera Administrative Region- Abra,
1925 – 1950
Cotton, ramie;
Plain woven, supplementary weft, brocaded,
embroidered
Gift of S. Markson to the Textile Museum of Canada,
T86.0096

Story of Modam is an artistic response by **Jung-Ah Kim** that explores a brief history of modam, a traditional Korean woolen carpet. The stop motion animation features a paper-cut puppet of Jingnyeo, the weaver girl from famous folk tales across East Asia, and a small-scale tapestry weaving on a small frame loom. The video features a kilim or modam from Korea.

Something to Hang on to by **Katy Biele** is a video (6m 3s) and an embroidered textile work. Biele responds to a yarn painting by artist Francisco Carillo (pictured on the next page), highlighting three main subjects that she personally tries to pay homage to on a daily basis—the Cosmos or the non-material world, her ancestors, in particular the women in her family tree, and Mother Earth.



Kilim or Modam [T87.0355]
Asia: East Asia, Korea, 1870 – 1930
Gift of Fred Braid



Francisco Carrillo Zamora, Untitled, 1940-1990

Huichol

Nayarit, Mexico

Wood, beeswax, wool

Gift of Penny Bateman, TS03.23.124

To make this picture, Huichol artist Francisco Carillo inlaid yarn into beeswax, which was warmed and softened by the sun. It shows a man and woman making an offering to the sea goddess. They offer a pot of chocolate, and in the centre of the picture, a blooming arrow. The sea serpent is a guardian of the sea god. On the right, three coloured squares – white, black and green – signify prayers to the gods of fire, sea and corn.

Resilience

Selections in this gallery highlight how **hand-made** textiles from around the world are intertwined with nature and the health of the planet; they explore the life cycle of a textile in relation to **sustainability, resilience** and **daily life**.

These textiles show ways that different people around the world use local **renewable** plant resources to construct clothing and containers, reuse and recycle textiles, and how textiles can be **repaired** or **mended** to prolong their use, reducing the environmental impacts of their making.



Woodland Cree
Western Canada, North America, c. 1880,
Bast fiber, paper, wool felt, glass bead,
Gift of Thomas Kalman, T81.0063a-b

The cuff above is made of a natural protein fibre, **wool**, which has been **felted** and embellished with glass beads. Similar Woodland Cree floral designs are beaded on leather as well as felt.

A paper backing has been adhered to the back of each of the cuffs. The paper reads "Campbell Bros & Wilson – Importers & Wholesale Grocers – Winnipeg", indicating that it has been repurposed from packaging originally used for a commercial food product.

Weaving Art is a digital zine created by multidisciplinary artist and (re) maker **Norwin Anne** in response to three plant fibre mats from Basilan province in the Philippines.

It explores the traditional art of **banig** or mat weaving and shares the artistic knowledge of generations of weavers from all over the Philippines through numerous photographs and text.

This multimedia project translates the stories behind these handwoven mats and their cultural significance, while showing how it has evolved in contemporary reimagining.

The art of **nakshi kantha** is a folk tradition of West Bengal, India, and Bangladesh.

Used dhotis (men's sarongs) and saris are cut and pieced together in layers and quilted with simple lines of running stitches.

Motifs are **embroidered** using coloured threads from the borders of old saris, transforming the cloth into the richly decorated kantha. They were used as bedcovers, cradle cloths, ceremonial seating mats for honoured guests and many other household uses.

The market for nakshi kanthas has increased since the 1970s, and as development organizations have supported women's craft in retail contexts, designs have also changed in response to the global market and commercial interests.



Nakshi kantha or bed cover (detail)
Made by Srimirithi (Mrs.)Lokhibala Dashi
West Bengal, India,
1920-1960 (early to mid 20th century)
Cotton; embroidered, plain woven
From the Fitzgerald Collection, T04.24.152

The centre of this kantha features an eight-petaled lotus and a Mandala.

Embroidered motifs of peacocks and horses and the swirling image (shostir chino) evoke the perpetual turning of the universe.



Mino-boshi or rain hat
Shonai area, Tohoku District, Honshu Island, Japan, 1930-1950
Rice straw, bark, bast fibre thread, seaweed; stitched and tied
From the Opekar/Webster Collection, T94.0476

In Japan, renewable plant resources from local environments have been used since ancient times to make clothing, and a variety of materials such as bamboo, rushes and plant fibres were used to fashion hats for protection from the sun, snow and rain. This example is made of rice straw, bark and seaweed, stitched tightly together with hand-spun bast fibre thread. Some threads, dyed with indigo, and persimmon juice, are stitched into a decorative pattern. The shape is reminiscent of warrior's kabuto (helmet), the lower portion corresponds to the shikoro of a samurai helmet, and the flowing sweep of the straw covers the neck and shelters the shoulders.

This hat afforded practical and lightweight protection from the cold, rain and snow. In the past they were worn throughout Japan but during the 20th century only by workers in the mountains, hunters and woodcutters in areas of deep snow.

Florence Ryder (1935-2005) was born on the Standing Buffalo Reserve, northeast of Regina in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley, and learned to hook rugs from her mother when she was 10 years old.

The symmetrical designs that Ryder used in her rugs were geometric patterns that originated from her Sioux ancestors. Historically, there was a rich and well-established Sioux tradition of painted designs and dyed quillwork used to decorate tipis, animal hides, weapons, and clothing, which were later embellished with beads introduced by the early settlers.

This design knowledge was lost over time, and in an effort to revive and support the traditional arts of the area where Ryder lived, the Sioux Handcraft Cooperative was formed in 1967 and the women of the cooperative began to hook rugs based on Sioux designs.

Florence Ryder initially hooked European-style floral designs, but later was encouraged to incorporate Sioux designs in her rugs. She worked with readily accessible materials – strips of fabric cut from old clothing were used to hook the pattern. She did not remain long with the cooperative, but returned to making rugs on her own.

For over 40 years, Ryder created rugs with unique colour combinations and distinctive bold motifs, and continued to incorporate geometric designs that were adapted from the traditions of her Sioux heritage.



Florence Ryder
Untitled, c. 1980
Standing Buffalo Reserve, Saskatchewan
Burlap, wool, cotton; hooked
Gift of Max Allen

Activity: Create your own Yarn Painting!



Francisco Carrillo Zamora
Untitled (detail), 1940-1990
Huichol
Nayarit, Mexico
wood, beeswax, wool
Gift of Penny Bateman, TS03.23.124



You Will Need:

- **Cardboard (base)**
- **Liquid Glue**
- **Pencil**
- **Scissors**
- **Yarn** (scraps are great!)

Inspired by Francisco Carrillo Zamora's **yarn painting** (above), create your own colourful artwork!



- Create a pencil sketch on your cardboard background. This can be anything you like! We suggest trying a landscape scene if you're not sure where to start.
- Choose yarn colours for each section of your sketch, snip shorter pieces of the yarn, and try placing them on different parts of the image. This is how you'll choose which colour yarn goes in each place!
- Spread liquid glue onto the cardboard, and place pieces of yarn, focusing on one section at a time. Try making interesting patterns with **stripes** or **swirls** of yarn!

Definitions & Important Terms

Ancestry: The familial or ethnic origin of many generations

Artist Response: A piece of art inspired by another artwork

Baníg: A traditional, Filipino hand-woven mat. These are very common, and they are used as sleeping or floor mats. Baníg are made from local plants such as palm leaves (buri), pandanus, or reed leaves.

Dhoti: A type of sarong usually worn by men during festivals in India.

Diaspora: The dispersion of people from their original homeland or country, to another part of the world.

Double-ikat: A technique in which the artist tie-dyes both the vertical and horizontal threads (warp and weft) of their weaving, to create a pattern.

Embroidery: The use of a needle and thread to decorate a piece of fabric

Felt: A fabric created by fusing fibres (usually wool) together, using heat, friction, and other chemical processes.

Kantha: Means “patched cloth”; refers to a type of embroidery native to Bangladesh and East-India, in which the artist layers old saris and attaches them with a running-stitch. Kantha can also refer to the finished, quilted cloth.

Migration: Moving from one place to another. Migration usually refers to travelling a long distance to live somewhere else.

Modam: A traditional, flat-woven Korean carpet from Joseon dynasty period (1392-1910). Modams are woven with wool and cotton threads (definition from *The Story of Modam*, Jung-Ah Kim).

Sari: (Saree) means “strip of cloth” in Sanskrit. A type of robe made by wrapping a piece of cloth (up to 8m long!) around the body. Typically worn by women from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

Quilting: Attaching fabrics together to make a larger textile, usually a blanket or wallhanging.

Reclamation: A personal journey to connect with familial lineage. In our exhibition this refers to learning traditional textile techniques practiced by ancestors.

Renewable: A natural resource which can be replenished faster than it is used. For example, oil is a limited resource which cannot be replaced, whereas crops can be re-planted, making them renewable.

Resilience: The ability to adjust, adapt, and overcome challenges.

Sustainability: Leaving something behind for the next generation to use, especially in the case of natural resources.

Weaving: Creating a fabric by interlacing two sets of threads, called warp and weft.

Zine: The abbreviation of 'magazine'; An independently produced or homemade publication, usually shorter in length than a novella.

Learn More:



In Our Library:

Saris of India : Madhya Pradesh, general editor, Martand Singh; written & edited by Rta Kapur Chishti & Amba Sanyal.

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