

UNARCHIVING WOVEN HISTORIES: A COLLECTION OF STORIES AND QUILTS SQUARES

Made collectively by participants at the American Folk Art Museum's
Self-Taught Genius Gallery and facilitated by Natalia Nakazawa



SHAHNAZ KHAN

I used fabric scraps from my job at the musical Wicked. I work full time doing repairs and alterations on the costumes, and subsequently these are the textiles that shape my everyday life.

I wanted the theme of my block to be movement as related to migration. I have a long personal history of migration through many generations of my family. The circles are representative of our world (the globe) and the cyclical nature of life & migration. The lines symbolize the constant motion of migration over long and short distances.

My Migration History:

I was born in England and emigrated to Australia and then America.

As a child, my father fled with his family from India to Pakistan during partition. As an adult he emigrated to England and then The USA.

My step Mother is the American daughter of Japanese immigrants.

My mother's ancestors were part of the Greek diaspora, my grandfather's family settling in Russia, and repatriating to Greece. My mother was born in Greece, emigrated to England, then Australia.

My Step Father's family are Parsi Indian - Persians who settled in India. His parents emigrated to England, where he was born. As an adult he emigrated with my mother to Australia.



DEBIE MORRIS

My quilt square began with a piece of fabric from my adolescence. Printed with childhood toys, this fabric came from a halter top I sewed and wore for most of my teen years. It reminds me of the naivety of my youth. This is combined with a map printed cotton, from a blouse I purchased on my first trip abroad to London.

The cotton Hawaiian print links to my trips to Hawaii with my husband and daughter and how as tourists, we only see the western myth of the islands. The red silk links to my work in the apparel industry throughout the 1980's.

The rough hewn wool and linens are more contemporary works I have done using natural dyes, hand spinning wool and hand weaving cloth.

My journey has taken me from finely woven manufactured fabrics to the exploration of centuries old traditional techniques of handmade textiles.



ELSIE ROGADOR

The Philippines, where I came from, is known for its embroidery products, either by hand or by machine as applied to garments and in other decorative details.

In our Philippine high schools we are taught the basic embroidery stitches. So, as a way of sharing something that we feel proud of anywhere we go/live, or if we give something to friends especially those outside of the country, the embroidered textiles are part of it or those that are applied in table napkins, tablecloths, handkerchiefs and other centerpieces.



DEANNA LEE

My quilt square is primarily composed of fabric commercially printed with large-scale images of courtesans from ukiyo-e woodblock prints by the Edo-period artist, Kitagawa Utamaro.

From 1997 to 2001, I was one of two caretakers of the Asian Art collection in the Art Institute of Chicago, which houses an excellent collection of Japanese prints. An intern in the department bought this fabric and made smocks for me and my colleague, based on the more soberly colored smocks that we usually wore at work, as a surprise.

The Japonisme smocks, with their loud pattern of female figures, strongly resembled outré pajamas, and after I left the job, I wore the smock as a light robe at home for many years, until the fabric tore.

Given the busyness of the fabric, I chose to embellish my quilt square with just a white button and a large pink sequin (which the scanner rendered as a black dot).



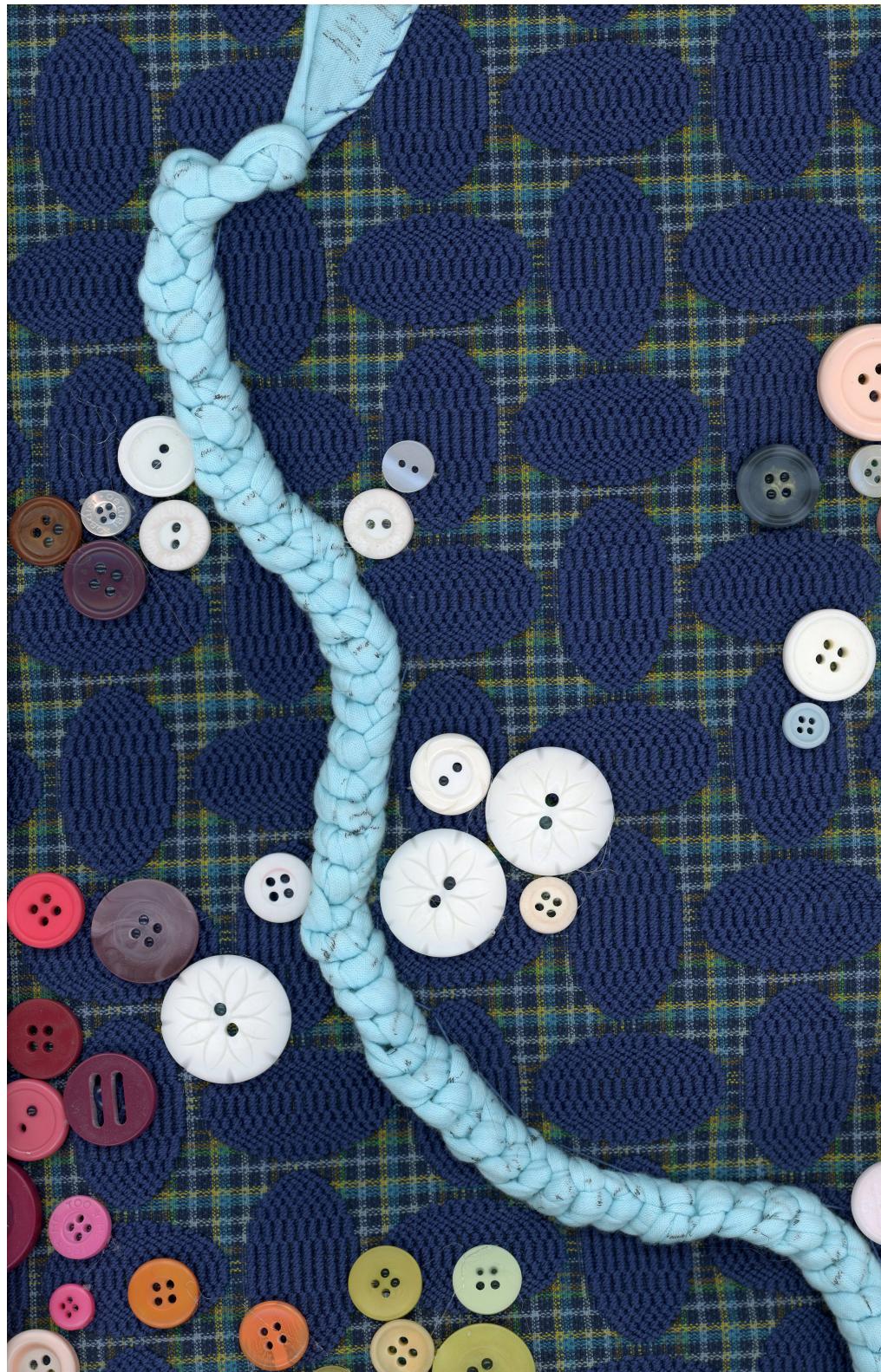
JULIA JUSTO

I wanted to honor some of my friends that came to America to better their lives.

They brought their ideas, their rich culture and their entrepreneurial spirit.

They give back, they enrich our society and make America strong.

I can't mention their names because they are undocumented.



LAURREL PARRISH

My square is made from fabrics used in the Broadway show Wicked, where I have worked for 15 years.

It represents my personal migration through work and travel. The circular vine has motifs representing the places I've lived: a pink California poppy, the yellow daffodils that are all over Seattle in the spring, a silvery-blue Persian paisley, and finally a shiny Broadway star.

Using these fabrics that have been such a part of my life for so long really made me reflect upon this journey and how all these places have led me to where I am today.



MOLLY DILWORTH

My fabric is from 2 women I love who lost their husbands this year. The purple silk is from my mom's social worker office wear circa 1984, the green linen is leftover from a dress my friend Anna made while visiting her mom in Moscow.

The shapes in the green are the negative spaces left from tamarind leaf sculptures I made with the fabric. I got fascinated with the tamarind when I grew plants from the seeds in the paste, and noticed the leaves open and close with the rising and setting sun.

Later I found out the tree is a water-hungry invasive species in the US, a settler colonial in plant form.



CRISTINA FERRIGNO

I was really inspired by the fabric and the materials. I've always been interested in the stars, the constellations and the moon.

The story on my square is about nature, celestial wonder and looking upward.



SARAH MARGOLIS-PINEO

Selena and I met in kindergarten at Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Elementary in Portland, Maine. At age 5, she was bossy and a little strange. Her parents raised her vegetarian -- a highly suspicious thing in Maine in the 1980s. Today, she loves to tell this story about how she was the only person I didn't invite to my birthday party out of our entire class. I don't remember this trauma as clearly as she does; even so, I blame my parents for that particular blunder. And, I've apologized, a lot.

We became good friends -- inseparable friends -- in high school. Together, we played field hockey, discovered the culinary delight of pickle and cheddar cheese sandwiches, and got into all the mischief that teenagers tend to get into, (in our case: hanging out in the Old Port like a small gang of street toughs and smoking way too much weed). We went off to separate colleges and, in our 20s, lived on separate coasts. Selena and her partner Colin, a chef, settled in Brooklyn. Every time I would visit their beautiful Crown Heights loft, I would lament about how I should just quit my west coast job and life and move here too. They would say: YES, just do it already! But, I never pulled the trigger.

Two summers ago, Selena and Colin got married in Portland. For their reception, I hand dyed and batiked indigo textile to make flags and pennants -- a selection of that textile is included here. They spent their honeymoon in Paris, where Selena haggled with a street vendor for three small pieces of vintage Japanese indigo ikat, which she gave to me when she got home. I love these textiles -- particularly where they show evidence of their age and use. One of the sections incorporated here is perforated with holes -- an example of beautifully spontaneous surface design.

In July of last year, Selena announced that she was pregnant, and I immediately began applying for jobs in New York. By October, I was living in Brooklyn and, in January, Selena and Colin welcomed Dahlov, (named for renowned Maine painter Dahlov Ipcar), who I have found to be the most marvelous tiny human of all time. I created this quilt square thinking of her -- my niece, who, even before she was born, totally changed my life.



ANNA FLINCHBAUGH

Rupture, fissure, suture.

When knowledge of the past is lost in the tumult of movement and migration, it can be comforting to fill the gaps with stories.

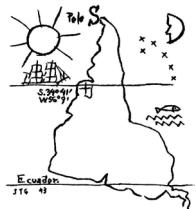
To self-mythologize, to imagine ourselves as descendants of an ancestor more perfect than we could hope to be (but we can be forgiven our fall from grace, after all, we were cast out).
Disappointed millionaires, displaced princesses.

Lately, I've been investigating these patchwork constructions in my own sense of history. I'm fascinated by the way in which an act of healing may also be an act of violence.



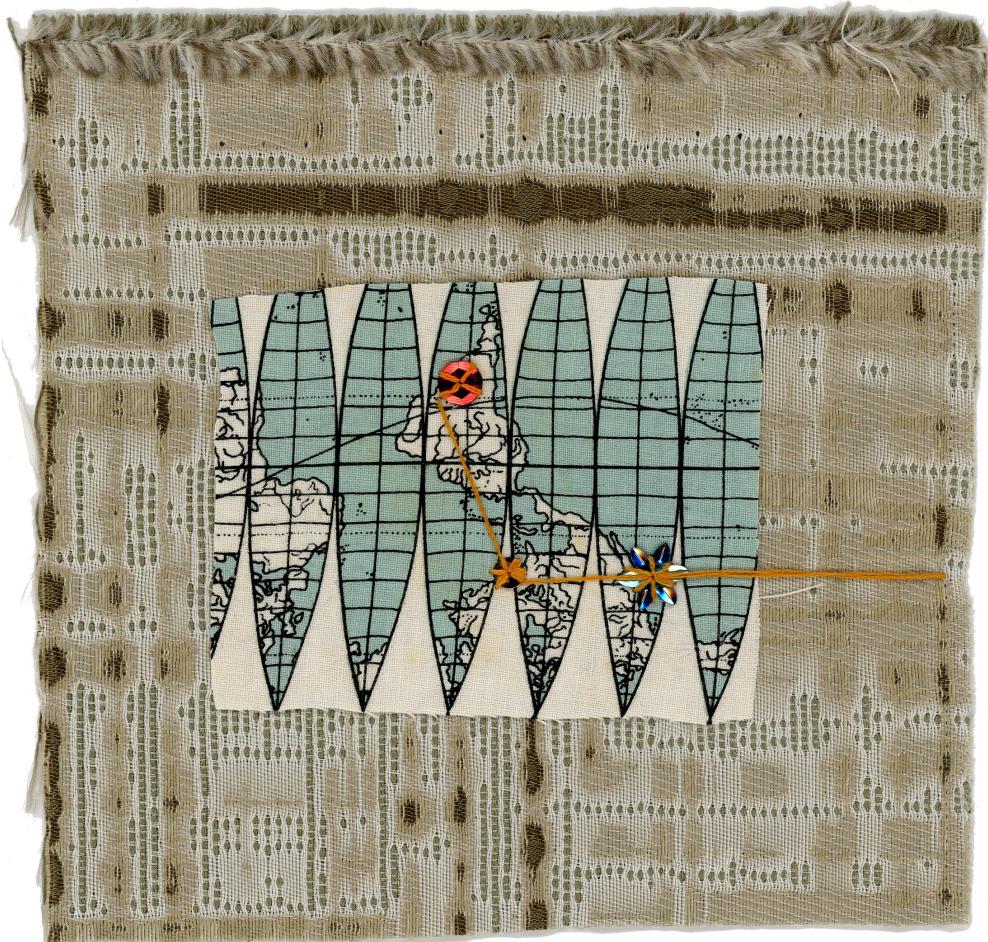
NATALIA NAKAZAWA

When I think of the map - I always remember Joaquin Torres García's incisive ink drawing, *América Invertida*, which produced a playful visual counter narrative to the dominant one of...



..."South" America being below or beneath "North" America and Europe - and the resulting notion that it was somehow inferior. This drawing is also an example of *constructive universalism* - a philosophic approach to art making that attempted to bring together European and indigenous forms of abstraction.

While thinking through my own quilt square I was taken by this world map fabric (from Debie Morris) and quickly traced out my own families' path of migration across the Earth. There is always something so unknowable about maps, that at once they feel ungraspably huge and also microscopic.



I think the backing fabric looks like a stain or an organic circuit board....or maybe a heat scan of an ant colony. I enjoy placing something that appears "knowable" over something that is so random looking. Yet, because they are both woven textiles, there is always ancient knowledge, patterns, and structure ordering it all.



Natalia Nakazawa is a Queens-based artist working across multiple disciplines, including painting, textiles, and social practice. In conjunction with *Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts*, Natalia presented *Unarchiving Woven Histories*, an artist talk, exhibition walk-through, and collaborative quilt-making workshop that explored the stories embedded in everyday materials and things.

This zine includes stories and completed quilt squares created by participants with materials brought to the workshop for their history and personal significance. It exists as a printed publication and online as part of the American Folk Art Museum archive.

Many thanks to Sarah Margoli-Pineo, Assistant Curator, for her true collaborative spirit in making this workshop and presentation possible.

Additional thanks to the American Folk Art Museum's Self-Taught Genius Gallery for hosting and to the staff members: Cristina Marcelo, Alison Gilbert, and Elizabeth Wallace, who made true workshop magic happen.

THANK YOU!!!