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*A Stitch Between*

Erin Bundock

Undergraduate Honors Thesis

Studio Art

May 17, 2020



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## Abstract

As an artist I am compelled to tell stories about intimate moments, both tender and tense. Over the past year, the exhibition, *A Stitch Between*, has developed into a meditation on relationships with the self and others. This project includes a series of three portraits and a grouping of felt objects. These were created through a variety of processes, including printing, drawing, painting, and sewing. This formal combination mirrors the complexity of relationships surrounding sexuality and reproductive health that is the undercurrent of the work. Utilizing fiber's associations with femininity and its ties to feminine resistance, *A Stitch Between* examines moments that are sites for growth and celebration.

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## INTRODUCTION

Though I had worked with different types of fiber art when I was younger, I first pursued fiber as a formal medium in the summer of 2019. I developed an interest in embroidered patches as a form of self-portraiture in fashion. Historically, they had ties to organizations or political movements and found their rise to fashion during the 1970s. The patches were part of a trend of ‘do it yourself’ (DIY) fashioning which included hand painted and embellished elements of clothing. The 2017 exhibition *Counter-Couture: Handmade Fashion in an American Counterculture* at the Museum of Art and Design featured garments, accessories, and jewelry to represent the goals of counterculture in that era. The vision was that of a new “reality” with values that included “ideas of love and community that deviated from the values of the traditional nuclear family” (“MAD Spotlights”). Politically oriented, handmade fashion continues today, an example being the Pussyhat Project that started in November of 2016. These knitted hats were created to protest misogynist and racist rhetoric used in the 2016 state and federal election races (“The Pussyhat Story”).

In the late summer of 2019, when I was beginning to generate visual ideas for the work, a series of stringent anti-abortion laws were passing in the South and Midwest. By the end of the year, “nearly half of the 58 new abortion restrictions enacted in 2019 would ban all, most, or some abortions” (Nash et al.). These regressive policies echoed the politics that DIY fashion in the 1970s spoke out against. At the same time, I had just experienced some unsettling and potentially dangerous health complications due to hormonal birth control. These experiences, paired with the political climate, contributed

to my interest in sexual and reproductive health as both cultural and personal issues.

While my artistic approach to these issues is quite subtle compared to that of the Pussyhat movement, I work to demonstrate value in the moments of quiet intimacy in *A Stitch Between*.

Though my interest in fiber started by looking at embroidered patches and self-fashioning, my work transformed as I read more about the history of fiber in the art world. The trend of personalized clothing and hippie self-fashioning in the 1960s and 1970s was only one aspect of a growing societal interest in fiber. A macramé craze had also erupted and the Bicentennial provoked a renewed curiosity in folk art. Feminists began to appropriate and reimagine women's craft traditions (Auther 25). All these factors were a backdrop for the growing use of fiber in the art world in the 1970s.

As a frame for the work included in *A Stitch Between* I will present the feminist approach to fiber in the 1970s, the movement's achievements, and the critique of the approach. Next, I will explain my process and how it has changed my approach to both medium and concept over the course of the year. Following this, I will reflect on each piece in the exhibition, discussing both the successes and questions left unanswered in the work. Finally, I will explore avenues for continuing growth beyond the work in *A Stitch Between*.

## BACKGROUND

Feminist artists of the early 1970s, such as Faith Ringgold and Harmony Hammond, inspired a critique of the distinction between art and craft by using materials of traditional

women's crafts. Their work led to a larger systemic analysis by feminists on how women were historically situated within this hierarchy of art and craft. They found that this classification system played a fundamental role in our "definition of art, aesthetic experience, and the hierarchy of genres since at least the eighteenth century" (Auther 98). The second finding of this feminist analysis was that this divide, in part, was borne of and maintained by societally defined hierarchies of race and gender. In Terry Smith's delineation of craft, materials are considered "sacred," the composition is primarily concerned with surface, a viewer's experience is merely haptic, and its purpose is to be "an object of satisfying usefulness" (Auther xviii). This outline mirrors stereotypes and boundaries traditionally assigned to femininity. These stereotypes portray women as sacred or pure, lacking intellectual depth, something to touch, and as objects meant for a particular purpose.

Lastly, feminists identified this opposition of art to craft as the root of other dichotomies affecting how women's art was viewed. These dichotomies fall along the lines of the "genius artist" or the "anonymous maker." The "genius artist" creates intellectual, reflective, non-utilitarian, and creative art objects. The "anonymous maker" produces non-intellectual, detail-oriented craftwork that falls into a line of "serial objects" (Auther 98). Feminists argued that these classifications were not outlined on the basis of objective art qualities but instead heavily influenced by societal gender bias, marginalized due to their association with femininity. Thus, feminist artists of the 1970s were drawn to traditional women's art forms, such as fiber, as a site to question aesthetic boundaries as well as boundaries surrounding femininity.

While there were many women who created important works during this era, Faith Ringgold's works are the most closely related to my own art. Creating 'women's art' for Ringgold was a way for her work to be "free from the restrictive conventions and attitudes of the mainstream art world," actively avoiding the "male, white mainstream" approach to art (Auther 100). She regards women quilters as the "original artists" who were making art without associating with the art world. In 1975, Ringgold stated that, "Sewing has been traditionally what all women in all cultures have done ... Feminist art is soft art, lightweight art, sewing art. This is the contribution women have made that is uniquely theirs" (Auther 105). By the 1980s, she began making a series of narrative quilts. These were a combination of painting, quilted fabric, and sometimes text. In one of her most famous works, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?* (Figure 1), she rewrites the story of Aunt Jemima, a commercialized black female figure, granting her new agency and voice within American culture. This mirrored Ringgold's goal of exposing the discrimination African American women artists faced when being denied access to exhibit their work. In her combination of painting and quilting, she maintained her connection to the women who inspired her while presenting the traditional form of the quilt within the framework of 'high art'.

Ringgold's view of women quilters as the "original artists" illustrates a mentality that there exists an alternative art history to that of the male-dominated mainstream art history. However, there was also concern surrounding this tactic of separation. Historian Linda Nochlin questioned whether quilts were evidence of an art form that evolved separately from the male-dominated mainstream, or if they were just decorative "tokens of women's traditional ability to triumph over adversity" (Auther 102). The question then



became how to disrupt the equation of women with craft if attempts to do so utilized the same association. However, during this same time period, curators and collectors actively tried to rid quilts of their associations of femininity and race in order to label them as ‘legitimate’ works of art. With this in mind, Ringgold, along with artists like Miriam Shapiro, fought against this trend, demanding that quilts and fiber works be accepted into the art world along with their associations of gender and race.

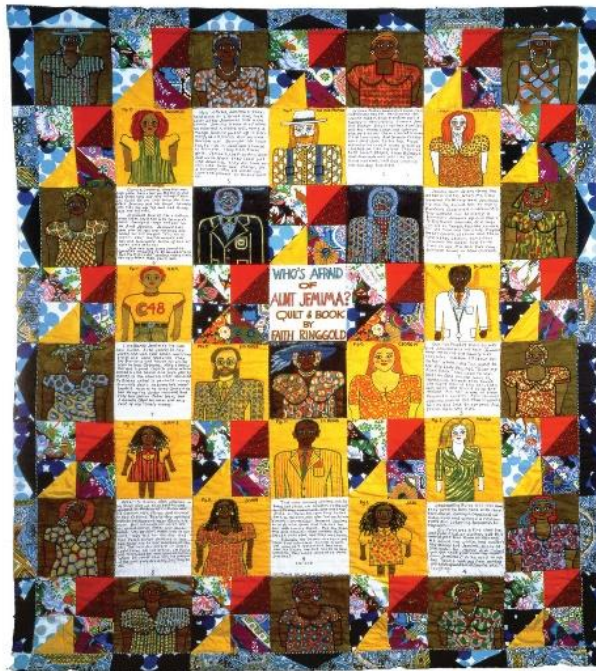


Figure 1. *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?*, 1983, acrylic on canvas, dyed, painted, and pieced fabric, 90 x 80 in.

In her book, *String Felt Thread*, Elissa Auther outlines how there was often not enough give and take between the true craftswomen and those who imitated their work in order to inject it into the world of ‘high art’. While this appropriation did make these traditional practices more relevant and accessible within the art world, the women practicing these traditional arts were either not involved or were overshadowed. This resulted in tension between women with differing intentions regarding quilts or other

traditional art forms. It also called into question whether or not this attempt to “elevate” traditional forms was purely an act of cultural erasure, or if there were other measures of value in this pursuit (Auther 133). A positive outcome of this controversial approach was the increased visibility and appreciation of the quilt as creative women’s history. This contributed to a revitalization of the practice which had been slowly dying out in America. The attention also resulted in projects that presented quilts as important cultural and artistic forms in American history. Scholars and quilt historians like Patricia Mainardi, who offered the perspective of traditional quilt culture, were also important in the reassessment of the art and craft divide in art history.

A major feminist success of the 1970s was fiber’s legitimization as a medium within the art world. By maintaining its socio-cultural ties to femininity, the legitimization of fiber also validated feminine experiences. However, a third critique of feminism in the 1970s was that it lacked intersectionality. One of the trappings of equating a category of ‘feminine art’ with womanhood is that it implies a ‘universal feminine experience’. This critique is especially relevant now, as there is a broader understanding that femininity and womanhood are not fixed categories. Today’s approach to fiber as a material continues some of the feminist concerns regarding “gender, race, and personal experience,” but expands upon it to talk about cross-sections of “hybridity, memory, sexual identity, loss, tradition,” to name a few (Auther 163). This widespread use of fiber in the contemporary art world is due in part to the feminist art of the 1970s. Other factors include a growing interest in installation art and a shift in curatorial patterns to include a more international approach to fiber art traditions.

I considered these critiques of 1970s feminist art throughout the creation of *A Stitch Between*. I agree that reinforcing associations of women with craft is both a problem and a solution. However, I am aligned with Ringgold's stance, along with many contemporary artists, that fiber should continue to be accepted as a valid art medium with all its associations intact. This is already being done in the contemporary art world by artists like Hu Xiaoyuan, kimssooja, Bisa Butler, and Wylie Garcia. Since the 1970s, fiber art has maintained connections to past forms, but has expanded beyond attempts to 'elevate' traditional forms like the quilt. Examples include Anne Wilson's 2002 *Topologies* and Do-Hu Suh's series of hanging fabric 'homes'. Fiber is no longer limited to associations with 'women's work'. Artists also use fiber's intersectional associations with race, immigration, and art forms from a multitude of ethnic minorities. Jeffrey Gibson utilizes this intersectionality in his fiber-based works to hold conversations about race and sexuality.

My work is situated in this contemporary practice by referencing the traditional forms of quilting and embroidery through formal creative decisions while largely departing from them. In doing so, my goal is to both maintain ties to and expand upon the creative history and association with feminine resistance. Through this approach, my hope is that I have avoided the issue of culturally erasing those who continue to create quilts and embroidery in their traditional manner. I believe my multi-media approach also reflects the contemporary lens of fiber being used to discuss a wide range of topics. My approach to fiber is one that primarily considers its association with femininity, but also its associations with intimacy, connection, and tactile qualities.

I do not believe in any type of ‘universal experience’ of femininity, and as such my work doesn’t address all experiences. My work is an examination of one section of experience; however, my hope is that these pieces still resonate across gendered lines. *A Stitch Between* explores femininity’s socio-cultural ties to biological processes of menstruation and reproduction, examining how expectations of ‘womanhood’ impact relationships. Throughout the next section of this paper, I will explain my process and how this changed the intention of my work over the course of the year.

## PROCESS

### **Inspirations**

When I began work for *A Stitch Between*, I thought that I would be making pieces more explicitly linked to sexual and reproductive issues. However, as I worked on developing drawings, my intention shifted towards creating artworks that could be sites of quiet contemplation. I had asked myself how I could communicate ideas of sexual and reproductive health and found that my work became stronger when I used those topics to pose questions about relationships. What effects do the lack of communication surrounding health and sexuality have on the relationship between body and self? What does it mean to have a supportive partner? How do maternal relationships affect conversations surrounding topics like menstruation, sex, or abortion? These were only a few of the questions I considered as I made my work.

A vital portion of my process was drawing. In the beginning, I primarily focused on the narrative nature of the figures and the spaces they inhabited. While generating these compositions, the history of large-scale tapestries inspired me. Architect Le Corbusier

likened tapestries to murals which he defined as “a painting of large size, with an architectural potential” (Thomas 106). He goes on to describe how tapestries are unique in that they could easily be transported from home to home. I wanted to create images that structurally fit into the idea of a transportable mural for the home. Faith Ringgold similarly viewed the portability of her work as important to its social relevance (Auther 106). I was also struck by William Morris’ choice to maintain “the abandonment of perspective effects” in his tapestries (Thomas 165). It reminded me of the figures in embroidered Slovak wall-hangings that had been passed down on my mother’s side of the family (Figure 2). I was drawn to their simple color blocking and flatness which inspired elements of my own drawn figures. Like Morris, I use flatness to maintain ties to a visual history.



Figure 2. Embroidered Slovak figures and horse drawn wagon, embroidery floss on fabric, 9 x 22.5 inches. Photographed by Elizabeth Bundock in 2020.

Adopting aspects of the visual language used in tapestry and traditional fiber art was important in my process as it also had ties to how fiber art came to be categorized as ‘women’s work’. In a study on domestic art, Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker highlighted how up until the Renaissance, “most of the professional needleworkers were

men, and there were no rigid divisions ‘between art with a paint or a stone and art media made with thread or fabric’” (Torsney 19). Needlework came to be recognized as women’s work when women entered into the needlework market, triggering an exodus of male workers. This transition of needlework into a ‘frivolous’ and feminine activity is an important factor in fiber art being viewed as separate from high art until well into the 1970s.

The history of embroidery and quilting was also vital to my process. Embroidery was viewed as a way to keep women busy at home and out of the public sphere. However, the subtle ways in which it subverted often went unnoticed. In a social setting where they were deprived of making decisions, quilting and embroidery became a way for these women to exercise control and assert their identity. Robin Morgan’s poem *Piercing* draws parallels between the creation of a patchwork quilt and the creation of an assembled self, thus restoring a sense of power and authority to the creator of the quilt (Torsney 39). Each quilt was a self-portrait, indicated by a favorite stitch, pattern, or signature.

### **Discoveries**

Through this, I realized that mark making needed to play a larger role in the work. Unlike quilting or tapestry, the stitch in embroidery pieces works in tandem with the underlying fabric. Since the stitching doesn’t cover the entire surface of the fabric, the surface beneath the stitches plays an active role in the overall composition (Thomas 107). I began to think of what dense embroidery would look like if the stitches had more breathing room between them, as if they stretched as the scale of the fabric expanded.

When I translated that notion into my drawings, I developed a mark that mimicked a single running stitch. I wanted to create something that reflected a hand stitch which could be recognizable across all the pieces, whether it was drawn, printed, or sewn (Figure 3). Though the mark's connection to a stitch was stronger on fabric, it remained separate from a stitch when it was drawn or printed. In a sense, this mark became my 'signature' in the same way women had used favorite stitches as signatures in their works. I repeated this mark to create fields of dashes which I would build up to convey transparency in my work.

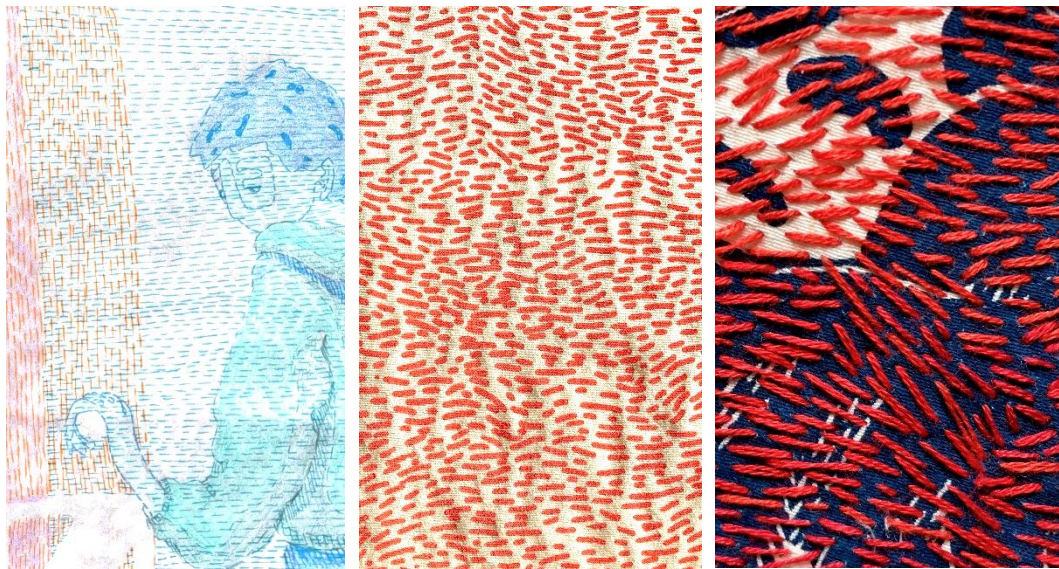


Figure 3. Details of drawn, printed, and sewn versions of similar mark quality, 2019 to 2020, marker, silkscreen ink, and embroidery floss.

As I continued to draw, I began to think of my drawings as miniature versions of larger fabric pieces. I wondered what it meant to evoke fabric on paper, and how translating those drawings back into fabric would change the image once again. I did a few one-to-one scale translations of drawings to fabric to understand how my shapes would change. I quickly discovered that obtaining gentle, curving lines was nearly

impossible with cotton fabric, but could be cut out easily from felt. Throughout the year, my understanding of this translation allowed me to make deliberate decisions surrounding the hardness or softness of edge in my images. In my drawings, I made the shift to drawing them as if they had been pieced together with the stitches sitting on top instead of hidden within the seams as they would be in a traditional piecing method. Inspired by Robin Morgan's Poem *Piercing*, I knew that I wanted certain aspects of the construction to be as apparent as possible to communicate the figures as assembled selves.

My process grew as I began with exploring the breadth of tactile resources. I bought varying sizes and types of thread or yarn to sew through differing surfaces. I quickly found out that canvas was unforgiving of sewing mistakes, leaving holes behind with one misstep of the needle. Felt was a receptive surface if I wanted to sew with a thicker thread for certain details. I visited Goodwill often, keeping my eye out for the right color bedsheet to use for the textile prints or backdrop for a piece. I wanted my materials to be grounded in elements of the everyday to reflect the normalcy of the narrative scenes I was creating, as well as the history of patchwork. Recycling linens and cloths also became an interesting way to experiment with varying textures in the works.

On the sewing machine, I experimented with how the scale of a piece of fabric and the tension setting affected the texture of a stitched surface. Higher tension created a rippled effect on the fabric. I used this technique in *Cycle Ten* on the embroidery of the figure to reflect the figure's tension with tactility. I also found that using the sewing machine on felt created an inlay of stitching which contrasted the stitches that sat on the surface of cotton blends. When printed on, the thread on the felt didn't receive any ink,



resulting in moments where the designs of the stitch and the design of the print combine. This effect can be seen on the figure's shirt in *Cycle Ten* (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Detail of *Cycle Ten*, 2020, felt, cotton blend fabric, silkscreen ink, embroidery thread, metallic beads.

The combination of mediums in *Period Shower* (Figure 5) are a result of playful exploration. When I printed on the napkins used for the floor piece, the ink bled most of the way through the fabric, leaving the fabric stiffer than the same print on a cotton shirt would have been. From the floor, a comparatively soft embroidered tub offers an engaging contrast. From there, a waterproof shower curtain hangs over a bedsheet. Within this bedsheet, there is the rigid texture of the dry paint next to the softness of the fabric with the drawn dashes. Another variation of texture exists within the felt hair and loofa which, within themselves, have the varied texture of unprinted vs printed surfaces. This combination of mediums plays a large role in the joyous tone of the piece.



Figure 5. *Period Shower*, 2020, cloth napkins, cotton blend fabric, felt, shower curtain, silkscreen ink, embroidery thread, acrylic paint, and fabric marker, 96 x 65 x 34 inches.

The addition of printing patterns required a new level of technical problem solving. Due to the large scale of the works, I had to develop patterns that could expand to fit the size of my fabric, but also consisted of units small enough to fit on the screens I had available to me. In order to ensure the units were repeatable in all four directions, I developed the patterns digitally so I could test them before transferring the design to the screen for printing. From there, I had to develop a registration system so that the edges of the design would line up and flow continuously across a sheet of precut fabric. This involved a sheet of newsprint that was larger than my piece of fabric so that I could mark where the corners of the screen needed to sit. Four separate prints comprised the ‘uterine wall’ textile sheets, while eight prints comprised the ‘dash’ textile sheets. I made six sheets of each design. This process of making a large piece from smaller units was

heavily linked to the processes of quilting and patchwork, creating another layer of connection with the historical framework I was drawing inspiration from.

The ‘uterine wall’ and ‘dash’ textiles were then used to create the illusion of the quilt in *Cycle Ten*. The challenge with this piece was continuing the quilt pattern over the figure just by printing (Figure 6). I constructed a grid of newspaper stencils before printing in order to continue the patchwork of the quilt over the figure. I completed the pattern one screen color at a time, a process that took about three days. The figure had taken me months to piece together and embroider, and the act of destroying one state to move to a new one was an anxiety riddled process. This mirrored some of the emotion I was trying to convey in the piece, so this approach was vital in the creation of *Cycle Ten*.



Figure 6. Detail of *Cycle Ten*, 2020, felt, cotton blend fabric, silkscreen ink, embroidery thread, metallic beads.

Printmaking also brought in new conceptual interest regarding how ideas could be communicated through pattern. I wanted the patterns to be connected to the subject of

each piece without being too overt about their subject. For example, I was not interested in creating a repeating pattern of a uterus to talk about birth control in *Cycle Ten*. Instead, I looked to histology, the branch of anatomy dealing with animal or plant tissues on a microscopic level. This choice was heavily inspired by my mother, a double doctorate in the medical field, who used to make paintings based on neurological structures. From being the ‘breadwinner’ of the family to leading countless committees within the STEM field, my mother has been a constant model of opposition to societal stereotypes. It was important to me that I reference her and the values she has instilled in me in my work.

To connect to menstruation and reproductive rights, I chose to make patterns based on the microscopic structures of the uterine lining and ovaries (Figure 7 and 8). These highly detailed patterns lean into the historical association of femininity with detail while altering that same notion of femininity by using scientific imagery. I chose to eliminate the labels typically included in histological diagrams. Though the histological patterns are not heavily abstracted, the removal of labels allows them to be read as an abstract pattern. By abstracting the uterine lining or ovary through histology, it removed the association of femininity with that biology. I realized that translating the pattern back into the context of fiber was an act of gendering that biology once again. This pattern could remain distanced from femininity in another context, however I wanted to avoid speaking about an experience that was not my own. I made this choice to speak to how femininity affects my relationship with my body.

As I continued to develop these biological patterns, I was concerned with the potential that this would introduce a trans-exclusionary element to my work. I wanted to be inclusive of all women without running into the pitfalls of illustrating an experience

that was not my own. I sat down with a female-identifying trans friend to discuss gender, how my work related to it, and the ways I could avoid being exclusionary. We both agreed that the work had to be about my experience as a cis woman. She suggested I focus on social mechanisms that affected my experience but extended to other experiences as well. My work was already focused on menstruation and reproduction, but this conversation caused me to reexamine my approach. How did the societal gendering of these biological processes affect my experience? How did it affect the relationships I was depicting? My hope was that by considering this mechanism in my work, I could speak to my own experience while remaining open to how these experiences manifest for different people.

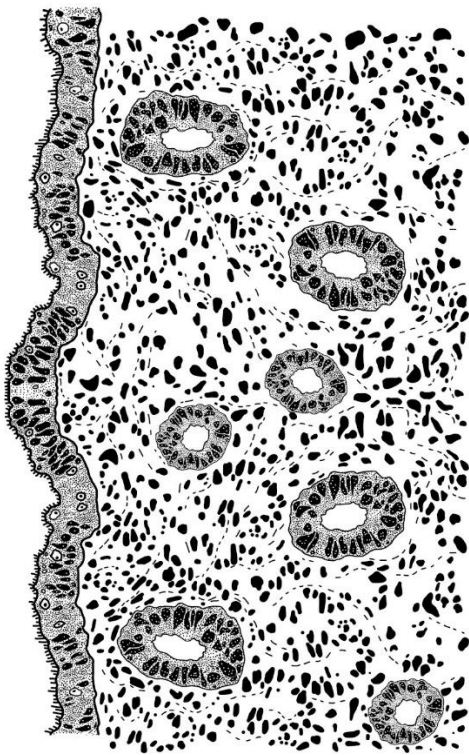


Figure 7. *Uterine Lining*, 2020, digital textile design, 17 x 12 inches.

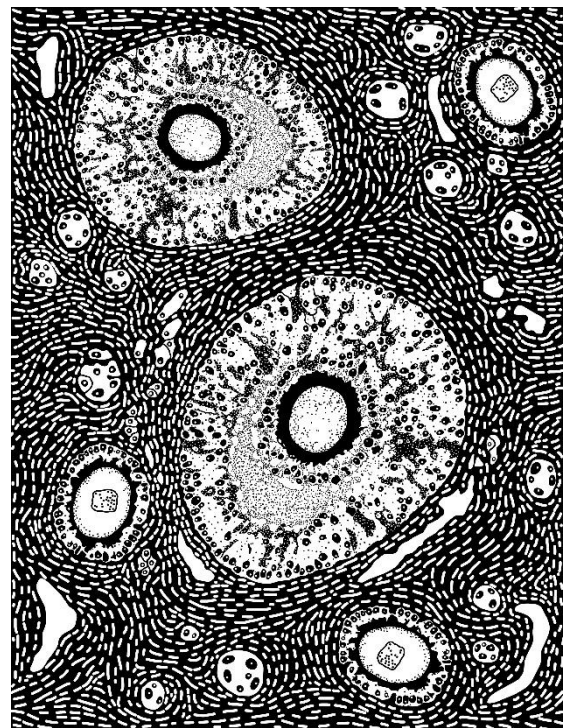


Figure 8. *Ovary*, 2020, digital textile design, 17 x 13 inches.

The piece *Letter to My Mother* (Figure 9) is a reflection on the connection between mother and daughter. A series of stream-of-consciousness letters and questions regarding menstruation, sexuality, and love are scattered throughout the ‘waters’ of the piece. These letters vary in degrees of transparency. Some are hidden below thread or are cut off while others remain open for the viewer to read in their entirety. I was interested in creating a tender tension in this piece. As the mother rises back to the surface, does she know about the questions that surround her? If she does, will she answer them when she resurfaces? What holds mothers and daughters back from openly sharing their experiences? While the figures are separated above and below, they still swim in the same waters, suggesting these conversations are multigenerational.



Figure 9. *Letter to My Mother*, 2020, recycled bedsheet, cotton blend fabric, felt, cloth napkin, silkscreen ink, fabric marker, 112 x 72 inches.

Biological aspects of menstruation and reproduction have been historically hidden away. Shame and embarrassment taint perceptions of periods and sex. Due to this shame, which often starts in childhood, questions remain unasked. *Letter to My Mother* deals with these questions head on. *Cycle Ten* is a reflection on the cumulative effects of internalized silence surrounding topics traditionally considered taboo such as abortion, sexual health, and sexuality. This silence often correlates with a lack of self-advocacy in healthcare settings. Conversely, *Period Shower* is a celebration of confidence and comfort in one's menstruation, rejecting the notion that sexuality exists in a realm without this biological process.

## CONCLUSIONS

*A Stitch Between* is a culmination of a year's worth of meticulous planning, process, and execution. The varying processes involved influenced my approach more than I initially anticipated. The slow building of the image enforced the notion that I was creating work that would act as a space for reflection rather than a declaration that could be looked at once and understood immediately. I believe the work raises a number of questions about how we relate relationships to concepts of sexuality and reproductive health.

Historically, women have been expected to bear children without protest. Like the purpose outlined for craft, women are viewed as objects of "satisfying usefulness". Menstruation is also meant to be hidden away, a biological process that is at once implicated in and removed from sexuality. The sexual liberation movement of the 1960s and the continued activism addressing reproduction and sexuality have shifted these

expectations, but they still permeate our culture. *Letter to My Mother* illustrates a line of questioning one may have as they try to navigate their experience of their body and that culture. What does it mean to hold an open conversation with our mothers? Is this a site of healing and growth, or do these conversations hold an equal power of separation and destruction? In this piece, fiber's association with femininity is used to evoke past expectations surrounding women while simultaneously facilitating a conversation on how to change these expectations.

In *Cycle Ten* (Figure 10), the figure hugs the blanket around them, but the viewer is still able to see through the blanket. This furthers a sense of unease in the piece as the figure is both covered and uncovered. Is the figure aware of the pattern's origins? If they are able to recognize the pattern as cells under a microscope, are they able to identify which structure these cells are from? Do we really know our own bodies? The piece suggests that there is some lack of understanding. Like *Letter to My Mother*, *Cycle Ten* suggests the importance of increasing the knowledge of one's self and their body. While the pattern of the blanket can be viewed purely for its surface effect, identity and meaning lie beneath the surface. This is inspired by women's historical use of quilts as stories of identity, often left unread due to what Anne L. Bower calls, "textual/textural illiteracy" (Torsney 33).





Figure 10. *Cycle Ten*, 2020, muslin, cotton blends, felt, silkscreen ink, embroidery thread, metallic beads, polyester batting, 72 x 96 x 1.5 inches.

What does it mean to feel comfortable in our bodies, and how does this impact how we share it with others? How can we achieve confidence in self and body? *Period Shower* illustrates one potential outcome. It is an embrace of menstruation as a natural process without the shame typically attached to it. It also posits menstruation as a process that can be an embrace of intimacy rather than a degradation of it. In doing so, it rejects the notion of purity as something apart from the body.

At this time, I expect the critique that the work is potentially too narrow in scope. Due to the amount of labor involved in each piece, I was only able to create three large pieces with a series of small felt works. As the work is limited in its quantity, in no way do I believe I am done working on this series. My goal is to expand the work in order to further address topics such as sexuality, family structure, maternal relationships, and spirituality.

I see an area of growth beyond *A Stitch Between* in the series of small felt objects (Figure 11). It wasn't until the end of this project that I considered the play between

repulsion and attraction. The series of small felt works, especially the pads and tampons, entice the viewer to experience their haptic nature firsthand by touching them, but these products are also associated with the ‘repulsive’. These objects only barely scratch the surface regarding the potential that exists in that interplay. This is something I will continue to explore.

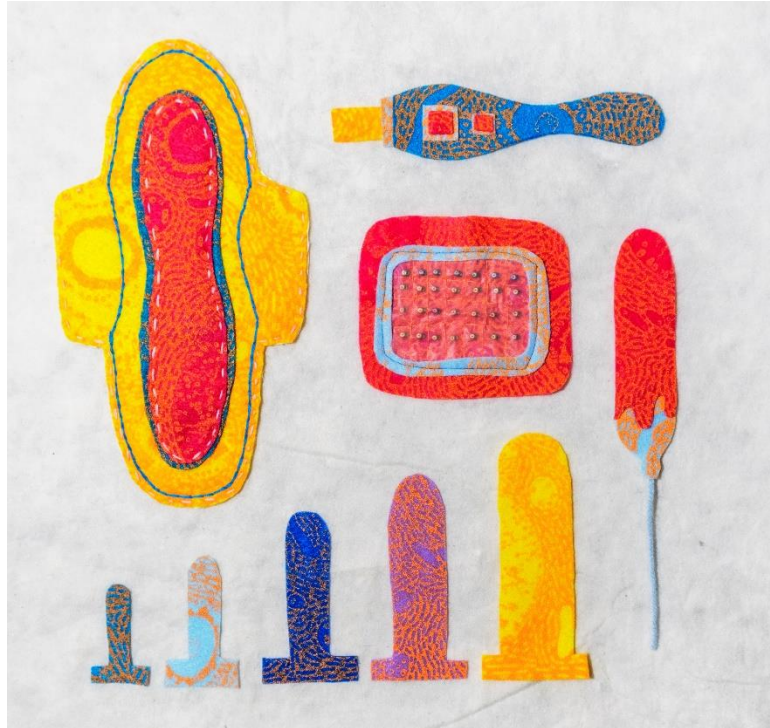


Figure 11. A collection of felt objects in the shape of a pad, pregnancy test, birth control pack, tampon, and vaginal dilators, 2020, felt, silkscreen ink, embroidery floss, metallic beads, and string.

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