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Opening Reception

Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time

Friday November 8, 6 pm - Schmidt Center Gallery

Opening Reception with Polysemic

Polysemic: An Exploration of Perception

Friday November 8, 7 pm - Ritter Art Gallery

A multi-media performance produced by Matthew Baltrucki, FAU Department of Music.

Hand & I Curator's Gallery Talk

Saturday November 9, 2:30 pm

Join Hand & I curator Yulia Tikhonova for a tour of the exhibition.

Conversation Between Artists

Friday January 24, 7 pm

Miriam Schaer and Pip Brant discuss their work, their inspirations, and what it means to be working artists today.

Panel Discussion: Art, Craft & Activism

Thursday January 30, 7pm

Artists Aurora Molina, Noelle Mason, Associate Professor of Art at University of South Florida, and Julie Ward, Assistant Professor of Art at FAU, discuss their art and the role of art and craft in activism today. Moderated by Karen Leader, Associate Professor of Art History, FAU.



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## FAU Presents *Hand & I*

**BOCA RATON, Fla. (July 1, 2019)** – Florida Atlantic University’s University Galleries presents the *Hand & I* exhibition from Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019 through Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020 in the Schmidt Center Gallery. There will be an opening reception on Friday, Nov. 8 at 6:30 p.m. and both the reception and opening are free and open to the public. There will be a *Multi-media Performance/Happening* relative to the *2019 Faculty Trifecta*, orchestrated by Matthew Baltrucki of the Department of Music, on Friday, Nov. 8, 2019, at the Ritter Art Gallery, concurrent with the opening reception of *Hand & I*.

Curator Yulia Tikhonova wrote about the exhibition: “*Hand & I* brings together 24 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. These artists address the difficult problems of climate, race, gender, immigration, and the U.S. prison system—their needlework a *cri de coeur* for social justice.

Small stitches tackling big problems is fundamental to the creativity and vision of the growing community of ‘craftivists’ who deploy the panoply of domestic arts in the service of the disenfranchised. Embroidery is uniquely suited to embody their narratives. It is deeply rooted in story telling ‘writing with a thread’.

The tradition of embroidery is imbued with a spirit of community. Sewing together, in silence, or sharing a story, is a slow and patient art form—a meditation—whose enduring creations will be seen and used by generations. It is the singular durability and persistent

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visibility of embroidery that inspires the contemporary artists in our exhibition.” The exhibition will feature several of the artists that were in *Hand & I* at the Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Program as well as several artists who are being added for the FAU iteration.

The University Galleries are open Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. The Schmidt Center Gallery is located in the Performing Arts building (building 51), near the Living Room Theaters. Daytime visitors can obtain a temporary one-day parking pass online for \$5 at <http://parking.fau.edu>, or in person at the Information Booth at FAU’s main entrance. Visitors can also use the parking meters, which cost \$2 per hour. Meters can be paid by downloading the Parkmobile app, or with credit card, debit card or exact paper currency (no change is given). Parking for the opening event is free in designated parking lots.

The *Hand & I* exhibition is produced in collaboration with the Department of Visual Arts and Art History. The University Galleries exhibition and education programs are supported in part by the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County, R.A. Ritter Foundation, Beatrice Cummings Mayer and individual contributors. Museum Education programs are made possible by the Kaye Endowment for Arts Integration.

For more information call 561-297-2661, email [galleries@fau.edu](mailto:galleries@fau.edu), or visit, [www.fau.edu/galleries](http://www.fau.edu/galleries).

- FAU -

**About Florida Atlantic University:**

*Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit [www.fau.edu](http://www.fau.edu).*

# UNIVERSITY GALLERIES

The following is a selection  
of images from the upcoming  
exhibition ***Hand & I: Mending the  
World One Stitch at a Time*** located  
in the Schmidt Center Gallery from  
November 8, 2019 through  
February 1, 2020

**Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time**  
November 9, 2019 - February 1, 2020  
*Schmidt Center Gallery*

**UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES**

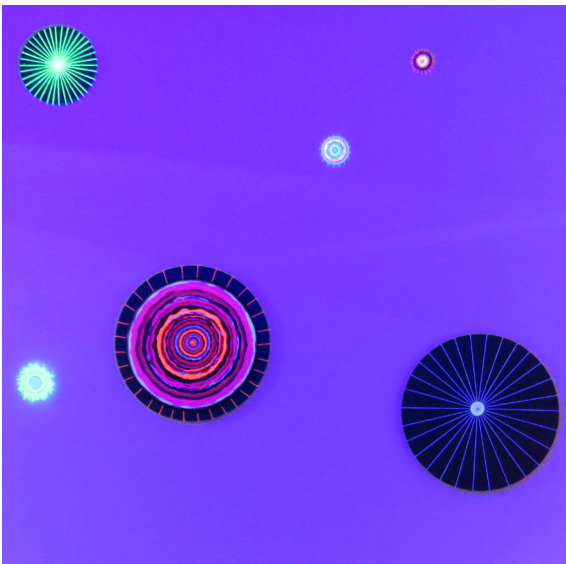
2019/2020  
**Image Sheet**



**Fanny Allié**  
*Man-Shield*, 2018  
Trash bags sewn on canvas  
88 in x 72 in



**Ana De La Cueva**  
*Rio Grande Oro y Plata*, 2018  
Embroidary on linen, silk, metallic thread  
52 in x 48 in



**Angie Wilson**  
*Luminous Matter* (full work), 2015  
Canvas, wood, yarn, thread, mason twine, acrylic  
paint, black light  
Various Dimensions



**Annie Lucas**  
*Samson Wrestling the Lion*, 1999  
Acrylic and tread on canvas  
22.5 in x 19 in  
Courtesy of James Sokol and Lydia Cheney



**Barb Hunt**  
*#Me Too - Tarana Burke, 2015*  
Vintage apron  
26 in x 16 in



**Blanka Amezkua**  
*Re-Konztrukt: women and Tools (Drill), 2017*  
Embroidery on cotton fabric with Mexican lace  
71 in x 67 in



**Pip Brant**  
*Central American migration route (detail), 2019*  
Embroidery on vintage rug  
(work in progress)



**Rachel Breen**  
*Rana Plaza Factory Collapse, Evidence #4; Blue Shirt, 2016*  
Paper Scraps  
3 ft x 5 ft x 1 in

**Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time**  
November 9, 2019 - February 1, 2020  
Schmidt Center Gallery

**UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES**

2019/2020  
Image Sheet



**Cristine Fulterer & Gabriele Scherrer**  
*As if, Untitled #1*, 2013  
Cotton embroidery on canvas  
60 in x 48 in



**Erika Diamond**  
*Caution: (HB2 Gold 20 Figure)*, 2016  
Hand-woven alpaca tapestry  
27 in x 10 in



**Shannon Gross**  
*Trans Murder Victims (Detail)*, 2017  
Embroidery on cotton  
36 in x 144 in x 2 in



**Merritt Johnson**  
*Fetish (object/object/object)*, 2018  
Flax weaving  
3 x 4 in  
Courtesy of the artist and AccolaGriefen Gallery

**Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time**

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**UNIVERSITY  
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**Judy Polstra**

*A Woman's Place is in the House and in the Senate,*  
2018 (updated 2019)

Embroidery on Vintage Cotton Slip  
30 in x 59 in (18 in x 18 in base)



**Swati Khurana**

*Monthly Circle,* 2010-2019

Mixed media embroidery on linen in wooden hoops  
15 in x 26 in



**Sibel Kocabasi**

*On the Move,* 2019

Embroidery on Inka rug  
24 in x 45 in



**Liz Collins**

*Skins (Detail),* 2010-2019

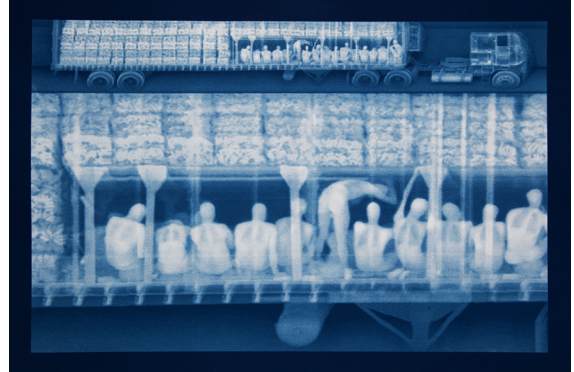
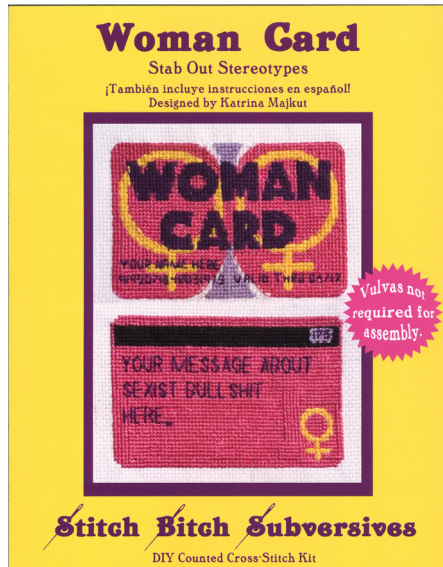
Knit and stitched yarns and textiles, steel and wood frames  
7 ft x 7ft x 20 in



**Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time**  
November 9, 2019 - February 1, 2020  
Schmidt Center Gallery

# UNIVERSITY GALLERIES

2019/2020  
Image Sheet



**Katrina Majkut**  
*Woman Card Kit: Stitch Bitch Subversives* DIY  
Embroidery Kit Collection, 2019  
Limited editions  
11 in x 8.5 in

**Noelle Mason**  
*Backscatter Blueprint (Ultima Cena)*, 2019  
Cyanotype  
17.5 in x 24.5 in



**Miriam Schaer**  
*Babies Are (Not) On Board, Your not having children...*, 2010-2019  
Brown haired baby doll, hand embroidered garment  
23 in x 10 in x 5.6 in



**Aurora Molina**  
*Selfie Project (Detail)*, 2017  
Embroidery on cotton  
-No Dimensions-



University Galleries, Florida Atlantic University,  
for hi-res images contact: [wfaulds@fau.edu](mailto:wfaulds@fau.edu)

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**UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES**

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Image Sheet



**Ray Materson**

*Waiting for the man*, 1997

Needlepoint from unraveled sock threads

5 in x 3.5 in



**Micki Spiller**

*Book Jacket: The Woman in the Water*, 2019

Embroidery on cotton, wire, books

-No Dimensions-



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## Exhibition Text for Brochure

### *HAND & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time*

Artists do not choose embroidery by accident. It is a medium long looked down on more as craft than art, one that has endured the casual disregard accorded the domestic (feminine) crafts. The division between art and craft was hotly debated during the ascendant years of the Arts & Crafts movement in the 1880's and has never ceased to fascinate generations of artists, designers, academics and occasionally, viewers, but it has been largely dismissed as futile by contemporary fine artists. The embrace of embroidery by fine artists thus indicates that the unique qualities of this traditional skill can play a compelling role in an evolving domain of dissenting art practices.

*HAND & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time* 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 call for resistance to complex and often inhumane social policies. These artists address the difficult problems of climate, race, gender, immigration, and the US prison system—their needlework is *a cri de coeur* for social justice.

Small stitches tackling big problems is fundamental to the creativity and vision of the growing community of “craftivists” who deploy the panoply of domestic arts in the service of the disfranchised. By advocating the use of creativity for the improvement of the world, craftivists teach knitting lessons, sew scarves for battered women's shelters, and knit hats for chemotherapy patients. In promoting the idea that people can use their own creativity to improve the world, craftivism allows those who wish to voice their opinions and support their causes the chance to do just that through sharing their story.

Embroidery is uniquely suited to embody their narratives: women's empowerment, sex education, family planning, healing, alienation, and so on and on. Embroidery and quilts historically “enabled women to speak the truth about their lives” by joining many disparate fragments, which, when read together, make a specific and often subversive “utterance.” In nineteenth-century America, patchwork on fabric made many different utterances: they could transmit a local history, recount one version of a family feud, or physically connect living women to their ancestors by combining inherited fabrics. Before women's suffrage arrived, American women also made embroideries to express their political sentiments.

Embroidery is ideal to carry not only a political message but also a very personal one embodied by fabric that has already had a long life. Blood & sweat, wear & tear are stitched into the pattern and become an intrinsic part of the embroidery. Their ghostly presence pervades the needlework.

The tradition of embroidery is embedded in a spirit of community. Sewing together in silence or sharing a story are slow and patient art forms—a meditation—resulting in enduring creations that will be seen and used by generations. During the conversations that led to this exhibition, the artists confirmed that the community is both a user and a producer of the work. The communal nature of quilting, fiber workshops of the past and more recently, “Knit for Defense,” “Rip What You Sew,” and “Protest Curtains” are participatory projects to make functional art respond to current political crises. “Knit for Defense,” for example, transforms the caring act of women making scarves, sweaters, and socks for soldiers during war time into a protest against the industrial war complex and national hegemonies. “Protest Curtains” double as window curtains for homes and businesses to face out onto the streets between actions, communicating empowering messages of love and resistance. These artists lead community projects utilizing embroidery’s soft power for uniting diverse people in gestures of protest and resistance.

*Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time* is the second iteration of this exhibition. It introduces a powerful subtitle that highlights this medium’s persistence, patience, and care.

To mend something, and to do it well, implies the skill and knowledge to make invisible the hand of the mender, which means that the careful mending of a tear is in itself an invisible labor. Careful mending processes imply identifying an appropriate “remedy” for the destruction of the fabric of the earth, and healing power of needle, thread and an artist’s hand that holds it.

This is what we mean when we talk about the transformative power of art.

In this iteration, four artists who make South Florida their home joined the exhibition. Sibel Kocabasi, Pip Brant, Aurora Molina and Judy Polstra bring the themes of Latinx and Cuban culture, and speak truth to power of geo-political conflicts. In addition, Rachel Breen, from Minnesota, inspires the solidarity that could be achieved by textile labor by exposing not the right word the victims of factory fires. Shannon Gross uses embroidery to create a homage to transgender victims of violence and Merritt Johnson, of American Indian heritage, addresses the objectification of women’s bodies. As a whole, this exhibition has been enhanced by their contributions. It means to mend the world.

I ponder on the persistent visibility that inspires the contemporary artists in our exhibition. I am reminded of the Russian avant-garde artists Kazimir Malevich and Oleksandra Ekster, who adopted local embroidery patterns as a means of freeing their timid contemporaries from an alien Western art so that they could embrace their Eastern roots.

Like them, the artists in *Hand & I* subvert the stereotypes of embroidery as a benign feminine craft and transform it into a raucous, striking and effective art form. Its time has come.

## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

I am deeply grateful to the artists for participating and contributing their compelling work to this exhibition. Most of all, I wish to express my great appreciation to Rod Faulds, Director of FAU’s University Galleries for giving me this wonderful opportunity, and for his advice, support, and

professionalism during every phase of this exhibition. Thank you, Erica Ando, for organizing a series of educational programs in support of this exhibition. Many thanks to all the staff without whom this exhibition would not be possible. Last year, I taught at FAU as an Adjunct Professor. I consider *Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time* as a wholehearted thank you to all the faculty who supported me through this process: Karen Leader, Carol Prusa, Brian McConnell and Stephanie Cunningham. Without your friendship and advice my teaching would not have been such an exciting process.

**Biography:** Yulia Tikhonova is coordinator of the Art Gallery and Museum Services at Eastern Connecticut State University Art Gallery, Willimantic, CT. Tikhonova’s curatorial and teaching practice derives from the global perspective she acquired during her long migratory journey from Russia, to Poland, South East Asia, and New Zealand, and, finally, to the U.S., where she has made her home—in New York City—for most of the past 15 years. Tikhonova graduated from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

**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.

**Blanka Amezkua** adopts the language of Latino comic books as the inspiration for textile works that comment on longstanding clichés about female identity. *Re-Konztrukt: Women and Tools* (2017) are larger-than-life embroideries that feature Amazon-like figures armed with tools sacred to the masculine universe. Hammer, drill, sledgehammer, machete, wrench are industrial-sized to complement with their looming, muscular bodies. 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 skimpy outfits, 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**, 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 and 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.

Minneapolis-based artist-activist **Rachel Breen** has created a new work titled *Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, Evidence #6; Dress of the Dead* that references 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.

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** 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** 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.

**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." *Mourning Trans Murder Victims* is a personal act of grieving for the transgender individuals whose lives were cut short in 2017.

**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, “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.

**Mariette 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.

**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 Card Kit* is 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.

**Aurora Molina**’s *The Selfie Project* (2018) features hundreds of embroidered selfies stretched on a cell phone cage. These complex artworks examine the egocentricity that informs our culture’s contemporary obsession with the “selfie.” She highlights the addictive nature of the selfie and creates a series of sculptures that project pop culture’s drug-like dependency on social acceptance. Molina explores themes ranging from national identity and immigration to self-identity and feminism. She embeds her personal history within the universal experiences of women and minorities in the U.S. and Cuba.

In the nearly two decades 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 thread, 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.

**Noelle Mason** challenges the voyeuristic nature of surveillance technologies and its photographic and video mediation of our responses to traumatic events and tragedies. *X-Ray Vision vs. Invisibility* (2016) reveals the frightening power of contemporary technologies to trace undocumented immigrants. This body of work consists of the cyanotypes that are backscatter blueprints of people in the trucks and cross-stitch embroideries titled *Coyotaje* (2014) based on these images. Mason uses cross-stitch 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 the new radar technologies is more powerful than any concrete wall.

**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.

**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.

**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 down 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.

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** addresses women's choice from her own "personal is political" perspective. A 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.

**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 and accompanied 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.

**Micki Watanabe Spiller**'s *The Woman in The Water* (book jacket) was made during her residency on Governor's 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** 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."

*Hand & I: Mending the World One Stitch at a Time* highlights the creative ways that contemporary artists have transformed the traditions of needlework into potent tools in the struggle for cultural and economic equity. They affirm embroidery as a medium which, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "bend the arc of the universe towards justice."