

How She Taught Me
Integrative Thesis Paper

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Introduction

My thesis project is a record of individual conversations with women in my community. In these conversations, the participant and I discuss women in their life that have served as teachers in some way, either in a traditional or nontraditional sense. As we talk, we embroider together, stitching quotes and images that were generated during previous conversations over the course of the project. This environment, defined by the slow labor of the craft and the shared stories, is intimate, organic, and tactile: an ideal environment for passing information and knowledge. Excerpts from these conversations are recorded in embroidered patches, created by the collective hands of these women, as a log both of the time and content shared over the series of interactions. The pieces each exist individually, but share the same scale and shape, and are scattered as a collection on a large table, giving viewers the opportunity to touch, assemble, and examine the words shared by these women. This interaction recalls the same sense of gathering under which the pieces were created, and allows for further knowledge gain through the haptic.

Contextual Discussion

American quilting traditions

Although it existed for decades before, quilting in the United States boomed around 1840, when the new mass production of affordable fabric gave quilters the time and material to make larger textile pieces. Before this, colonial women spent the majority of their time spinning, weaving, and sewing fabric to make clothing for their families, and did not have extra time for artistic quilting.¹ Instead, these women patched and combined old clothing and blankets to make solely functional quilts. After the manufacturing of cotton began, women were able to purchase fabric,

¹ "Pioneer Quilts: A Comfort Through Hardship," Pioneer Quilts: Women's Quilting Brings Comfort Through Hardship, accessed October 2017, http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/pioneer.html

freeing up more time to create the artistic quilts that are more well known today. While wealthier women were able to create fancier appliqu  quilts, where decorative fabric elements are sewn onto a common fabric ground, western settlers often still did not have fabric to spare for layering. The block-style pieced quilt was the result of their efforts to create a more functional design and incorporate even the smallest scraps.²

Storytelling plays an important role in folk and fiber arts. Patterns and techniques were passed down through word of mouth, and were only documented in a beginner's first 'sampler quilt', which contained a grid of different quilt square patterns as a way to teach, practice, and record the techniques as they were learned, to be used for future reference.³ Marriage quilts, friendship quilts, and signature quilts were all popular in the 19th century as a way of recording events and familial bonds. While some literature from the time depicts romanticized quilting bees as large social events where grand meals were served to men and young people came to court, they were more likely quiet gatherings, where a small group of women or girls might gather to assist a friend or neighbor in finishing her quilt.⁴ These rituals composed much of a young girls' education, as women were not fully included in the sparse amount of schooling available at the time.

"The quilts seemed to be a format in which they had condensed much of personal, family, and community history. Talking about the quilts often triggered memories of stories they had heard from their mother or grandmother over the quilting frame. The

² "Pioneer Quilts: A Comfort Through Hardship," Pioneer Quilts: Women's Quilting Brings Comfort Through Hardship, accessed October 2017, http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/pioneer.html

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

common task which had brought them together to sew also brought them together to talk and exchange stories.”⁵

The Changing US Public School System

To accommodate these settlers migrating West, small schools began popping up across the United States. This was the work of Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann, who believed that a standardized education system for US citizens would ensure the survival of a new and rapidly growing democracy.

To Jefferson, who wrote the first literature on the subject, a unified republic depended on educated American voters,⁶ stating “General education will enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom”.⁷ Having received the private education only accessible to the wealthy, Jefferson proposed a similarly aristocratic education system in 1778. As described by journalist Nicholas Lemann, the system included “One [tier], to give people the democratic basics, and [the second]...for this small group of natural aristocrats (‘geniuses’) who would then be given a full-dress university education and serve the country as he had done”.⁸ Jefferson did not consider the possibility of female geniuses; his plan allowed for three years of schooling for girls to prepare them for marriage and motherhood, and provided no education for slaves.⁹

⁵ Cooper, Patricia J., and Norma Bradley. Allen. *The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art: An Oral History*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1977.

⁶ "The Educated Citizen." In *School: The Story of American Public Education*, by Meryl Streep, David B. Tyack, Sheila Curran. Bernard, Sarah Mondale, and Sarah B. Patton, 23-33. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

⁷ *ibid*, pg 23

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*, pg 24

Jefferson's views on standardized education were considered radical at the time, and were initially implemented in the 1840s by Horace Mann, who was then the Secretary of Education for the state of Massachusetts. As the system began to take root, Mann travelled around the state, visiting approximately 1000 schools in six years and surveying their physical conditions and teaching practices.¹⁰ He concluded from his research that inequity was a serious issue, as many schools lacked adequate heat, light, and ventilation, and did not have blackboards or standardized textbooks.¹¹ Mann began to propose a new system he called 'common schools' — a standardized, non-sectarian, publicly-funded school system that was meant to equalize education for all white citizens, in order to groom well-educated, hardworking voters to carry the new republic into a modern era. This common school model was the country's first step towards the contemporary US public school system.

*"It is a free school system, it knows no distinction of rich and poor...it throws open its doors and spreads the table of its bounty for all the children of the state...Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the equalizer of the conditions of men, the great balance wheel of the social machinery."*¹²

The common schools prided themselves on their commitment to equity, so they aimed to serve all (white) citizens, including girls. And as settlers migrated West, schools became important civic amenities that could draw settlers to their towns.¹³ In order to provide teachers for these schools, Catherine Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, promoted female teachers as the

¹⁰"The Educated Citizen." In *School: The Story of American Public Education*, by Meryl Streep, David B. Tyack, Sheila Curran. Bernard, Sarah Mondale, and Sarah B. Patton, 23-33. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

¹¹ *ibid* pg 25

¹² *ibid*, pg 29

¹³ *ibid*, pg 47

“...civilizing force of the West”, and founded colleges to educate women and train them for teaching. She advocated this as appropriate behavior for a middle-class woman, as “God designed women to be the chief educators of our race...it is woman who is fitted by disposition and habits for such duties”.¹⁴ This was the beginning of the feminization of the profession, as it was believed that only a woman could teach as well as offer the comforts of home, more reminiscent of the home tutoring that was the norm before common schools.

The public school system underwent major changes through the 19th and 20th centuries as organized work expanded, commercial entities proliferated, and the government enlarged. Schools increasingly took over on the education of subjects that parents were unable to teach, such as business and industry. They also emerged as a daily gathering place for youth, eventually segmenting them by age and catalyzing the creation of the peer group, the main social scene to navigate in a child’s life.¹⁵ A new American form of education eventually emerged, one valuing training in academics, vocational skills, civic literacy, and social and moral judgement.¹⁶ Over time, more and more emphasis was placed on the public school as the institution that should teach students these four aspects of their education until the system eventually assumed all responsibility. To accommodate the increase in content to be taught, the school system continued to become standardized throughout the Industrial Revolution to make for more ‘efficient’ learning practices according to the factory models popular at the time. That’s why we sit in desks of straight rows, and have bells that signal transitions in our school day.

¹⁴ *ibid*, pg 53

¹⁵ Goodlad, John I. "We Want It All." In *A Place Called School: Prospect for the Future*, 33-60. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

¹⁶ *ibid*, pg 40

Thankfully, schools today are trading in the extremely standardized ways of teaching for pedagogies that value critical thinking and individual learning methods. While these pedagogies are formidable, our public school system currently fails to provide a quality and comprehensive education, while at the same time accommodating individual differences in a larger, more diverse student population, with the goal of preparing students for a rapidly changing workforce. As summed up by Goodlad: “A new coalition comparable to the one that developed and sustained the present system of schooling must emerge. But this coalition must support more than schools. It must embrace new configurations for education in the community that include not only home, school, and church but also business, industry, television, our new means of information processing and all the rest of the emerging new technology of communications, and those cultural resources not yet drawn on for their educational potential. Education is too important and too all encompassing to be left only to schools.”¹⁷

Non-traditional forms of education

I’m interested in exploring supplemental learning methods that can be great resources for acquiring skills that have become overlooked in classrooms. These ‘alternative’ learning methods are often seen as nontraditional, but actually embody the goals that early education theorists (preceding Horace Mann) thought were the main aims of schooling. This system emphasized that a child’s education was not solely the product of what they learned in a classroom, but was a sum of the practical skills taught at home, the morals and community values taught at church, and the academic lessons taught at school. It was believed that this taught children “...the values and substance of piety, civility, and learning.”¹⁸

¹⁷ *ibid*, pg 46

¹⁸ *ibid*, pg 40

A model of this early American system can be seen in the work of the German crystallographer Fredrich Frobel, who is credited with developing the concept of kindergarten in the 1830s. His pedagogical philosophy centered around the utilization of curiosity as a child's most important learning asset, and developed a teaching system which consisted of geometric play gifts for young children that were meant to harness a child's natural curiosity for learning and discovery towards subjects such as art, mathematics, and natural science. In the book *Inventing Kindergarten*, Norman Brosterman writes: "Kindergarten's universal, perfect, alternative language of geometric form cultivated children's innate ability to observe, reason, express, and create."¹⁹ In demonstrations of Frobel's pedagogy at the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia, spectators observed children "...engaged in active play, singing and dancing, and in focused concentration, seated at long, low tables with gridded work surfaces, created geometric designs from small pieces of wood, colored paper, thread, or wire".²⁰

I'm investigating power of learning through haptic processes and the sharing of stories, the two procedures this project aims to combine. Women have a long history of learning in this way, and I'm looking to explore if / how people still feel that they learn from people's actions around them, instead of simply what teachers are prescribed to teach them. Through my project, I'm creating a modern day equivalent of the oral tradition, and am facilitating an environment that is suitable for learning in this way: intimate, organic, tactile. Both the participant and I are learning through making, and the findings of these conversations are recorded and presented in the medium that best that embodies these values.

¹⁹ Brosterman, Norman. *Inventing Kindergarten*. New York, NY: Kaleidograph Design, 2014.

²⁰ *ibid*, pg 33

*"In this context the home was studio, art school, and gallery...and the art was controlled and handed down by women, usually mother, grandmother, or aunt. The best elements of teaching were often combined over the construction of a quilt: early and often loving instruction, tradition, discipline, planning and completing a task, moral reinforcement."*²¹

Methodology

This project was born out of frustration along with a mix of other uneasy feelings: numbness towards my computer, unfamiliarity towards my sketchbook. Things felt stale in my graphic design-centric world (the medium I concentrated on throughout my underclassman years); after a few years of learning the software and studying the trends, the process of practicing the art just seemed a long series of revisions -- lots of fixing mistakes with very little spontaneity.

Now I don't love untethered spontaneity, and have a hard time getting over the fear of disrupting a blank page. But I do like working relentlessly on projects, in a way that's meditative and cumbersome. I knew that if I created a process for myself to follow for this long term project, that I could take refuge in that journey and have less opportunity to feel stuck. It's both a step outside my comfort zone and a step back into an old habit.

I thought about the parts of making that I enjoy the most: **(1)** I love working with my hands.

Before I started college, I worked mostly in ceramics, and have loved to knit and hand sew since my mother taught me in third grade. Working with physical materials gives me a sense of

²¹ Cooper, Patricia J., and Norma Bradley. Allen. *The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art: An Oral History*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1977.

tranquility and productivity that I don't feel when I'm designing on my computer, or even drawing in my sketchbook. (2) I love working on projects with others, which is why I'm drawn to the client-facing aspect of design work. I was reminded of this in Anne Mondro's 'Memory, Aging, and the Expressive Arts' class (Winter '17), where we worked on creative projects with a community group for adults living with various forms of dementia. The medium and content of the work was driven by their desires and experiences, and I was inspired by the pieces created, and the joy surrounding the experience. Fueled by this, I've gone back to teaching youth classes a couple times a month at the Ann Arbor Art Center, three years after I stopped working there to pursue design jobs. I find so much personal and professional fulfillment in facilitating the opportunity for students to explore mediums, concepts, and practices that they're passionate about (or may become passionate about). Strangely enough, I think watching others' processes makes me a more creative person.

I decided that I wanted a project that combined these two aspects of making: meditative tactility and invigorating community. I thought that hand fiber work — an extremely labor intensive, process based medium — could be perfect because of its ties to community and gathering, and I wanted to bring the power of these processes into the present. The idea of celebration and continuity of hand fiber work is borrowed from the multi-media artist Miriam Schapiro and her *femmagages*, a term she coined to describe artwork done in traditionally feminine mediums. She said: "I aim to collaborate with women of the past, as I do with the women I actually work with, to bring women's experience to the world".²² This collaborative dialogue is not unfamiliar, but her feminist aim was new. It differs from the mocking and competitive way that other artists often

²² Smith, Beryl K., Joan Arbeiter, and Sally S. Swenson. "Miriam Schapiro." In *Lives and Works: Talks with Women Artists*, 139-58. Vol. 2. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1999.

approached ‘collaboration’ with artists -- like Marcel Duchamp and his ‘collaboration’ with Leonardo da Vinci.

I focused on this collaboration in the context of the female quilters in mid/late 19th century America because I was intrigued by the idea of the ‘education’ that was created by and for these women through the merging of these two ideas — the discipline of the craft and the sharing of stories.

Free writing / Mind mapping

I began the year by mind mapping the themes I had been turning over in my head all summer. I laid out the key terms surrounding the themes and the authors and artists I researched, and attempted to find some initial connections between them. I did a lot of free writing on why these connections were important to me, and a lot of Googling to see if they were important to anyone else. This helped me visualize the main themes I was interested in pursuing, as well as find gaps in their connections where I felt I could intervene.

Learning and discovering through making

Through my research, I read multiple accounts by contemporary fiber artists who cited their creative practice as a place of stillness in their day, where they could relish in a monotonous, tactile task. This is beautifully illustrated in an interview with the Canadian weaving artist Sandra Brownlee entitled *You Have to Begin*.

“You have to begin, you have to make one row. And then you take that row and take the very first thought that comes into your mind and you make the next row, and then

it just starts to grow...I'm tactile oriented, it's how I access my ideas and feelings and knowledge".²³

This pairing of tactile exploration as a way to access knowledge is one that has been explored during the search to refine the way that American schools teach their students. Our education system currently relies on the visually oriented approach to learning, which centers on sight-based exercises using reading and writing. This forces children to adapt as best they can to a single approach to learning, even though art education research has shown that "...given the opportunity to use and develop other senses, students of all ages are able to learn more easily".²⁴ By integrating more tactile approaches to learning in the way we teach, schools could assist those who have difficulty acquiring knowledge visually, as well as offer one more means to learning for those who are able to acquire knowledge successfully through visual study.²⁵

This space for reflecting and learning through a haptic process became the most important part of my project, beginning during a research phase where I was stuck in a particularly tough rut. I decided to not retreat into a passive research hole (where I browse on my computer to avoid making decisions) and instead work through the kinks in my project while stitching. I used a phrase my cello teacher from high school would repeat dozens of times as I practiced tricky passages in my music for her over and over: "Good! Again!". Looking back on those lessons, I love that phrase. It's reassuring but insistent, which is exactly what I needed, both then and now. I learned a few new stitches and worked about 4-6 hours a day for a week, embroidering

²³ Wilson, Tim. "You Have to Begin: The Art of Sandra Brownlee." Vimeo. 2014. Accessed November 9, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/137943052>.

²⁴ Wolf, Marilyn. "Educational Implications of Tactility in Art." *Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education* 2, no. 1 (1983): 80-82. doi:10.17077/2326-7070.1057.

²⁵ *ibid*

the phrase over and over, only stopping to jot down ideas as they popped into my head. It was meditative to turn an idea over in my head for a while, and I found myself spending many of the hours reflecting on what it would have been like to employ this practice out of necessity, like the quilters I had been researching. I began to understand why they quilted with others, which led me to consider how I could facilitate this within my own community.

Emphasis of slow and tactile processes

As I worked to integrate this space for fiber work into my own creative practice, which I had the privilege of prioritizing for the sake of this project, I unsurprisingly found the process restorative; that the deliberate slowness allowed me to find deeper emotional connection to the themes I was exploring in the work. This quickly led me to gaps in the project's content, as I found the space created too grand to simply reflect on my own experiences. I truly longed to share the experiences of reflecting and making with others, such as in the ways I had been researching. As explained by Polly Ullrich in her essay, *Touch This: Tactility in Recent Contemporary Art*, "... fiber's deep, historical connection to the body and hand work, to personal adornment, to rituals, and to social gatherings [leads us to] a richer meaning to contemporary aesthetic inquiries about the purpose and place of touch".²⁶

I wanted to use touch (and the space it required) as a way to share the reflective space I had come to cherish, and converse and learn from others. In the book *Slow Stitch*, Claire Wellesley-Smith writes, "Simple, contemplative activities can be convivial too, creating non-verbal conversations through making".²⁷ I see this created space for handcraft as a catalyst for learning, as the stories shared are given proximity and sensation through the collection of

²⁶ Ullrich, Polly. 1996. "Touch this. Tactility in recent contemporary art." *New Art Examiner* 24, 10-15. *Art & Architecture Source*, EBSCOhost (accessed Oct. 10, 2017).

²⁷ Wellesley-Smith, Claire. *Slow Stitch: Mindful and Contemplative Textile Art*. London: Batsford, 2015.

accumulated stitches over time. These records of the process are able to be explored by both the participant in the making process, and in the viewing of the final project.

“Through art, an individual expresses what he or she sees and feels. In the act of creation, the artist uses both sight and touch. The observer is most often limited to using the visual sense in viewing the artist's work. But the artist who is successful, will stimulate tactile sensations in the observer, making the act of observation more complete.”²⁸

Because of the claims in the previous section on the importance of using more than one sense to better absorb information, I aimed to make the viewing experience of this piece as tactile-oriented as the making process, in the hopes that it would ensure better absorption of the teachings by the women in my project. This is important in the context of the medium, because it serves as an homage to the way that handcraft was the best way for women to record their lives for many centuries. So while the stories of the women who quilted may be lost, there is power in the tactile remnants they left behind. These remnants are not paintings or writings, which can only be viewed, but are functional and beautiful objects that serve as physical reminders of the people that created them. By touching the work of these women's hands, we validate their existences.

“The two-dimensional sense of vision is given tridimensionality through touch. Sight gives information of distance, while touch gives information of proximity. Use of the

²⁸ Wolf, Marilyn. "Educational Implications of Tactility in Art." *Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education* 2, no. 1 (1983): 80-82. doi:10.17077/2326-7070.1057.

*familiar phrase, 'Let me see it,' actually means, let me touch it, let me validate its existence."*²⁹

Using this concept today, I aimed to combine the making process with the words shared during the experience, as a way to record the stories of these contemporary women in a way that could be further passed on through the viewers' touch.

Creative Work

The conversations

The conversations over the course of this project provided the space for the creation of the embroidered pieces, as well as generated the material that was depicted in the embroideries. They were sometimes conducted with one participant and sometimes with as many as 5, with the conversation wandering but always returning to the work at hand.

Each embroidery session began with an explanation of the project, which was aided by an written excerpt taken from a previous conversation. I had the participant(s) read a typed quote from another woman and write it down in the sketchbook I carried to record the quote. This helped the participant understand the broader context of the project and gave a direct example of how their words would be incorporated into the chain of exhibited stories.

²⁹ Wolf, Marilyn. "Educational Implications of Tactility in Art." *Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education* 2, no. 1 (1983): 80-82. doi:10.17077/2326-7070.1057.

*She saw another woman in her 50s
back in school, and went to college
and got a degree in psychology
and opened her own practice.
She works with women on issues
like domestic violence.*

I normally began by asking if they had ever embroidered before, and many cited times they learned a craft from their friend or relative. This often led to other stories on skills they valued and the way they learned or practiced them, and I would ask about experiences that they had with the women that taught them. When the participant couldn't come up with specific examples, I shared experiences of my own, or explained the story behind the pieces we were embroidering. In almost every case, this would result in the participant being reminded of a similar experience, a testimony to the reflective space being shared over the stories.

Most of the women were beginners. Younger participants were sometimes amused, older ones were often apprehensive, and almost all were nervous about making mistakes, but normally relaxed once they saw me demonstrate a simple running stitch. More than once I was asked to do a second session, or to teach them another stitch after working for an hour or so.

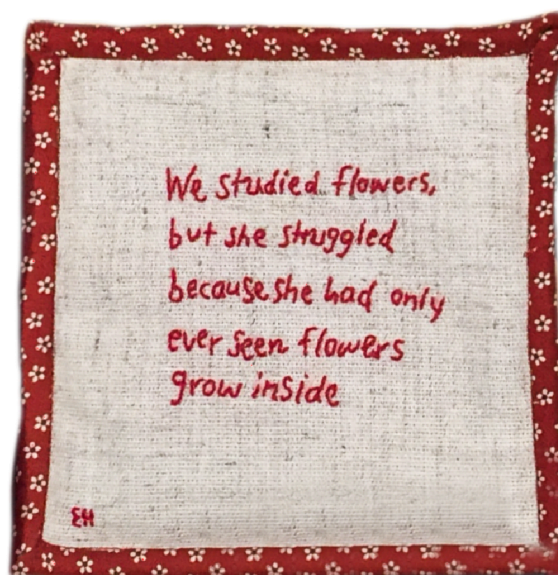
At a natural conclusion of each conversation, either defined by time or a depletion of stories, I asked the woman to reflect for a moment on any of the individuals we discussed during the

dialogue and write or draw something that they feel describes her. These drawings are also used in the final project as representations of how women view their female leaders.

The sketchbook

The sketchbook I carried for this project was specifically dedicated to collecting the excerpts and drawings from each participant, and served as a good beginning and ending to each embroidery session. The sketchbook was first used to teach, by demonstrating how the words of each participant would be used in the project. By capturing the words of one woman in the handwriting of another, it allows for further documentation of each individual that was present in the project. I am able to transfer their writing in the sketchbook onto fabric to be embroidered, turning each piece into an artifact of a previous conversation.

We studied flowers,
but she struggled
because she had only
ever seen flowers
grow inside.



It was also used at the end of each session as a way to reflect, as I asked them to write or draw something about a woman we discussed — as a way to sum up how they would describe that individual. By solidifying a particular moment through a more concrete form of recording, they showed me what moments of the conversation were meaningful to them. The pieces of the conversation they selected were normally surprising, but the differences in our reflections always amazed me, and I loved that they reinforced a piece of their story for me, probably a piece that I otherwise would have eventually forgotten. I particularly loved the drawings that were shared, for the heartfelt and thoughtful insights they gave the viewer on how a modern woman views her mentors and teachers.

The quilted fabric squares

The embroidered and quilted squares serve as the most important form of documentation of this project, with the hand stitching serving as a record of the amount of hours put in to the project by all the women who were involved. This is further displayed by the initials on each fabric square, showing the women who contributed to the stitching of that piece.

Each embroidery is individually bound into a 5 x 5” square using cotton fabric in red, yellow, green or blue, a reference the colors of the gifts created by Fredrich Froebel. The pieces also reference the 3rd gift of square blocks, which Froebel used to encourage “the concept of relativity — of the whole in relation to the parts and the parts in relation to the whole”.³⁰ The pieces depict many women’s stories and roles to the participants, each each existing as as an individual piece displayed among the collection of others. This is another homage to the work of Miriam Schapiro, who made much of her work about the compartmentalization of roles in women’s

³⁰ Brosterman, Norman. *Inventing Kindergarten*. New York, NY: Kaleidograph Design, 2014.

lives, with the aim that this piece could demonstrate the many facets of the modern female teacher as a whole.



The table

The table was first and foremost included to create a gathering space for the viewer, so they were able to interact with the fabric squares in a way that facilitated tactile interaction, even in a gallery setting. The table also serves as a representation of the way women gathered to assist each other in their hand quilting, and is a nod to the collaborative spirit that women have cultivated with this practice of handcraft, and their gathering over a quilting frame. The viewers

are also invited to come together over the continued workings and words of women “with a spirit of celebration and continuity”.³¹



The wooden table, which was engraved with a grid of 5 inch squares and bordered by a 3.5 inch wooden frame, was also designed as a structure for learning and play, in the same way that Frederic Frobel created his environments for learning in his kindergarten classrooms, with his students “seated at long, low tables with gridded work surfaces, created geometric designs from small pieces of wood, colored paper, thread, or wire”.³²

³¹ Smith, Beryl K., Joan Arbeiter, and Sally S. Swenson. "Miriam Schapiro." In *Lives and Works: Talks with Women Artists*, 139-58. Vol. 2. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1999.

³² Brosterman, Norman. *Inventing Kindergarten*. New York, NY: Kaleidograph Design, 2014.

The frame around was used to is to keep the fabric squares from falling off the table, but also simulated these play environments created for kindergarteners in elementary classrooms. By rearranging the fabric squares within the as well as the bordering edge of a quilt, keeping all the fabric squares contained in a single gridded space. Viewers were able to play and piece their own quilts, potentially strengthening their retention of the content on the squares through their manual investigation. The shapes formed through this play are not only a nod to piecework quilts, but to the geometric shapes made by the students of Friedrich Frobel.



Conclusion

To me, this project truly embodied Miriam Schapiro's teachings of collaboration with celebration and continuity, a woman and artist whom I greatly admire, and it allowed me to utilize the creative practices I love most — working with others in a medium that required diligent practice.

The time spent on this project has engrained these activities into my creative practice, spurring what I hope will become a lifelong investigation of the processes. Through my research of artists and scholars working in the fields of education and handcraft, I see a growing desire for a reintroduction of slower, alternative forms of learning into our education system. Through my interactions with the amazing women in this project, I see excitement and promise in their willingness to sit and tell me their stories.



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