Two of the artists in Displaced are Harriet Bart and Yu-Wen Wu

Harriet Bart was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is an artist who creates entire rooms made of art, sculpture, and artist’s books. Her work is really interested in how single people and groups of people think about memory.

Yu-Wen Wu was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She is an artist who creates work about what it means to share life on planet earth with other humans. Her work uses images of data and information in drawing and painting. She also creates videos, and experiences that happen across time.

Harriet and Yu-Wen first met in 2010 in Virginia. Their friendship began when Yu-Wen offered Harriet her camera. Following this kindness, the two shared a studio visit where they discovered how much their art had in common.

In 2016, at the Perlman Teaching Museum, they worked across the whole school to create “Crossings”, a work about walking. They were thinking about what it would be like if you had to walk to live. “Crossings” used 6 tons of river rock, which was carried across 1 ¾ miles.

On Leavings/Belongings:

When Harriet Bart and Yu-Wen Wu worked on “Crossings” they learned that about 51% of refugees are women and children. These refugees face many different kinds of violence and danger that threaten them. Someone is a refugee if they are a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to: escape war, escape suffering or escape a natural disaster.

This is something that also happens to people in the United States of America. “After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, African American women were among the worst hurt by flooding in Louisiana. More than half the poor families in the city had single mothers.”

“Leavings/Belongings” is Harriet Bart and Yu-Wen Wu’s way to talk about these things. It is a chance to invite everyone to listen and come together to heal. This project is about the difficulties women and children have to deal with as they flee from war and hunger. It also shows what women go through to find homes for them and their families.

It is about having many refugees spend time together and talk. At the same time they are making “bundles.” These bundles are like small pillows of fabric made of the things that someone has to leave behind. Bart and Wu started this project in Boston and Minneapolis/St Paul. Since then, bundle making sessions have been held in Portland, ME, Worcester MA, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Leavings/Belongings is on display at SITE Santa Fe, in the SITE Lab up front. It will be available for viewing upon SITE’s reopening to the public.

On Leavings/Belongings:

What makes a textile?

Wool: Wool comes from sheep and other animals. There are also other terms for more specific types of wool. Cashmere and mohair come from goats. Qiviut comes from muskoxen. Hide and fur clothing comes from bison. Angora comes from rabbits, and other types of wool from creatures known as camelids, like llamas and alpacas. Wool catches fire at a higher temperature than cotton and some synthetic fibers. Wool clothing is used for firefighters, soldiers, and other jobs that put people in danger of fire. This is because wool does not catch fire or spread fire easily.

Silk: Silk is a natural fiber. The fiber is made of silk that is created by certain insect larvae to form cocoons. The best-known silk is obtained from the cocoons of mulberry silkworm larvae. Silk was first used as fabric in ancient China. The earliest known example of silk was found in soil samples from two tombs in Henan, which date back about 8,500 years.

Cotton: Cotton is a soft, fluffly fiber that grows in a protective case also known as a boll. Under natural conditions, the cotton bolls will help the seeds to spread out and grow in a larger area.

The plant is native to areas around the world, including the Americas, Africa, Egypt and India. The greatest variety of wild cotton is found in Mexico, with the second greatest variety found in Australia, and the third greatest in Africa. Cotton bolls discovered in a cave near Tehuacán, Mexico, are known to have been around as early as 5500 BC, but this date is not agreed upon by all scientists. It is agreed upon, however, that cotton certainly did exist in Mexico between around 3400 and 2300 BC.

Glass Fiber: Glass fiber is a material consisting of many extremely thin fibers of glass. Glassmakers throughout history have made experiments with glass fibers but they were always small experiments. Making lots of glass fiber was only made possible with the invention of finer and more precise machines. In 1893, Edward Drummond Libbey showed a dress at the World’s Columbian Exposition which used glass fibers as thin and soft as silk fibers. Glass fibers can also occur in nature, as something known as Pele’s hair.

Pele’s hair (the closest Hawaiian translation is “huluhulu o pele”) is a form of lava. It is named after Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes. It can be defined as volcanic glass fibers or thin strands of volcanic glass. The strands are formed through the stretching of molten glass made from lava.

Rayon: Rayon is a fiber made from materials such as wood and agricultural products. Different techniques are done that change the material into a fiber. There are many types of rayon that can mimic the feel and texture of fibers like silk, wool, cotton, and linen.

Rayon fabrics are soft, smooth, cool, comfortable, and very absorbent. But they do not always store heat, which makes them perfect for use in hot and humid climates. Some people think rayon makes their hand feel cool and sometimes almost slippery to the touch.
Setting the stage: Facts about textiles

Textiles are made from many different kinds of materials. There are four main types of material used to create textile: animal (wool, silk), plant (cotton, flax, jute, bamboo), mineral (asbestos, glass fibre), and synthetic (nylon, polyester, acrylic, rayon). Textiles are formed by weaving, crocheting, knitting, knotting, tatting, felting, or braiding.

The words fabric, cloth, and material are often used in jobs like tailoring and dressmaking. The three words seem like they mean the same thing, but there are some differences. A textile is any material made of fibers that are combined together. A fabric is a material that is first made by weaving, knitting, or crocheting. Then it will be used to make something else like clothes, blankets, towels, and more. Cloth is similar to fabric but it has been changed beyond a fabric so that it is used to make a more specific type of clothing.

The first clothes were worn at least 70,000 years ago and maybe even earlier. They were probably made of animal skins and they helped protect early humans from weather, nature, and earth. Sewing needles are at least 50,000 years old. The oldest possible example is a needlepoint found in South Africa from 60,000 years ago. Other early examples of needles dating from 41,000-15,000 years ago are found in multiple locations including Slovenia, Russia, China, Spain, and France.
Humans have used textiles for a very long time on all parts of the Earth. They protect and warm our bodies, decorate our homes, and make work easier. In “Leavings/Belongings” Harriet and Yu-Wen have created a work of art which shows the way textiles are something that everyone can both understand and appreciate. Everyone can also use textiles to express their individual stories. Below are a number of different famous textiles created throughout history, from around the globe.

**Batik** is an Indonesian technique of dyeing fabric which began in Java. Batik is made by drawing dots and lines with a spouted tool called a tjanting, or by printing the shapes with a copper stamp called a cap. The artist uses the tjanting or the cap to draw the pattern on the fabric with wax. The wax stops the dye from coloring certain parts of the fabric. The artist can use different colors by soaking the cloth in one color, removing the wax with boiling water, and doing it over again.

**Shisheh or abhla bharat** is a type of embroidery which attaches small pieces of reflective metal mirrors to fabric. Mirror embroidery is done throughout Asia, and today can be found in Afghanistan, China, and Indonesia. The embroidery started in the 17th century in India. Traditionally, shisheh work was done using a rock known as mica. Sometimes beetles, tin, silver or coins were used instead. These materials were later turned into glass, blown into large thin bubbles and then broken into small pieces for use. Traditional shisha mirrors have a curve due to this process. The practice is done by women in South Asia, who use special scissors that are repeatedly made damp with water to prevent tiny flying pieces. They then use the scissors to snip the mirrors into smaller shapes.

**Kuba textiles** are a textile from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Africa. Most textiles have different rectangular or square pieces with lines of embroidery. The embroidery is woven from palm leaf fiber. When the palm leaves are cut to form a pile, it causes the surface to resemble velvet. Women are responsible for transforming the cloth into different forms including ceremonial skirts, tribute cloths, headdresses and basketry.

**Tartan** is a patterned cloth consisting of criss-crossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colors. Tartans originated in woven wool, but now they are made in many other materials. Tartan is particularly associated with Scotland; Scottish kilts almost always have tartan patterns.

Tartan is made with alternating bands of colored threads. The colored threads are woven at right angles. If you look up close, this forms diagonal lines where different colors cross. Those two crossing colors give the appearance of new colors mixed from the original ones. The blocks of color that are made of mixed colors repeat vertically and horizontally. The pattern of the mixed squares and lines is called a sett. Tartan is often called “plaid” by mistake. In Scotland, a plaid is a large piece of tartan cloth, worn as a type of kilt or large shawl. A plaid could also refer to a blanket like one on a bed.

**Yuzen** is a Japanese dyeing technique which uses rice paste applied to fabric to prevent color transfer. Just like Batik!

It began in the 17th century. The technique was popular for two reasons. Number one; it didn’t follow the laws on clothing that existed in Japan. Number two; it was a much faster way to make a kimono that looked hand-painted. Yuzen dyeing is special because of the process called itome-nori. Itome-nori is when the artist uses starch. This makes it so the colors don’t mix and everything stays colorful and sharp.

**Tenango** is a style of embroidery which originated in Tenango de Doria, Hidalgo. Pieces show many figures or creatures in a pattern. The pattern is mostly or completely symmetrical. The most common things embroidered are the plants and animals found in the Tenango de Doria area. This includes chickens, dogs, wild birds, rabbits, horses, flowers and trees. Sometimes people and other objects appear as well. Most often, they are made using bright colors such as yellows, greens and blues. They take a lot of work to make. A tablecloth or bedspread may take up to six years to make.

In the 1960’s a drought caused serious trouble for Tenango de Doria because many crops died. People weren’t able to make money and needed a new business to survive. The idea to sell Otomi embroidery instead of crops came from the small community of San Nicolas in Tenango de Doria. This is when tenango embroidery first appeared as something to sell. However, not everything was good. The big problem is that the artists who make the embroidery get paid a lot less than what the piece sells for elsewhere.

Very poor and/or non-Spanish speaking artists may be paid as little as 100 pesos for a tablecloth. Some even exchange their work for nothing but food. It is estimated there are about 1,200 artisans practicing the craft, but the number may be much higher as it does not count children as young as five years old who are helping with the work.
**Make your own Textile:**

Use this part to create your own fabric pattern. Be sure to fill in one block at a time! If you don’t have different colors to use, try drawing shapes for each block (X / O / Triangle / Star / Square / Dot). You can also fill in blocks with lines going in a single direction (Up, Right, Diagonal Right, Diagonal Left). Great patterns use repeating shapes. Look through the workbook for inspiration!

**Interview an older friend or family member:**

Many times people are judged too quickly based on their appearance. It’s great to use style to visually define yourself, but there’s more to a person than what’s on the surface. Arrange a time with an older friend or family member to interview them and learn more about the personal history that has defined who they are today. Record the answers of the person you are interviewing and make a note of what stuck out as important to you.

Q #1.) Where are you from? Where are your parents from?

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Q #2.) When were you born?

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Q #3.) What was your favorite outfit as a child? What was your favorite outfit as a teenager? What is your favorite outfit now?

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Q #4.) What is a tradition you remember fondly from your youth?

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Q #5.) Who are other people in your life that you feel have similar experiences to you? What makes their experiences similar to your own?

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Q #6.) Create your own question and ask your interviewee. Then have the person being interviewed create a question for you. Then answer that question.

______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________