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

Harriet Bart was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is a conceptual artist who creates evocative content through the theater of installation, the narrative power of objects, and the intimacy of artist’s books. At the core of her work is a deep and abiding interest in the personal and cultural expression of memory.

Yu-Wen Wu was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She is an interdisciplinary artist who creates works that explore the philosophical concepts of universal connectedness and interdependency. Her work utilizes the visual language of data and information in drawing, painting and time-based art.

Harriet and Yu-Wen first met in 2010 at an artists residency in Virginia. Their friendship began when Yu-Wen offered Harriet her camera. Following this kind gesture, the two shared a studio visit where they discovered how compatible their art and practices were.

In 2016, at the Perlman Teaching Museum, they worked across the whole campus to create “Crossings”, a work that dealt with the theme of walking. They were thinking about what it would be like if you had to walk to live. “Crossings” used 6 tons of river rock, carried across 1 ¾ miles to create an installation which reflects the great lengths immigrants will go to in order to find safety and seek refuge. That same year, the two began work on the current project of bundles which would become the installation “Leavings/Belongings”.

During Bart and Wu’s work on “Crossings” they learned how, according to the United Nations, approximately 51% of refugees are women and children. Abduction, rape, sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation are some of the problems faced by these refugees. In a more recent 2018 report, “United Nations figures indicate that 80% of people displaced by climate change are women. Roles as primary caregivers and providers of food and fuel make them more vulnerable when flooding and drought occur.”

This kind of displacement is something that also happens in the United States of America. BBC News reports; “After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, African American women were among the worst affected by flooding in Louisiana. More than half the poor families in the city were headed by single mothers.” They also note how “in the immediate aftermath of extreme events, emergency shelters can be inadequately equipped to support women. The Superdome, in which evacuees were temporarily housed after Hurricane Katrina, didn’t have enough sanitary products for the women accommodated there.”

“Leavings/Belongings” is Harriet Bart and Yu-Wen Wu’s way to tackle this issue, respond to it, and bring public awareness and healing. This project focuses on the unique hardships endured by women and children as they flee war, famine and face issues of resettlement.

“It is an opportunity to bring various refugee/immigrant communities together to make “bundles” and tell their stories of leaving their native countries and the difficulties of resettlement in the United States.” These bundles are like small pillows of fabric representing all that an individual has left behind, and the little that they have carried with them. “If they choose, participants and their pillows of fabric representing all that an individual has left behind, and the little that they have carried with them. “If they choose, participants and their bundles are photographed and stories recorded. Bart and Wu started this project by reaching out to non-profit organizations working with communities in their respective cities 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: Harriet Bart and Yu-Wen Wu

Leavings/Belongings is currently installed at SITE Santa Fe, in the SITE Lab and will be available for viewing upon SITE’s reopening to the public.

What makes a textile?

Wool: Wool is the textile fiber obtained from sheep and other animals, including cashmere and mohair from goats, qiviut from muskoxen, hide and fur clothing from bison, angora from rabbits, and other types of wool from camellids. Wool ignites at a higher temperature than cotton and some synthetic fibers. It has a lower rate of flame spread, a lower rate of heat release, a lower heat of combustion, and does not melt or drip; Wool is usually specified for garments for firefighters, soldiers, and others in occupations where they are exposed to the likelihood of fire.

Silk: Silk is a natural protein fiber, some forms of which can be woven into textiles. The protein fiber of silk is composed mainly of filin and is produced by certain insect larvae to form cocoons. The best-known silk is obtained from the cocoons of the larvae of the mulberry silkworm. Silk use in fabric was first developed in ancient China. The earliest evidence for silk is the presence of the silk protein fibroin in soil samples from two tombs at the neolithic site Jiuhu in Henan, which date back about 8,500 years.

Cotton: Cotton is a soft, fluffy staple fiber that grows in a boll, or protective case, around the seeds of the cotton plants of the genus Gossypium in the mallow family Malvaceae. The fiber is almost pure cellulose. Under natural conditions, the cotton bolls will increase the dispersal of the seeds.

The plant is a shrub native to tropical and subtropical regions around the world, including the Americas, Africa, Egypt and India. The greatest diversity of wild cotton species is found in Mexico, followed by Australia and Africa. Cotton was independently domesticated in the Old and New Worlds. Cotton bolls discovered in a cave near Tehuacan, Mexico, have been dated to as early as 5500 BC, but this date has been challenged. More securely dated is the domestication of Gossypium hirsutum in Mexico between around 3400 and 2300 BC.

Glass Fiber: Glass fiber is a material consisting of numerous extremely fine fibers of glass. Glassmakers throughout history have experimented with glass fibers, but mass manufacture of glass fiber was only made possible with the invention of finer machine tooling. In 1893, Edward Drummond Libby exhibited a dress at the World’s Columbian Exposition incorporating glass fibers with the diameter and texture of silk fibers. Glass fibers can also occur naturally, as Pele’s hair. Pele’s hair (closest Hawaiian translation: “huluhulu o pele”) is a form of lava. It can be defined as volcanic glass fibers or thin strands of volcanic glass. The strands are formed through the stretching of molten basaltic glass from lava, usually from lava fountains, lava cascades, and vigorous lava flows.

Rayon: Rayon is a manufactured fiber made from natural sources such as wood and agricultural products that are regenerated as cellulose fiber. The many types and grades of rayon can imitate the feel and texture of natural fibers such as silk, wool, cotton, and linen.

In manufacturing terms, rayon is classified as “a fiber formed by regenerating natural materials into a usable form”.

Rayon fabrics are soft, smooth, cool, comfortable, and highly absorbent, but they do not always insulate body heat, making them ideal for use in hot and humid climates, although also making their “hand” (feel) cool and sometimes almost slimy to the touch.
Textiles are made from many different kinds of materials. There are four main sources 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, latting, felting, or braiding.

The words fabric, cloth, and material are often used in textile assembly trades (i.e. tailoring and dressmaking) as synonyms for the word textile. There are subtle differences, however, in the use of these words in their specialized fields. A textile is any material made of interlacing fibers, including carpeting and geotextiles. A fabric is a material made through weaving, knitting, spreading, crocheting, or bonding that may be used in production of further goods (garments, etc.). Cloth may be used synonymously with fabric but is often a piece of fabric that has been processed.

The first clothes, worn at least 70,000 years ago and perhaps much earlier, were probably made of animal skins and helped protect early humans from the elements. Sewing needles have been dated to at least 50,000 years ago (Denisova Cave, Siberia) – and uniquely associated with a human species other than modern humans, i.e. H. Denisova/H. Altai. The oldest possible example is 60,000 years ago, a needlepoint (missing stem and eye) found in Sibudu Cave, South Africa. Other early examples of needles dating from 41,000-15,000 years ago are found in multiple locations, e.g. Slovenia, Russia, China, Spain, and France.
Textiles have long been used by humans for a variety of reasons. They protect and warm our bodies, decorate our homes, and make labor easier and more efficient. In "Leavings/Belongings" Harriet and Yu-Wen have created a work which shows how textiles are something that everyone can both understand and appreciate, and also use to express their individual stories. Below are a number of different famous textiles created around the globe.

**Famous textile designs from across the globe:**

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**Batik** is an Indonesian technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to whole cloth. This technique originated from Java, Indonesia. Batik is made either by drawing dots and lines of the resist with a spouted tool called a tjanting, or by printing the resist with a copper stamp called a cap. The applied wax resists dyes and therefore allows the artisan to color selectively by soaking the cloth in one color, removing the wax with boiling water, and repeating if multiple colors are desired.

Wax resist dyeing of fabric is an ancient art form. It already existed in Egypt in the 4th century BC, where it was used to wrap mummies; linen was soaked in wax, and scratched using a stylus. In Asia, the technique was practised in China during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), and in India and Japan during the Nara Period (645–794 AD). In Africa it was originally practised by the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, Soninke and Wolof in Senegal. These African version however, uses cassava starch or rice paste, or mud as a resist instead of beeswax.

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*Shisheh* or *abhla bharat* embroidery, or *mirror-work*, is a type of embroidery which attaches small pieces of reflective mirrors to fabric. Mirror embroidery is spread throughout Asia, and today can be found in the traditional embroidery of the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, China, and Indonesia.

The Shisheh embroidery originated in the 17th century in India. Traditionally, shisheh or abhla bharat work was done using mica but beetles, tin, silver or coins were not uncommon depending on the region. This was replaced by glass blown into large thin bubbles and broken into small pieces for this use. Traditional shisha mirrors have a convex curve due to this process. The tradition of making circular shisha was extensively done by women in South Asia, who use special scissors that are repeatedly dampened to prevent flying shards, and snip them into smaller circular shapes.

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**Kawung** is another very old design consisting of intersecting circles, known in Java since at least the thirteenth century. It has been suggested that the ovals might represent flora such as the fruit of the kapok (silk cotton) tree or the arein (sugar palm).

**Suzanis** are unique in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire, for their elaboration and complexity of design and surface decoration. Most textiles are a variation on rectangular or square pieces of woven palm leaf fiber enhanced by geometric designs executed in linear embroidery and other stitches, which are cut to form pile surfaces resembling velvet. Women are responsible for transforming raffia cloth into various forms of textiles, including ceremonial skirts, ‘velvet’ tribute cloths, headdresses and basketry.

Suzani is a type of embroidered and decorative tribal textile made in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries. Suzani is from the Persian *Suzan* which means needle. The art of making such textiles in Iran is called *Suzandozi* (needlework).

Kuba textiles are unique in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire, for their elaboration and complexity of design and surface decoration. Most textiles are a variation on rectangular or square pieces of woven palm leaf fiber enhanced by geometric designs executed in linear embroidery and other stitches, which are cut to form pile surfaces resembling velvet. Women are responsible for transforming raffia cloth into various forms of textiles, including ceremonial skirts, ‘velvet’ 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 (pre-dyed) threads woven as both warp and weft at right angles to each other. The weft is woven in a simple twill, two over—two under the warp, advancing one thread at each pass. This forms visible diagonal lines where different colors cross, which give the appearance of new colors blended from the original ones. The resulting blocks of color repeat vertically and horizontally in a distinctive pattern of squares and lines known as a sett.

Tartan is often mistakenly called “plaid” (particularly in the United States), but in Scotland, a *plaid* is a large piece of tartan cloth, worn as a type of kilt or large shawl. The term *plaid* is also used in Scotland for an ordinary blanket such as one would have on a bed.

The world’s first permanent color photograph, taken by Thomas Sutton (using the three color process developed by James Clerk Maxwell) in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon.

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Suzani usually have a cotton (sometimes silk) fabric base, which is embroidered in silk or cotton thread. Chain, satin, and buttonhole stitches are the primary stitches used. There is also extensive use of couching, in which decorative thread laid on the fabric as a raised line is stitched in place with a second thread. Suzanis are often made in two or more pieces that are then stitched together. Popular design motifs include sun and moon disks, flowers (especially tulips, carnations, and irises), leaves and vines, fruits (especially pomegranates), and occasional fish and birds.
Yūzen is a Japanese resist dyeing technique involving the application of rice paste to fabric to prevent color transfer. Originating in the 17th century, the technique became popular as both a way of subverting existing laws which limited dress fabrics, and also as a way to produce kimono that appeared to be hand-painted in a much shorter time period. The technique was named after Miyazaki Yūzen, a 17th-century fan painter who perfected the technique.

Yūzen dyeing is special because of the process called itome-nori. Itome-nori is when the artist uses starch on the edge of the colored area. This makes it so the colors don’t mix and everything stays colorful and sharp.

Other methods of resist dyeing are rōketsuzome with wax, katazome and tsutsugaki with rice paste. Birodo yūzen, or yūzen birodo, describes velvet dyed and painted using the yūzen process whereby the pile is cut away in deep and light layers to create a painterly effect of light and shade. Birodo yūzen is not actually embroidered, but uses a cut-velvet technique to reproduce paintings and photographs.

Tenango is a style of embroidery which originated in the Tenango de Doria municipality in the Mexican state of Hidalgo. It is a commercialized version of traditional Otomi embroidery, which was developed in the 1960s in response to an economic crisis. It is estimated at over 1,200 artisans practice the craft in Tenango de Doria and the neighboring municipality of San Bartolo Tutotepec.

Tenango is a simplified version of embroidery done for centuries, adapted for products to be sold to the outside world. Pieces generally have multiple figurative elements in stylized form, which are arranged onto the fabric in a geometric pattern, mostly or completely symmetrical. The most common elements are the flora and fauna found in the Tenango de Doria area including chickens, dogs, wild birds, rabbits, horses, flowers and trees. Sometimes people and other objects appear as well. These elements are most often arranged in a pattern, but can be set up to form scenes from daily life, folk festivals and religion. Most often, the elements are not done in realistic colors, rather using bright colors such as yellows, greens and blues. Better tenangos have small, tight stitches, with a well-done tablecloth or bedspread taking up to six years to make.

The embroidery style now known as tenango is based on traditional Otomi embroidery of the area, but modified to create pieces to sell. This occurred in the 1960s when a regional drought severely disrupted the local economy’s dependence on subsistence agriculture. The origin of this innovation has been traced to the small community of San Nicolas in the municipality of Tenango de Doria. Originally the idea was to make and sell pepenado blouses, a kind of gathered and traditional blouse still worn there. However, these are very time-consuming to make and could not be sold for a sufficient price. Instead, embroidery elements were transferred to flat pieces of fabric. However, some of the marketing has been controversial. One of the main problems is that the artisans receive many times less what the piece eventually sells for. Very poor and/or non-Spanish speaking artisans may be exploited, paid as little as 100 pesos for a tablecloth or even exchanging their work for food. It is estimated there are about 1,200 artisans practicing the craft in the municipality, but the number may be much higher as it does not count children as young as five helping with the work.

**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 note of what stuck out 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.