



Chandra Wu

Seattle, WA

chandrawu@gmail.com

www.chandrawu.com

ARTIST STATEMENT

My paternal great grandmother was a tailor and quilter in Nebraska. I feel very deeply connected to the craft that she passed on to my grandmother. I was born in Seattle and grew up on Whidbey Island around both fresh and saltwater shores. I appreciate how changing ecosystems and the disappearance of local species such as local salmon, frogs and bees I recall in plenty as a child illustrates the acceleration of our impact on the planet. Some crafts seem to be going extinct as well. I want to honor and value the work of my ancestors through quilt-making. My mother taught me to sew on her great aunt's White treadle machine that originated on a farm in Stanwood, WA. Those early treadle sewing machines were a valuable piece of farm equipment!

I was living in Vancouver, BC where I got involved with the Modern Quilt Guild and then attended my first QuiltCon in 2013 after moving to Seattle and co-founding the Seattle Modern Quilt Guild. The modern quilt movement is a wave of quilt revival that swept me into social circles of quilters of my generation online and has recently been superseded by another interest in needlework during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first wave inspired me to begin making art quilts from improvisation and repurposed materials while the second wave reinforced my interest in making quilts as works of art and employing more handwork.



ARTIST STATEMENT, *cont.*

The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Celebration piece (*at right, Molly's Moons, 36 x 48*) is the only quilt I completed in 2020, while serving as a full-time teacher for Seattle Public Schools. I am concerned about our collective mental health now more than ever. As a teacher doing remote instruction throughout most of 2020, I avoided sitting at my sewing machine after long hours in my makeshift "office" at home. Returning to this quilt helped me sustain my patience of being isolated at home and set boundaries around my work-life balance. Hand quilting helped me support my own healing as I stitched an improvisational "moon over mountains" pattern. The resulting shapes formed from puzzling these oddly shaped scrap pieces together over and over again remind me a bit of Molly Upton, an early quilter during the quilt renaissance of the 1970's and one of the first to produce quilts as fine art.



Recently I have focused more on hand piecing, embroidery and hand quilting. I am inspired by the intersection of the natural world with modern industrial life. Some areas of interest for me include the current climate crisis and the human, animal, and floral responses to this profound change to our planet's habitat. This impacts my use of materials, including natural, found and reusable textiles.

A formal education in geology and physics inspires a lot of the balance and design in my art. I feel that improvisation is a novel way to implement my "engineering" brain as a problem-solver working with complex or oddly fitting patchwork pieces or determining how quilting can highlight the elements of a quilt. I have been mentored by improvisational quilt artists Sherri Lynn Woods and Nancy Crow. Hand stitching inspirations include local Sequim quiltmaker Marla Varner, renowned painter and sculptor Coulter Fussell, master embroiderer Ekta Kaul, and maximalist hand-piecing and quilting vanguard Heidi Parkes. A quiltmaker I truly admire is fellow former Seattle guild member, Season Evans, who makes stunning minimalist quilts in Philadelphia.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

I completed an artist residency at the Richmond Saltwater Park in Shoreline, WA in 2022 and received a recent Best Handwork award at Quiltfest, SC in April. "Pink Moon Volcano" is currently on exhibit at the Carnegie Museum of Art in IN.

In 2022-23, I've shown work in Denton Arts, TX; Schweinfurth Museum, NY; the PNW Fiber Art Museum here in La Conner, WA as well as local Columbia City Art Gallery, Gallery B612 and Collective Visions. See more of my quilts at the Bothell Visitor Center through July 15, or during the Bothell art walk on July 13th.

OTHER WORKS

Below, left: *Subduction Zone*, 2022, 28 x 19; Below, right: *Heat Birth*, 2023, 43 x 33

