



Meredith Grimsley Bloomsburg



Artist Statement

From the day we are born to the day we die, we are wrapped in fiber. It has been a second skin: ushered us into this world; kept us warm; made us fashionable; embraced us in fear, love, memory, and nostalgia; adorned us in ceremony; ornamented the spaces we occupy; been passed down through families in heirloom and practice; and will usher us out when we pass from this world. Our interaction with textiles is the longest sustained physical relationship we have in our lives. Other than our own body, it is the only material that will always accompany us through life - disposable to sacred. Further, fiber art is made from materials which are perceived to be delicate or fragile. Yet, when a fiber artwork is made, the materials can withstand incredible physical manipulation, harsh chemical environments, and extreme temperatures, it is beaten, stomped, tied, knotted, tangled, pierced with needles, and still remains strong or becomes stronger. This is simply awesome. I am moved by the metaphorical capabilities of fiber as an artistic medium and as a conduit to the subconscious.

As a 47-year-old woman, what my work has given me at this point in my life is a deeply painful, yet, liberating perspective that I have labored under a personal fiction most of my life. My work revealed the veil of self-deception I had constructed over my depression and childhood trauma. As a coping mechanism for trauma, personally created fairy tales have clouded my vision and ability to live in truth. As an artist, I correlate dysfunctional family legacies through both personal experience and epigenetics to reveal the psychological/genetic traits that each generation inherits. I see that, within families, significant events, words, and behaviors occur and are absorbed into our daily routine without examination. Some happen over time or in a breath. Our minds and bodies are formed. However, whatever residue embeds through nature and nurture, we have the opportunity to deconstruct those wounds and reclaim our spiritual identity – our spiritual birthright. Now, I find myself in eager pursuit of truth. To my audience, I whisper about my search with the physical, indelible mark of the stitch and the language of fiber. Through my work, I am ushered into a radical acceptance of self-worth. I am given the gift to reconnect with the mysteries of life: perfectly timed pain; confrontation of darkness; embracing true love; seeking forgiveness; practicing gratitude; nurturing friendships; the endurance of the human spirit; and accepting the gift of God's healing grace.

Tapiwa Mugabe's poem, "You are Oceanic", calls to me at every level of my life and work:

"All she wanted
Was to find a place to stretch her bones
And spread her hair
A place where her legs could walk
Without cutting and bruising
A place unchained
She was born out of the ocean breath.
I reminded her;
"Stop pouring so much of yourself
Into hearts that have no room for themselves
Do not thin yourself
Be vast
You do not bring the ocean to a river."