



VERWEBAN

FLOSSIE PEITSCH

(fur-vee'-bonn) Germanic Interweaving

April 11th – May 25th, 2025

Fabrik Arts & Heritage

Lobethal, SA



VERWEBAN is supported by the Australian Government's Arts and Cultural Development Program, Regional Arts Australia and Regional Arts Victoria.



FABRIK

**Thanking the fans of FLO_ART, some of whom
have faithfully followed Flossie for over 50 years.**

Dr. Flossie Peitsch, a Creative PhD candidate, Federation University and a PhD from Victoria University and MFA, BFA(HONS) from Monash University, Melbourne, is an internationally exhibiting multimedia, performance art, and installation artist residing near Melbourne. A cross-disciplinary artist, community liaison, academic and art educator, Peitsch is a 'visual art' theologian with interests in social sculpture, generating creative communities through the arts and contemporary spirituality facilitating the self-realization of being – termed one's SPLACE.

VERWEBAN (fur-vee'-bonn): Germanic Interweaving
FABRIK Arts + Heritage, 1 Lobethal Rd, Lobethal, SA

Exhibition 11 April – May 25, 2025

April 11th Artist's Talk @ 5pm

Opening April 11th @ 6pm
Brian Parkes, CEO JamFactory

With FEARLESS SOUNDSCAPE by Andrew Voigt

WORKSHOP April 12th CRAFTING ART

From 1869 - 1992, Lobethal's Onkaparinga Woollen Mills, were synonymous with the highest quality Australian blankets and materials. Artist Flossie Peitsch sketched the skilled workers at their beloved machines, soon to be parted. Also a weaver, Peitsch used the very fibres produced by the Mill to weave 54 tapestries. For the first time, these two significant bodies of art are exhibited together. Knitted and constructed installations are also displayed.



A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE ART OF FLOSSIE PEITSCH

Neal Nuske

Flossie Peitsch is a contemporary Australian artist made with genuine Canadian parts and field-tested in her adopted Australian home environment. In colloquial terms Flossie is a *rara avis*, a rare bird, a visual artist whose inner self has been moulded, but not immobilised, within a tradition of spirituality. A particular Canadian Maple now has grafted herself onto an Australian Eucalypt, finding an artistic home fostered by a rich legacy of distinctively personal ideas under constant reformation and reshaping through her encounter with Australian environmental contexts and Indigenous cultures.

Her works of art reveal how she is constructing meaning within her interior *self* at a particular time and within a particular place. In her 2006 Doctoral Thesis, she defined this personal process as *splace* -that is, *space* and *place* within the reflective and creative artistic *self*.

SPLACE is:

a site within artistic consciousness where an artist can begin or continue the search for meaning in a way that identifies elements and themes from one's own spiritual tradition;

or elements and themes from one's own philosophical tradition;

or elements and themes from one's own reservoir of deeply held beliefs and values -and integrate these within the creative dimensions of the artistic self.

SPLACE is:

a context within which one can construct meaning; and,

meaning is found in the link between the internal world of the self and the way this is manifest in one's art.

VERWEBAN is a solo exhibition of art by Flossie Peitsch

KITH and KIN

wooden cot, woollen weaving

RUMPLEDQUILTSKINS

(5) deconstructed quilt

TABLESCARF

hand knitting

SCARF PEOPLE

(10) hand knitting

FEARLESS

(54) tapestry weavings

FEARLESS SOUNDSCAPE

digital soundscapes

THROUGH THE MILL AGAIN

watercolour paintings

WATERCOLOUR PAINTINGS, FIBRE ART, INSTALLATION

DR FLOSSIE PEITSCH

A bulging plastic bag of woollen strands lay with my art supplies since 1992. I had hastily bagged up these offcuts during the last days of the Mill after I had drawn and painted the operator at the 'twisting' machine. It sat heavily on the bottom shelf of my metal cabinet, patiently hibernating for over twenty years. Oh yes, I had used some of the woollen 'tails' - as is - for another fibre project but that was mercifully dismantled when we moved to Victoria. At that time, I couldn't bring myself to pull apart these wonderful unwoven blanket makings. Now that I am a tapestry weaver, I ruthlessly prey upon all fibres, mixing and matching willy-nilly. Sorting first colour, then tone, then separating fibres, like pulled pork. It's such fun to play!

The wooden structure on which to weave was also from my stock room. It is the very same cot - now recycled and rotated - that we had used for our six babies more than

30 years ago. In this altered state, I suggest that a cot acts as both a fence, for safety and a ladder, for advancing through life. If the wooden frame is as a skeleton, then the wool is the fleshing out of action and ideas, the linking of culture and community, the shaping of beliefs and values. This happens in every home in every country at any stage of one's development through living with others. Sometimes parenting is at work here, but much depends on the child itself and the choices they make. So, products of their own times, the outcomes for our children are often, somewhat mercifully, out of our control.

Two disparate raw materials waited several decades for their artist to discover how to use them. She had to gain the mechanical skills, artistic confidence and the intellectual insight for KITHandKIN to arrive at this time. It is kin to being born for both creator and createe.

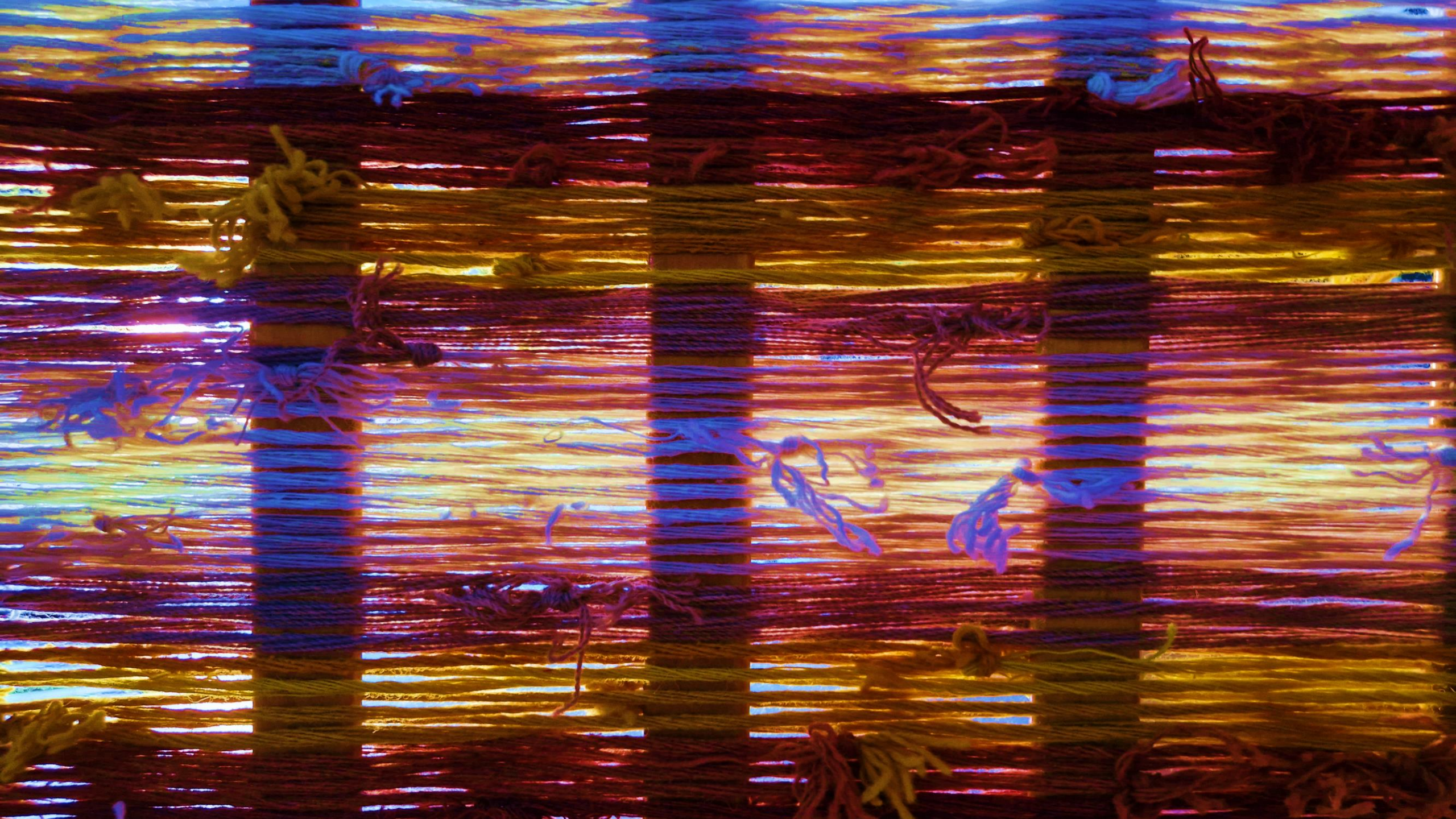
KITHandKIN

2025

Date:

Medium: wooden cot, woollen weaving
Location: Maryborough, VIC Dimensions: Variable





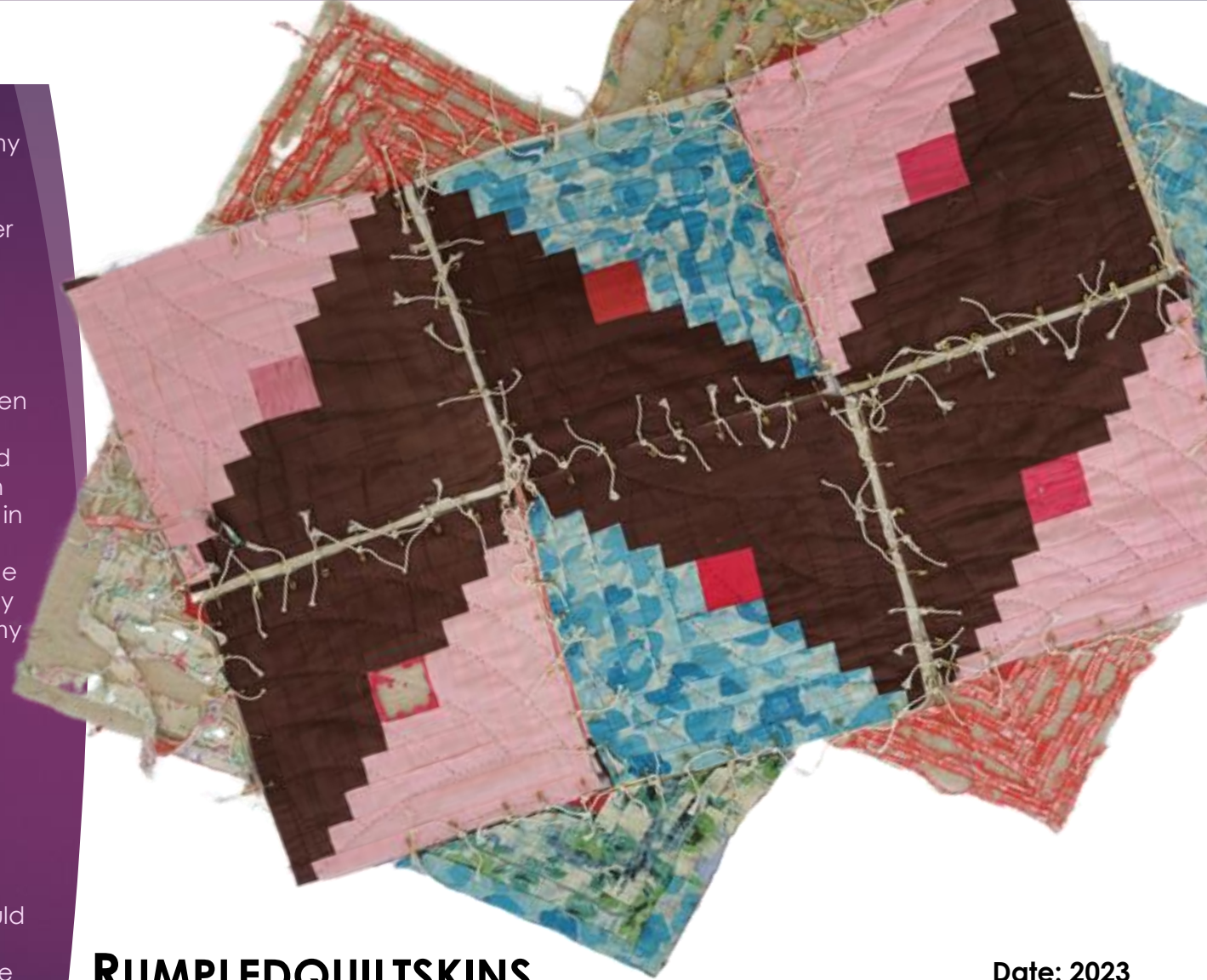


My grandmother, mother and mother-in-law have greatly influenced my fiber-art practice.... all being quilters. This quilting tradition is passed down to my young adult daughter as well. I possess quilts from four generations – dating from the 1850s until today. Though not a quilter per say, I have often created art using traditional quilting techniques. My mother would be so pleased with me now, since I long emphatically declared, she'd never make a quilter out of me!

In her later years, my mother made the goal of creating and quilting a traditional quilt for each of her four daughters, each of her grandchildren and making a cot blanket for each of her great grandchildren. She worked tirelessly for years, on her own, in the upstairs 'sunroom'. My dad had become concerned that Hildegard had become too 'fixated with her project'. He did not remember the endless hours she had spent, in his own solitude, in his workshop or on church work while my mom, Hildegard, battled with a young family on her own whilst catering for the many visitors who stayed at length. Gradually, the quilts were all lovingly completed, photographed by dad, and delivered – even to me and my children in Australia. What a wonderful epitaph. Love and skill worked into each blanket.

My husband and I slept under our quilt every night for over thirty years. We used it until its log-cabin pattern was in tatters. I tenderly unpicked the frayed squares with the idea of repurposing them somehow. There was little left to save of the tired patches. Sadly, I packed the squares away – unable to reuse them - yet unable to throw them out.

Eventually, an idea came to me! I would make them into fine art! I would shape the worn-out squares into animal-shaped 'skins'. They would be blocked out in a way reflective of how women dried animal skins for the warmth and covering of their families - since time immemorial. Even today, women go to great trouble and expense to provide warmth and safety for those they love. I followed my own heart and instinct to make peculiar art installations that are deeply invested in a lived history.



RUMPLED QUILT SKINS

Location: Maryborough, VIC /Sapphire Beach, NSW

Dimensions: 5 Panels x (700cmW x 900cmH x 0.3cmD)

Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

Date: 2023

Panels: 5

Ella Klose. What a wonderful friend! I am indebted to her forever. When my husband took up work as the Lutheran minister in Lobethal, we arrived with a one year old baby, three other boys of assorted ages and various pets in tow.

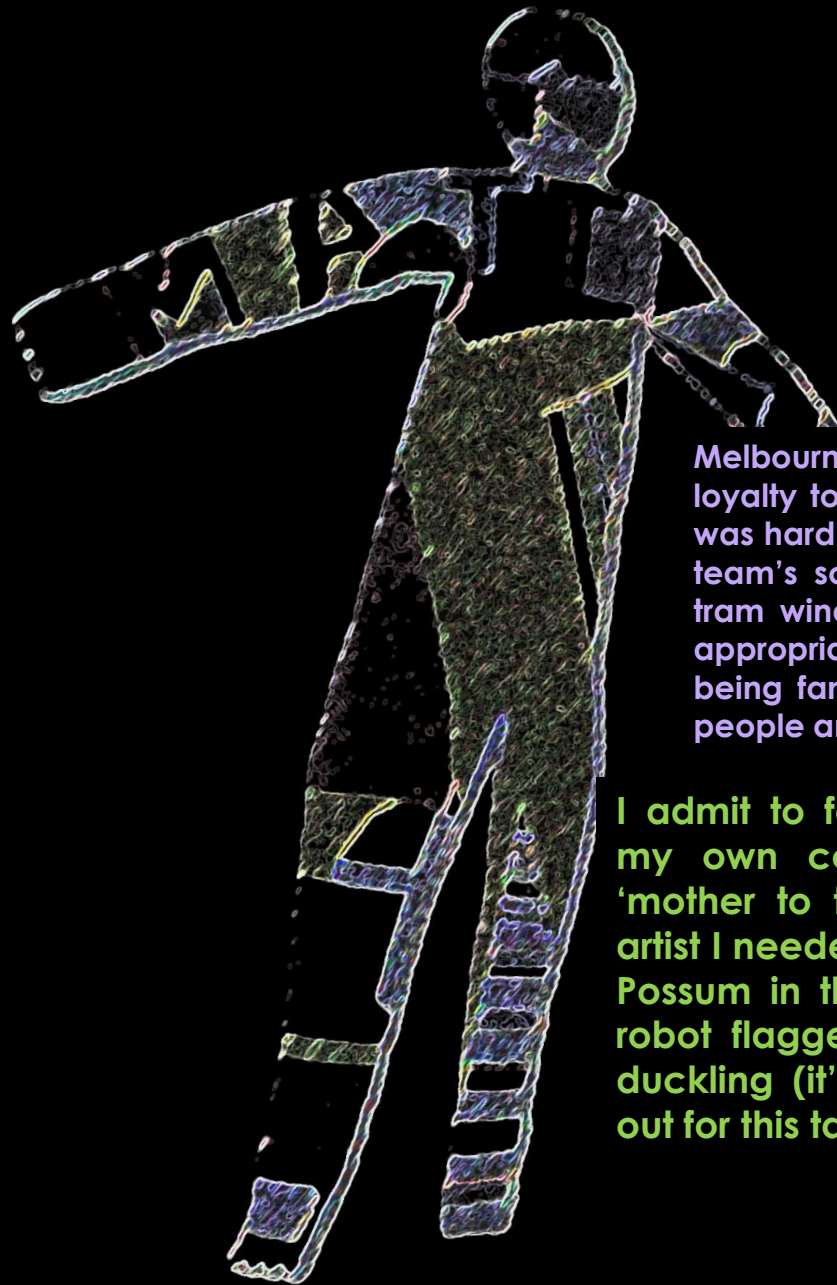
The parishioners were pleased as in time, we added another boy but notably delighted, when Patience arrived! The first girl in the manse in decades. A local, Ella offered us friendship, baby-sitting, canning help and more, at a time when it was sorely needed. Her kindness, good humour and energy was limitless.



Date: 2006 Medium: woollen fibre Location: Lobethal, SA Dimensions: 3m x 4m

TABLESCARF

But best of all were her matchless knitting skills! I designed these odd knitting projects and Ella lovingly crafted them. Moss stitch, I believe she called it. TABLESCARF and SCARF PEOPLE are evidence of Ella's perseverance and commitment to her adopted family, us.



2000 Medium: woollen fibre Location: Lobethal, SA
2001 Dimensions: Variable

SCARF PEOPLE

Melbourne is notorious for its footy teams and blind loyalty towards them. Coming from SA to Victoria, it was hard to fathom. Everyone it seemed sported their team's scarves, proudly flying the colours from the tram windows after a game. I designed these size-appropriate people scarves to emulate the gravity of being family, part of a family, for each of the eight people and pets under my roof.

I admit to feeling trapped and uncertain about my own commitment to my endless role as 'mother to the tribe, while struggling to be the artist I needed to be. To quote the sage advice by Possum in the movie, *The Wild Robot*, when the robot flagged while being a sole parent to the duckling (it's complicated), 'None of us are cut out for this task.' Or something like that.

N Nuske Works sited

- ▶ (1972). Retrieved from National Archives of Australia: <https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/first-australians/other-resources-about-first-australians/wave-hill-walk>
- ▶ *Departure from Nazi Germany of Paul Tillich*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Tillich/Departure-from-Nazi-Germany>
- ▶ Echo, U. (2006). *The Island of the Day before*. Batavia, IL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- ▶ Merton, T. (2002). *No Man is an Island*. Boston: Mariner Books.
- ▶ Peitsch, F. (2007). *The Immortal Now*. Melbourne: PhD Exegesis.
- ▶ Peitsch, F. (2024, January). FEARLESS by Flossie Peitsch: The Augmented and Articulated List. Maryborough, Victoria, Australia: Unpublished Manuscript.
- ▶ Renkin, Ryan, Collette. (2006). *Art and Soul Flossie Peitsch*. Melbourne: Macmillan Publishers Australia.
- ▶ Tillich, P. (1952). *The Courage To Be*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- ▶ Tillich, P. (1957b, p. 41, 43). *Dynamics of Faith*. New York: Yale University Press.



Peitsch with a completed small tapestry weaving, just before it is cut off the loom.

Art as Fearless Endeavour

Neal Nuske

- ▶ Peitsch has recognized the physical, intellectual, and spiritual importance which *space* and *place* (*splace*) has for Indigenous people...but not only indigenous people. Her artistic endeavour is a continuing process involving the restoration and reconfiguration of her migratory *self* in the context of her most recent artistic *splace*, **FEARLESS**.
- ▶ For more than forty thousand years, the Australian landscape has been the *splace* for Indigenous peoples wherein the intense symbiotic relationship between landscape and person creates identity and strengthens belonging. When this intimate relationship between landscape and person is fractured, a legacy of incalculable loss is generated (**BABYSTEPS** 2017).
- ▶ Paradoxically, loss changes the personal landscape of life, family, friends, as well as the fundamental importance inherent in a familiar geographical landscape. For the migratory *rara avis* Peitsch, recollections of homeland were reborn in a foreign context: "My land of birth, Canada," emerged into artistic consciousness. The act of remembering is an ongoing cognitive process which reduces the intensification of isolation and non-being by reconnecting all the foundational building blocks of personal identity.
- ▶ A crisis ensues when landscape is perceived primarily as a commodity for consumption, or a means to a financial end: both symmetry and balance are threatened. Consequently, well-being is challenged and mined by anxiety which will intrude upon and corrode a personal sense of timelessness, peace, and serenity (**DESERT LIGHT** 2018). Thereafter, personal *splace* is destabilised across multiple dimensions: the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual. For Peitsch, artistic creativity is one means by which personal identity and belonging is restored. This requires retreating into a personal *splace*. Tapestry weaving is "mind travel" and becomes a 'time capsule.'
- ▶ **FEARLESS** is the most recent outcome from inhabiting *splace* in which all aspects, shapes, and dimensions of Peitsch's selves were identified and ritually woven (re-membered in contrast to dismembered), that is, put back together (reconfigured), in various forms, in a particular *splace* (**FLIGHT** 2018). Inevitably, the artist will resurface, even though returning to the reality of time and place can be a jolt (**SLIPPAGE** 2018, **STRUGGLE** 2018, **MIMOSA** 2020). What Peitsch writes in (**OBLIQUE** 2023) summarises her conclusions about life: "*the enclosed finite shapes set in simple tactile backgrounds represent an ordered world of logical cause and effect. This well-arranged simplicity will never be a reality... Life is not ordered. The future is unknowable and uncertain.*" Such a conclusion takes the fear out of living in, with, and amongst the irregular complexities of life.
- ▶ **FEARLESS** is a set of visual variations, a landscape of life-experiences, woven into a set of tapestries. While there is an identifiable common origin to all 50+ (?) tapestry weavings, the basic design, plus colour combinations for each set, as well as the manner in which the tapestry-weavings are crafted in response to chronological time-signatures (2017-2023), does not create a bland, monotonous world. It may be likened to a set of visual variations based upon an existential theme, as Peitsch writes in her Design Overview, "*a soundscape tackling the mystifying world of change – found both intrinsically and externally.*"



Dimensions: 6 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD)

Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

BABYSTEPS

Kalkaringi, NT

2017

As an artist-in-residence, commissioned to bring a unifying project to very remote NT, I introduced weaving to literally draw together the threads of disparate cultures – the local indigenous peoples, community council, with supportive medical and educational services. Effectively, everyone in the small community wove parts of these weavings. The result is BABYSTEPS - a story of small repair, of respectful healing, following the truncated and disastrous historical negotiations between locals, unions and the station. At nearby Wave Hill (National Archives of Australia, 1972) in the 1966, Vincent Lingiari, a Gurindji spokesman, led a walk-off of 200 Aboriginal stockmen, house servants, and their families from Wave Hill as a protest against the work and pay conditions.

Everyone needs to belong somewhere on this earth. Everyone needs a physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual space to belong somewhere on this earth. This quest feeds my own restlessness. I uphold that globally, we are all equally worthy and entitled, but a trick of birth has left some far more privileged. This Residency gave me pause to consider this further from the indigenous perspective - whilst interrogating my own sense of belonging and lack of belonging.

DESIGN OVERVIEW

FEARLESS

Following are first person texts by Peitsch, articulating some of the predicated influences and fabrication challenges of creating this collection of tapestry weavings.

Augmented /
Articulated List.....

FEARLESS is a new, robust body of fiber art / digital / performance / soundscape tackling the mystifying world of change – found both intrinsically and externally. Pursuing spirituality in its many expressions, Peitsch is an interpreter of human existence. She is an exegete of her lived experience. SPLACE (Peitsch, 2007) - that is, space and place within the reflective and creative artistic self, is the artistic context within which Flossie's experience of Australia's diversity is collected and expressed in her art.

An assemblage of fifty (50+) new small tapestry weavings; plus five (5) strange, quilted, animal-shaped assemblages by Peitsch, offer expansive, tactile reflections on a changing world. All the outcomes have been created on site in very remote Australia or, are reflective of this experience. A changeless landscape and a travelling suitcase of limited fiber resources facilitated both the unity and diversity of design / colour demonstrated.

'Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.' Thomas Merton. To express my deeper philosophies behind this collection, I would need to say something about my using art as therapy to survive life or possibly, to escape it. To temporarily exorcise reality, with its frequent pain and ultimate loss of control. An artist creating fine art under the pretense of art therapy is something I dismissed as authentic practice in my PhD research.

Now, I must retract those words. After all, fine art is fine art - no matter what its impetus. Another thing that needs saying, is that I want to disappear from sight; hide behind this collection, to somehow to become invisible. There are countless online articles interrogating the effect and importance of artists' identifying identity and stressing social issues in society. I have often done just that during my long art practice. However, this time I aimed for an ambiguity of self – not becoming a prophetic road sign, fearlessly pointing a way ahead. My fearlessness comes cloaked in a smaller, quieter, more fragile voice.

Through non-preemptive visual language, Peitsch encourages audiences to reorient and reshape their thinking about the ordinary and extraordinary traumas of post COVID, post-postmodern life. As a fine art visual artist practicing for over fifty (50+) years, themes of ageism, the worlds of epilepsy and glaucoma, cultural and spiritual literateness, diaspora and displacement are adroitly considered in transformative, visceral outcomes which signify the struggle, the calm and the veracity of ordering disordered lives.

Shades of unimaginable observed light - at dawn, during daylight and at dusk. This perpetual passing of time was for me, a reassuring source of normalcy throughout the year. For one year I lived in Willowra - the government-contrived amalgam of displaced, very remote NT indigenous communities. It is a hazardous five (5) hour drive from Alice Springs. That year brought unprecedented natural

flooding, crocodile attacks, extended loss of power, basic food, services and supplies.

Still, the timelessness of the dry, sandy river bed, the serenity of the towering gums, and the soundlessness of life at night, carried promise and constancy. When reading the following texts, the self-descriptive titles for the following series, completed in Willowra, are self-evident.

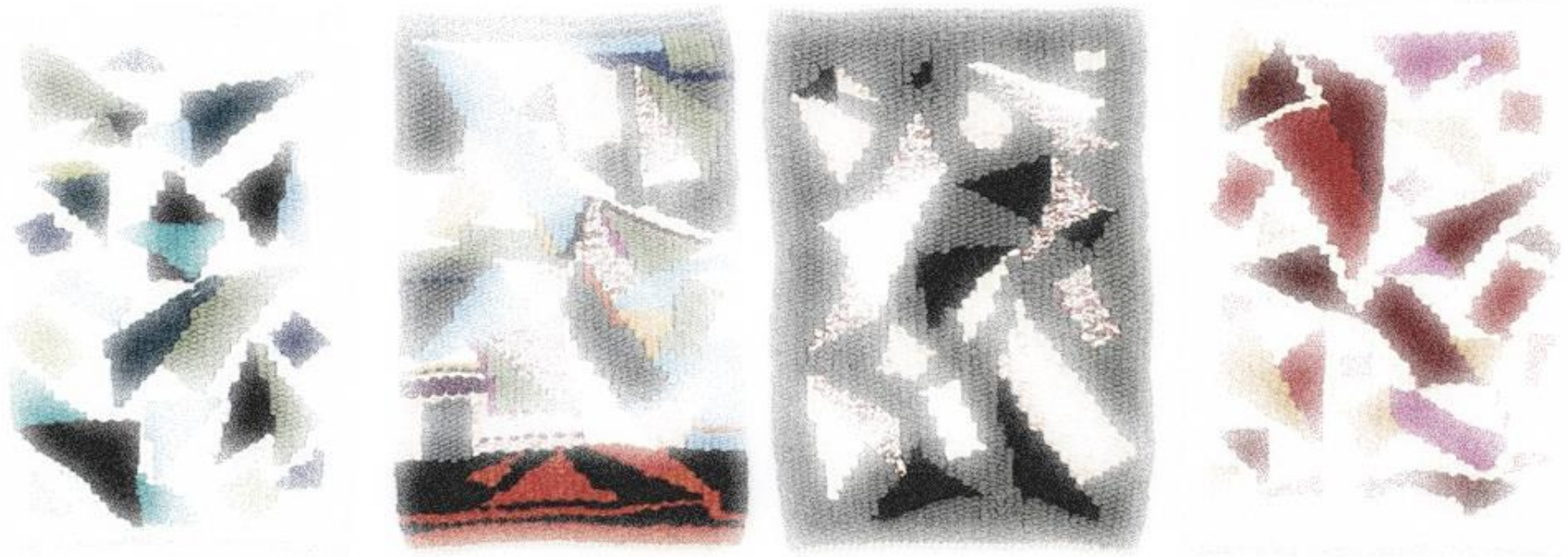
DESERT LIGHT

Willowra, NT 2018

Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD)

Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers





Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD)

Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

FLIGHT

2018 Willowra, NT

I realized that I have employable, useful, sustainable skills, matched with courage and hutzpah. So, working very remotely as a teacher and learning about my adopted country in the process, seemed a great idea. Somewhere inside myself, I was made aware of my personal vulnerability and at times, I fantasized about what form 'my leaving' might take? Then I realized that I did have wings. I had physically flown from Melbourne to Darwin and beyond. FLIGHT depicts this fantasy. The illustrated folded triangles are vehicles of transport - a method to instantly connect to my own family, and my long-time friends. My land of birth, Canada.

FLIGHT is myself in emotional transition to and from my unique remote teaching situation.

I did not take these very remote contracts out of a sense of misplaced 'pious charity' or as a selfless act in 'closing the gap'. Or with missionary zeal, hoping to 'convert' anyone to or from anything.

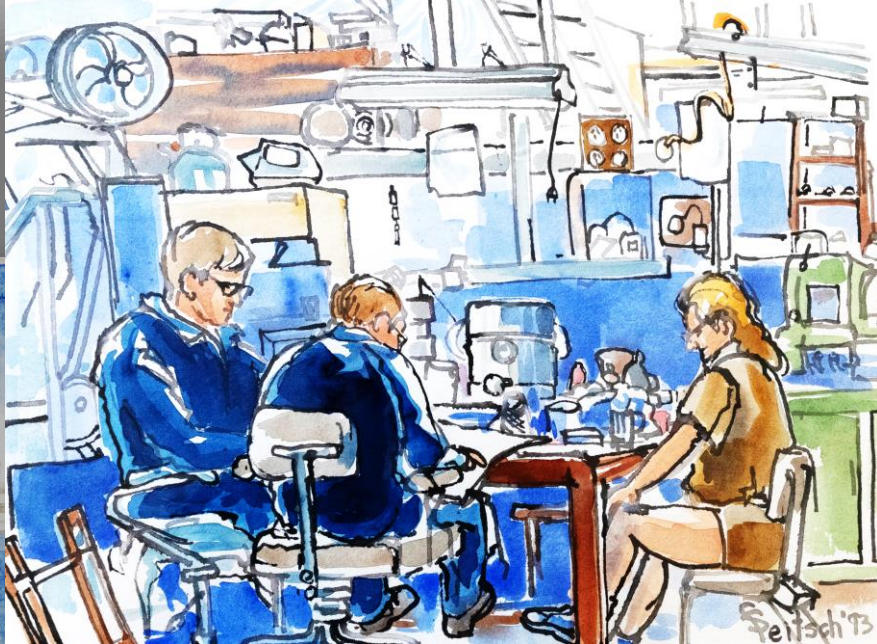
Using the time capsule of tapestry weaving as the medium, FLIGHT depicts 'mind travel', which carried me through time and eternity, connecting my past with my future in the present. Thus, it is the 'now'...microseconds in quantity - connecting quantum physics to art where 'The past would therefore still exist, just as the future already exists, but somewhere other than where we are now present.' (Does the Past

Still Exist Somewhere, 2019). It was an adventure to be there, out of my comfort zone. I enjoyed it immensely. I was accepted, respected, fit in well with the indigenous locals. Though, while working in very remote communities, I am not ashamed to say that at times I was very lonely and longed to return to the safety and belonging of my own culture by swiftly disappearing, taking a flight away.



THROUGH THE MILL AGAIN

All Pen/Wash Paintings were completed on-site amongst the noise, the bustle, the heat, the humidity, and the distinctive aroma of wet wool.



2018

Willowra, NT

SLIPPAGE

SLIPPAGE is a consideration of the conundrum of the mining industry, which whilst bringing royalty payments, also, delivered relentless social upheaval. Financial profits and prosperity extracted not only natural resources but also displaced ancient cultural grounding. The outback landscape is altered forever.



Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) **Medium:** cotton warp, mixed fibre weft- linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers



Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD)

The 'knowing' that bringing western culture and the English language to these very remote aboriginal communities – some of whom saw their first white people in fewer years than my lifetime – could be the doorway to a viable future. And yet, be the wedge which would forever separate the ancients with their old ways from their restless descendants. Retelling 'traditional indigenous culture' alone, does not necessarily make it desirable to contemporary indigenous youth as a lifestyle. Young

people around the world are the same in wanting mobile phones, fashion, freedom, and sadly, junk food!

Society is irreversibly connected globally through the internet. Seismic changes face every culture – ancient or post-postmodern but nowhere more distinctly than in Australia's outback. 'Not belonging' is still the possible widespread outcome for those seeking to be. Despite combined cultural efforts....no clear 'way ahead' seems apparent at this time.

2018

STRUGGLE

Willowra, NT

Andrew Voigt

DIGITAL SOUND COMPOSER

COMMISSIONED May 2024

The Making of the FEARLESS SOUNDSCAPE

When Flossie first asked me to consider creating a soundscape for her upcoming exhibition my immediate answer was a decisive YES. Then, when Flossie told me the theme - FEARLESS (facing the places that scare you) it was an instant double YES.

I've always loved the concept of telling stories through sound but had never chased the opportunity. I've been involved in audio since the early 80's, as a guitarist, live and studio sound engineer, recording on location and in the studio. I've loved recording a large diversity of musical genres and spoken word but it's mostly been other people creating the music with my role being to capture the soul of what they brought to the table.

Fearless would be completely different, working from a blank page, using tools I'd never worked with before and being the sole contributor. I related strongly to the subtext of facing the places

that scare you. Could I create a rich tapestry of emotive sounds, in the time frame, at a high quality - able to honour the visual stimulus of Flossie's work? The process would be new for me, as would most of the tools I'd be working with (eg software synthesisers). I truly had to face my fears and be fearless if I was going to succeed.

My starting point was to follow Flossie's lead and limit the audio palette as she had done by choosing a narrow set of colours for her tapestries. Absorbing the visual impact of the tapestries combined with the series titles and my emotional reaction to them set the foundation from which to begin.

Mix that in with a bit of musical colour theory and subsequent discussions with Flossie about the feelings and inspirations she experienced while creating the works and I had the framework to build upon and refer back to when decision making got a bit murky.

One highlight for me was incorporating a recording I made of a cherry de-stoning machine. I'm sure you'll pick the spot where it features but can you hear the other sounds it triggers at various moments throughout the piece? I loved finding ways to make a real world sound create musical elements beyond simply being a sound effect.

QR CODE

Use your phone to scan



Damaging my guitar-fretting hand during the creation interposed another challenge to overcome as I couldn't rely on something that was comfortable for me – that is, actually playing my guitar. I soon gained familiarity with a virtual keyboard to create the sounds and music that eventually formed the final version of the soundscape.

For me, Flossie's collection of tapestries reminded me of a symphony of recurring themes, layered in different tones and timings, ebb and flow, discomfort mixed with hope and a lightly held resolution. The tapestry hues, shapes, sizes and their woven relationships heavily influenced the musical tones and rhythms of the soundscape.

Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers



ARTERIAL

Darwin / Nganmarriyanga, NT

2020

ARTERIAL is based on the river courses as seen from the small planes used to transport me to and from my very remote communities – yet I hoped I could somewhat camouflage their design source by using unexpected colours. This removes the designs from a mere interpretation of reality to become a flight of fantasy.

All the rivers lead to the ocean and are connectors – even if to only allow the crocodiles to escape into new territory! The picture of a dangerous predator entering a community uninvited, reminds me also of the fact that mobile phone networks also enter communities - unfettered. Here, its first victims are also the children. For Australian aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders, there is little possibility of turning back the clock and returning to the world of 'the noble savage'. The arterial current is relentless.



I was isolated from face to face contact with anyone in Darwin for several months - sitting out the expected plague effects of COVID 19. To survive and keep sane, I had only my weaving, a small apartment on the third floor with a view towards the harbour, and delivered food. This may not sound problematic but my isolation dictated no actual human contact.

However, eventually, I discovered that I liked my own company. Happily sipping a 'Great Northern' beer, I had uninterrupted weaving time. Who knew? I took the curving pattern of MIMOSA from the local flora printed on my tropical attire. I explored simplifying colours, using positive and negative space alone to create drama and movement... and incidentally, greatly extended my weaving skills.

2020

Nganmarriyanga, NT

MIMOSA

Dimensions: 4 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic



OBTUSE is my continuing attempt to simplify the weaving design and colours in order to expand some of the best qualities of weaving.....texture over time. My criteria being 1) to use a parameter of only two colours per panel – in varying shades and tones; and 2) to create a four cornered shape with the same perimeter on each panel, using the same closed length of string but securing it at differing points on each background. Some shapes seemed more pleasing to me than others, but I wanted to work somehow within my newest set of guidelines.

2022-23

Maryborough, VIC / Billiluna, NT

OBTUSE



Dimensions: 6 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.6cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

Each of the four 'corners' alludes to a continuing supportive, though at times obtuse, weekly connection with my three sisters (no brothers) over the fifty (50) years that we have lived in three (3) different countries. After my parents passed, it was truly an unknown to see if we sisters would stay close. Happily, we stayed on very good terms for many years - respectful, sympathetic and supportive.

Alternate titles to this series is HEADSPACE A – F. In this iteration, the enclosed finite shapes set in simple tactile backgrounds represent 'an ordered world of logical cause and effect'. This well-arranged simplicity will never be a reality. I have experienced this certainty in the raising of a family of six (6) children and now, by being involved in their adult lives as they make their own way in life, and by having the lived experience of my own aging body. Life is not ordered. The future is unknowable and uncertain

I travelled back in Victoria and duly had an emergency ear operation to try to restore some of my hearing. My glaucoma, another health concern, had continued to advance but I was given a temporary reprieve on needing an implant. Then, I decided to return to the same school and very remote teaching for an

additional term in 2023. Meanwhile, my sisters enjoyed their three (3) sister reunion. My husband was also in the USA for an extended period, supporting his ailing and aging father at this time.

At this time, coincidentally, I suffered a severe inflammation caused by the COVID virus. Overnight, I suddenly become completely deaf. I was forced to cancel my overseas trip to visit my sisters.

2023

Billiluna, WA

OBLIQUE



Dimensions: 6 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers

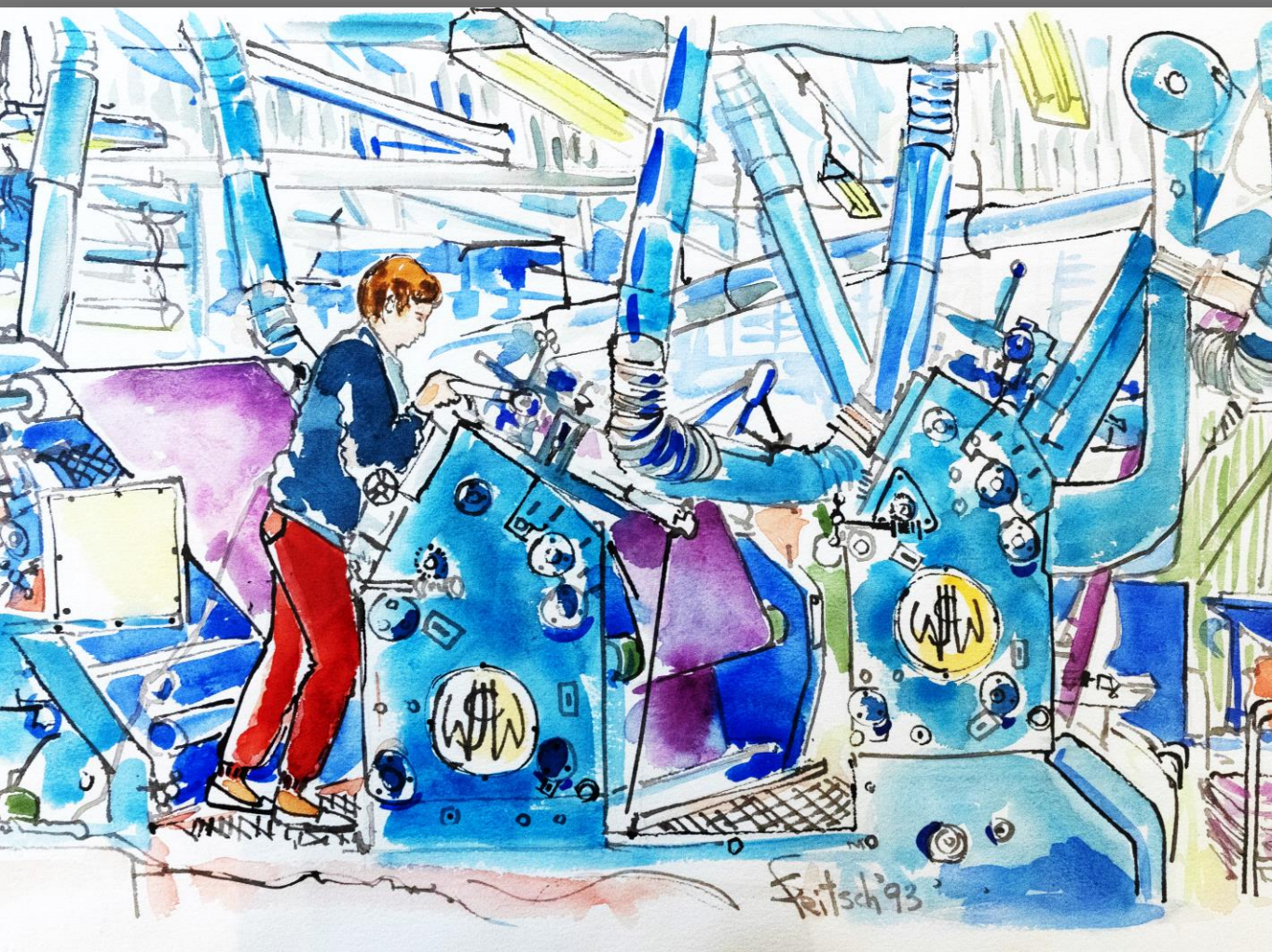
I felt like an outlier – and this was indeed so, physically. But keenly, I also felt cut-off from my usual support group and culture.

So, I threw myself into creative output. It was in this space (Peitsch, 2007) that I developed OBLIQUE. I 'obliquely' responded to the situations affecting me, abstractly and indirectly - with the intent to conceal, weaving my viewpoint as a form of mental processing –

not revelation. The figurative definition of oblique well suits my overall intention to be furtive.

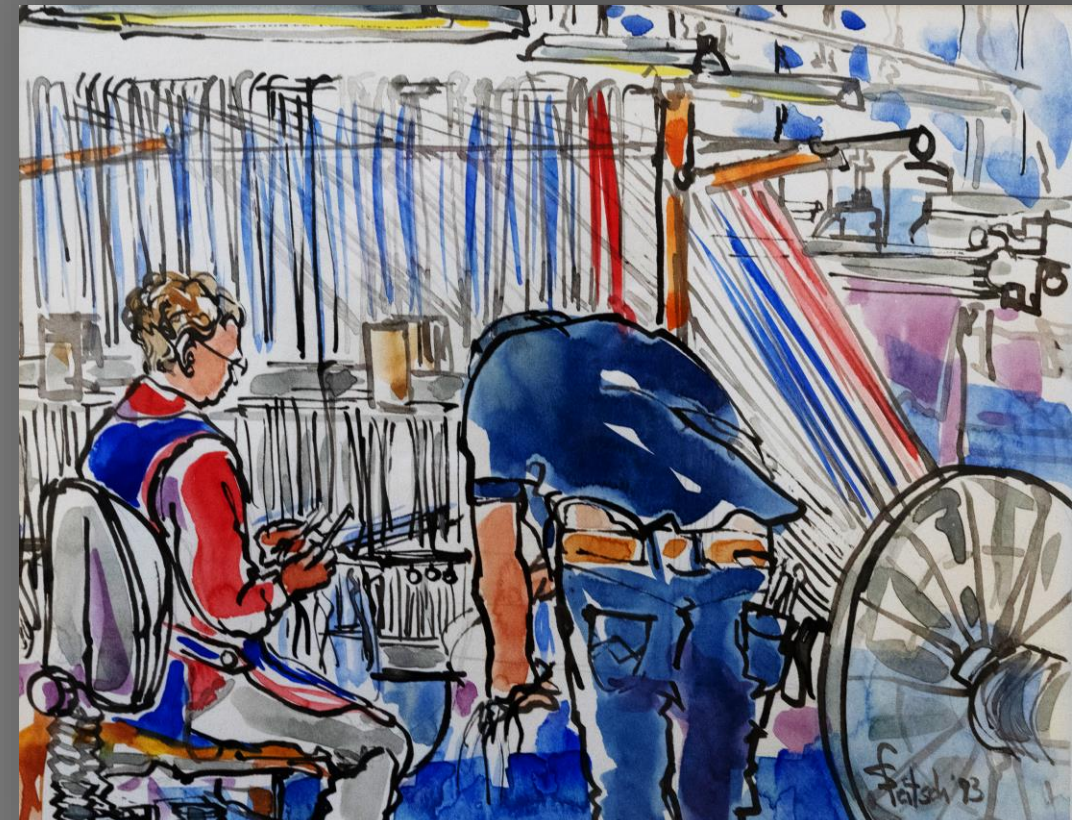
Additionally designwise, if something is oblique, it demonstrates slanting positions or directions. It was no problem to create such designs by simply carving off a corner of the quadrangles I used in OBTUSE. This is a good metaphor for how I saw myself in the bigger picture at this time – peripheral and extractable. Thus,

the designs for OBLIQUE are derived from slicing off - as if surgically removing - one 'corner' of the enclosed area of each design. Strangely by simply removing a corner, however, led to wonderful design possibilities! It is as if I had to withdraw from the social strictures I had set myself before I could see the expansiveness of the world waiting for me to further unravel.





Merging old and new artistic outcomes produced on site at the Mill or using its fibre and woven woollen materials, VERWEBAN demonstrates relationship. People have a time-tested link with natural fibre, clothing, and the apparatus that makes the fabric. This relationship to cloth motivates the designer, the fabricator, the manufacturer, the economist, the historian, the artist and most importantly, the wearer. Its attraction is universal.



Dimensions: 6 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers U/Finished DETAIL



Soon enough, I was back home. It seemed appropriate to summarize the remote tapestries themselves taking one design from each series; then, in a series itself, using neutral colours, inserted a one sixth strip of the overall design size and then, added 'hieroglyphics' using black and a

pop of colour to the original designs. I was also sifting and sorting through my remote teaching experiences as a whole.

This set of six (6) finished tapestries later seemed too 'clever' and contrived, to me. They were busy and complicated – not at

all a summary, as how I had pictured them. Yet upon reflection, they do reflect the interplay of unthinkable, unsolvable stresses and gargantuan power grabs at work in my difficult job, teaching away from my home.

REPRISE

Overall Challenges in Creating This Collection of Fibre-based Art

Community Input – Inconsistent

Tones – Too tricky for me to discern easily.

Fibre Inconsistencies – Not using regulated Australian Tapestry Workshop (ATW) weft, but rather found fibres, much experimentation was required.

Tensions and pressures from my 'day job'...classroom teaching all ages, all years, all situations!

Deadlines – Dictated by school terms; tight travel and weight considerations were problematic due to flights in helicopters and very small planes.

Lack of any local resources – 'If I didn't bring it, it was not there!' Postal delivery took longer than the terms of my contract ie. Three (3) months!

Mental Attitude – Though I chose to weave to keep a good mental outlook, at times my weaving did not progress because I did not have a good mental outlook.

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Dim: 12 Panels x (200cmW x 300cmH x 0.3cmD) Medium: cotton warp, mixed fibre weft - linen, cotton, wool, acrylic fibers



Back in Maryborough again for the last three months of 2023, I was able to plan the final set of tapestries for the exhibition. Recovering from major eye surgery and a second bout of COVID, it was some time – and resolve - before I could begin weaving this set. Considering FEARLESSNESS....as both an attitude and experience, the twelve (12) letters suited twelve (12) designs. Using text in my textile work is no great leap, as it has regularly featured in my art practice since 2000

Detail of six (6) of the twelve (12) tapestries in this series

RESOLVE

2023-24

Maryborough, VIC



This time, however, I wanted to wholly conceal the word portrayed. I liked the idea of observers having the message in plain sight whilst not being able to 'see' it. Thus, it becomes my private thought, and prevents anyone from taking issue with my point of view. To implement this idea, I needed to profoundly deconstruct the letters. I also took liberties within the designs themselves by adding additional letter fragments, just to frustrate people's desire to successfully decipher the word!

I took inspiration from my husband's colour blindness in discerning tones. I wondered if I could make designs that he and other sufferers like him, would find difficult to discern. I chose to interpret the designs in dark, middle or light tones using various colours. This was certainly a challenge but lots of



fun for me. I realized that keeping art to 'tonal monotony' (my newest phrase) was a greater experiment than I would have expected. After all, I had been working in colour and fibre for 40 years! I believe the total effect of this series of tapestries justifies the perhaps overly simple singular outcomes presented by each panel. I am actually quite pleased to have had few 'Likes' on Facebook as I have posted my initial ideas and then the progress for these particular panels. This trend tells me that I am aiming above the general public's idea of outright 'beauty'. I might even be able to stretch their long-held aesthetic notions. I hope so.

(NUSKE CRITICAL ESSAY cont'd) Flossie's art, as she herself writes, is a visual expression of where my body, mind and soul have travelled or are travelling (2006:16). And, the result is not a fossilization of ideas nor assertions of eternal truths as if art is a form of evangelism. Organized and traditional forms of religion are not granted a monopoly on the search for meaning. And, adults do not have control over the quest with a ready-made set of answers. On the contrary, if and when the experiences of life have caused children social dislocation, grief, and bewilderment, then these children, who have been impacted and influenced by their respective tragedies within their particular cultural backgrounds, will ask the same questions as adults.

Therefore, SPLACE is a cross-cultural concept that can assist dialogue and promote understanding within and amongst diverse groups. It is also a multi-dimensional concept that invites dialogue, not aggression and violence between religious and non-religious groups. SPLACE is the artistic context within which Flossie's experience of Australia's diversity is collected and expressed in her art.

In Germany's Protestant and Catholic religious traditions, artists expressed a commonly held belief in the Schutzengel -the Guardian Angel. The Schutzengel is portrayed as hovering over the rickety wooden bridge of human existence while two children are crossing the rotting structure, trusting they will be supported above the precipice, trusting they will be protected and preserved from tragedies that invade personal spaces and places, confident they will be safeguarded from all the exigencies of human existence. Such childhood trust in both the religious and non-religious world is frequently fractured.

Paradoxically, part of the 'accumulated wealth' of human experience - including that of children - comes from falling through the cracks, the spaces, and the very places where the planks, that are designed to provide us safe passage over the abyss, have completely rotted through, or suddenly splintered under the burdens of life. Such experiences become a catalyst for dismembering familiar belief systems, enhancing the dissolution of traditional cosmologies, and fracturing cultures. Perception about how the world functions, or should function, are all turned up-side-down. The language used to speak about the meaning of life changes -modification



is required, religious and philosophical systems may be scrapped, so that the childlike -not childish- questions can be addressed once more: Where am I? Why am I here? Who am I? Another mode of being in the world is required so that one can restore a sense of belonging and being at home. It is at this point that artists can assist in the construction of meaning when examining the environmental and cultural dimensions of indigenous citizens coming under threat.

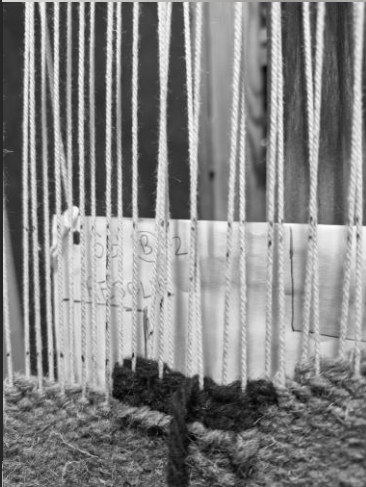
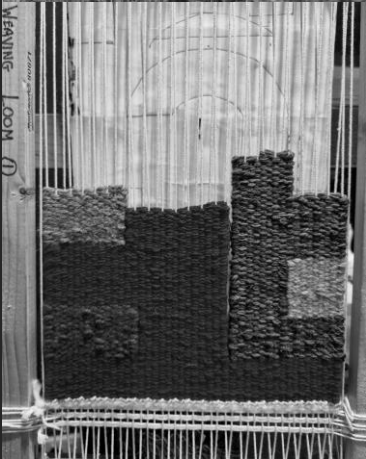
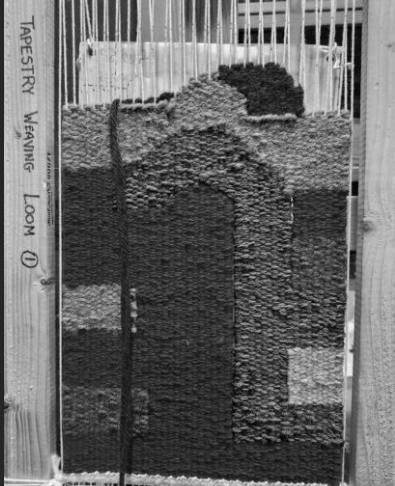
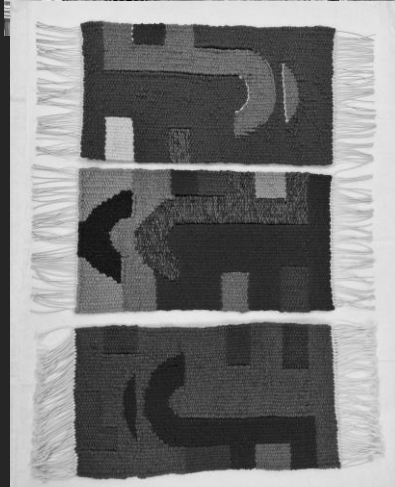
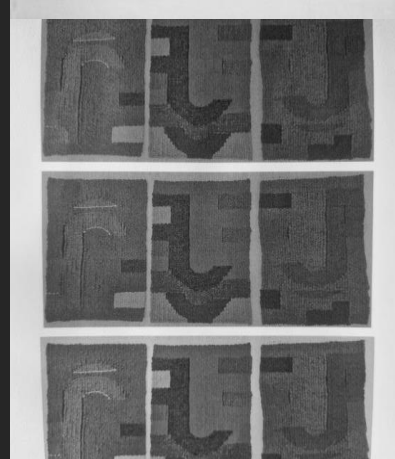
Flossie is given to us as an interpreter of human existence. She is an exegete of her lived experience. Like many artists, Flossie has been required to search for a SPLACE to articulate the wisdom that comes from personal experience. She is aware of the limitations of human language. She has a capacity for hope and an awareness of the necessity to create. She possesses a constellation of human virtues including compassion, empathy towards others, hospitality, tolerance, as well as a capacity to endure the paradox of being unfaithful to her own doubt. She has the courage to be (Paul Tillich) in the face of uncertainty.

Neal Nuske: Published Author in History, Art and Theology, B.Th., MA

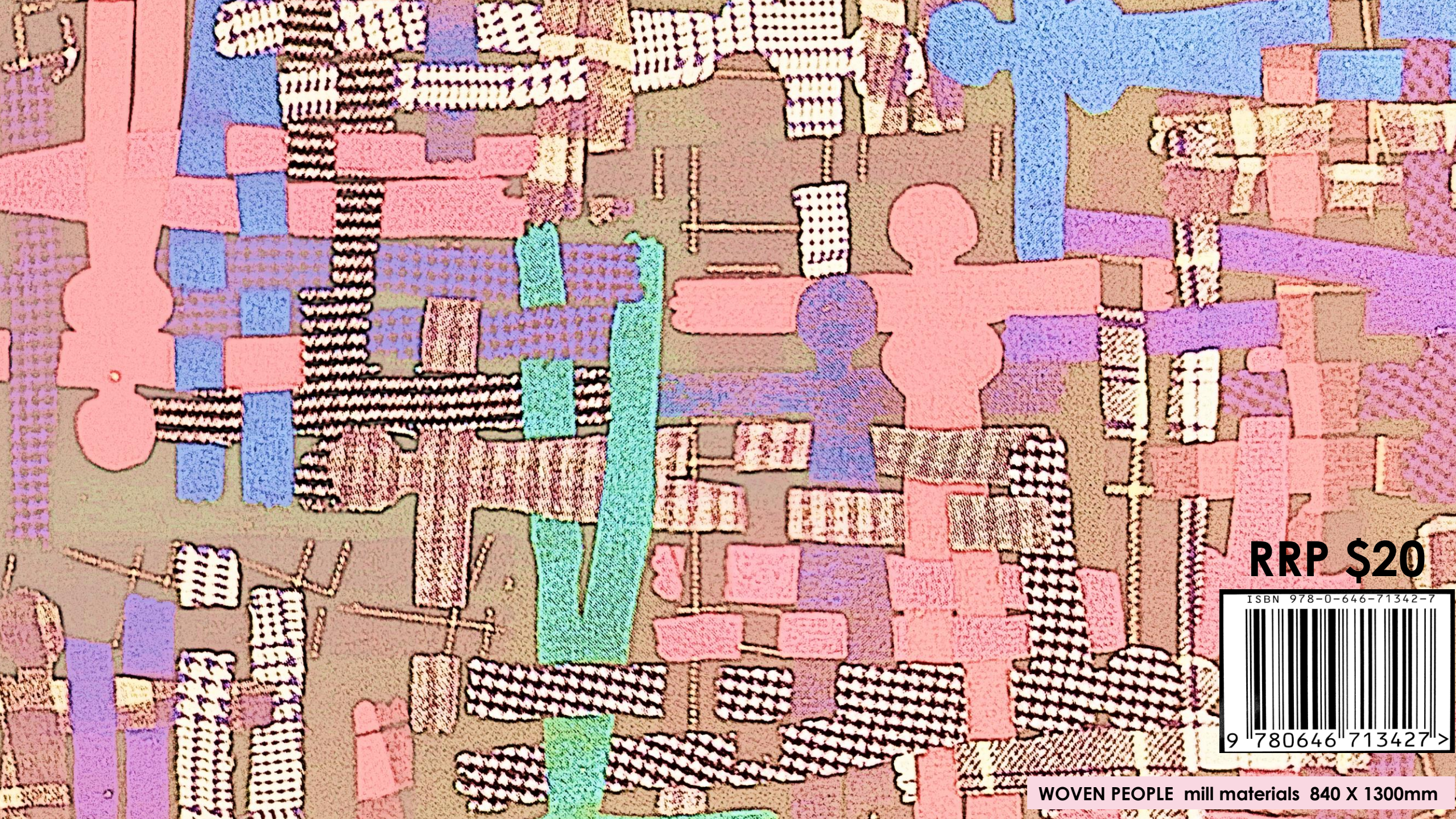
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