Mend.

Throughout my life the women in my family have worked in textile. Resourceful and resilient, these “homemakers” remade their environments. My grandmother held onto fabric with the idea that it could be mended and remade into something useful and lovely. The tiniest scrap could have a new life, When I was given one of my Great Aunt’s quilts, I was put in touch with a group of relatives, I’d never met. This particular quilt was the ocean waves pattern, striking in red and white. These ladies lived on the edge of the great plains of Iowa, I sensed a tongue in cheek humor within their group. The quilt was worn, yet vibrant. The red and white triangles and perfectly stitched feather quilting put me in touch with a group of relatives I’d never met. I reached back into my genetic code and glimpsed a group who apparently had the same creative impulses I had. Sometime later I was stretching a canvas, and thought, why not? I began to cut and stitch pieces together, I added pillow ticking and denim, gold leaf and calico. Gradually I re-imagined a new way to use the painting canvas. I collected quilts, I studied their patterns and layering. Along with the quilts, I collected Army blankets and retrieved the several that Dad had brought back from the War, I loved the variety of greens, and was inspired to mend and fix. The layering of quilts with army blankets tapped into my notions of duality, the scratchy army blanket and smooth quilt one made of love, the other for war.

My hand stitching is meditative, a process that coaxes the quilt and blanket stories to the surface. My stories became threaded into theirs, together into one. The chain stitching gives a sense of unity, a sturdiness, one I appreciate, the linear quality of the stitch defines the flatness of the surface and, at the same time penetrates the fabrics, fusing the layers, fixed for a long time.

My works are deeply personal and by hand stitching every piece I contemplate their making and past, The hand stitching process offers clues into their histories. By restructuring form and in mending worn areas, I intuitively explore each unique history. The universal nature of quilts and blankets urges the audience to tap into their own experience and the chain stitch allows for a flexible workflow.

Art is an imaginative adventure, an idea that can be shifted, a sort of free play, an enigmatic search for the truth”, Marcel Duchamp