

Gender Inequality in the Arts

Kaitlyn Robinson

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"Indeed it is largely due to Albert

Research ch

... famous for her "Big Eye" paintings,

Looking into the history of fibers art and led me to some incredible stories of women inside the art world that have gone unnoticed. For example, American artist Margaret Keane is known today for her "Big Eye" paintings that rose to popularity in the 1960's. Her husband, Walter Keane, took full credit for the creation of these paintings. While Walter was out partying and living a lavish lifestyle, Margaret was working on paintings in the basement. Margaret reported that Walter would lock her in the painting room and wouldn't allow anyone in. Eventually, she shared her secret with the public. While critics and academics weren't supportive of the "Big Eye" paintings, America fell in love with them and they were extremely successful (6).

It is largely due to Albert

"Indeed it is large

While uncovering these unheard stories of women's achievements, I also encountered many stories of women's oppression in the art world. Women, historically, were not given the same opportunities as men to be successful artists. Some women defied these societal expectations.

famous for her "Big Eye" paintings, which

Alina... (6)



"How could there have been any great women artists if art historians failed to acknowledge any women artists at all (1)?" Women have historically been excluded from the art world and are still facing underrepresentation and inequality today. "From the 16–19th centuries, women were barred from studying the nude model, which formed the basis for academic training and representation (10)." This lack of opportunity for women to become artists also influenced the downplay of women's achievements in art throughout history. According to Marsha Meskimmon, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Theory, "Over the past thirty years, a substantial body of literature on the topic of women-artists and their work has demonstrated clearly that women have played a significant role in the production of visual art for centuries (8)." While women's work has proved to be important to art history, there are many stories of women artists that have been hidden or unrecognized throughout history. Some of these stories, I have been able to research and uncover, but many will remain secret due to the lack of inclusion of and opportunity for women artists in written history.

... for her "Big Eye" paintings which

"How could there have been any great women artists if art historians failed to acknowledge any women artists at all?"



"this is so
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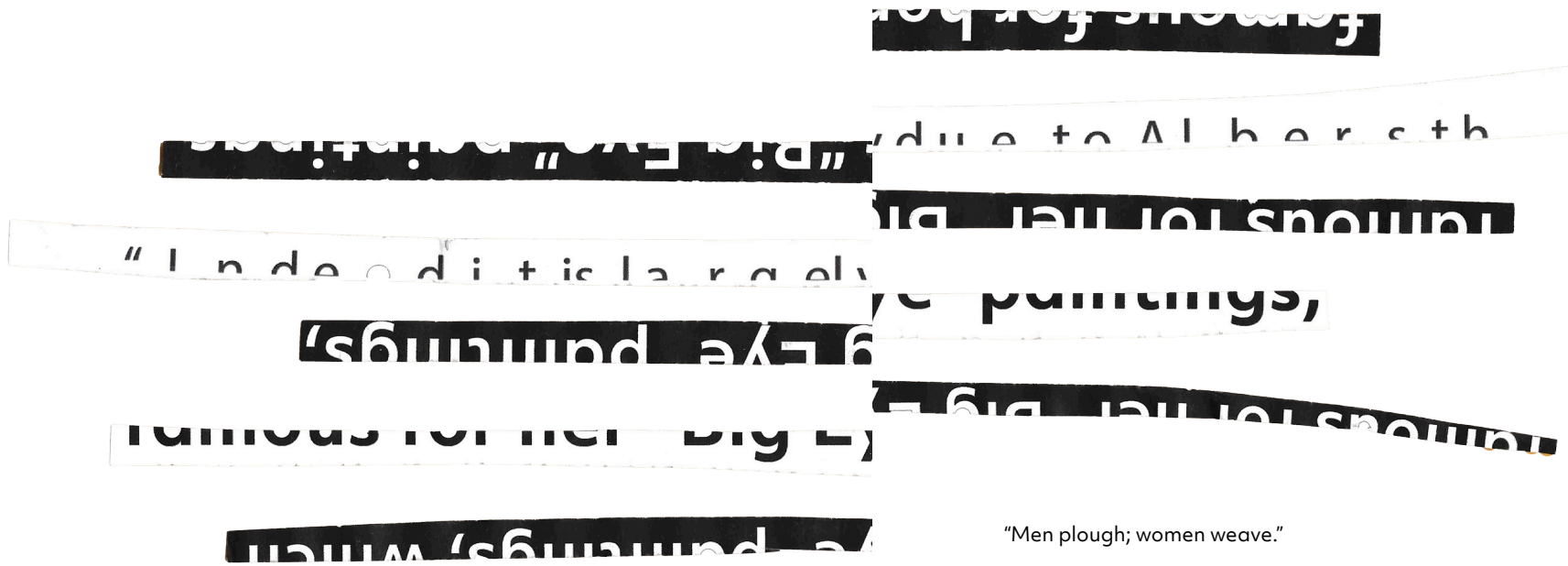
Anni Albers, famous today for her work in textiles, was interested in pursuing sculpture or painting when she was admitted to the Bauhaus in 1922. "It is not advisable, in our experience", the school's founder Walter Gropius said, "that women work in the heavy craft areas such as carpentry . . . For this reason, a women's section has been formed . . . which works particularly with textiles; bookbinding and pottery also accept women." Thankfully, Anni embraced her fibers medium and brought recognition to weaving and textiles as an art form. "It is largely due to Albers that the term "textile artist" is used at all (5).

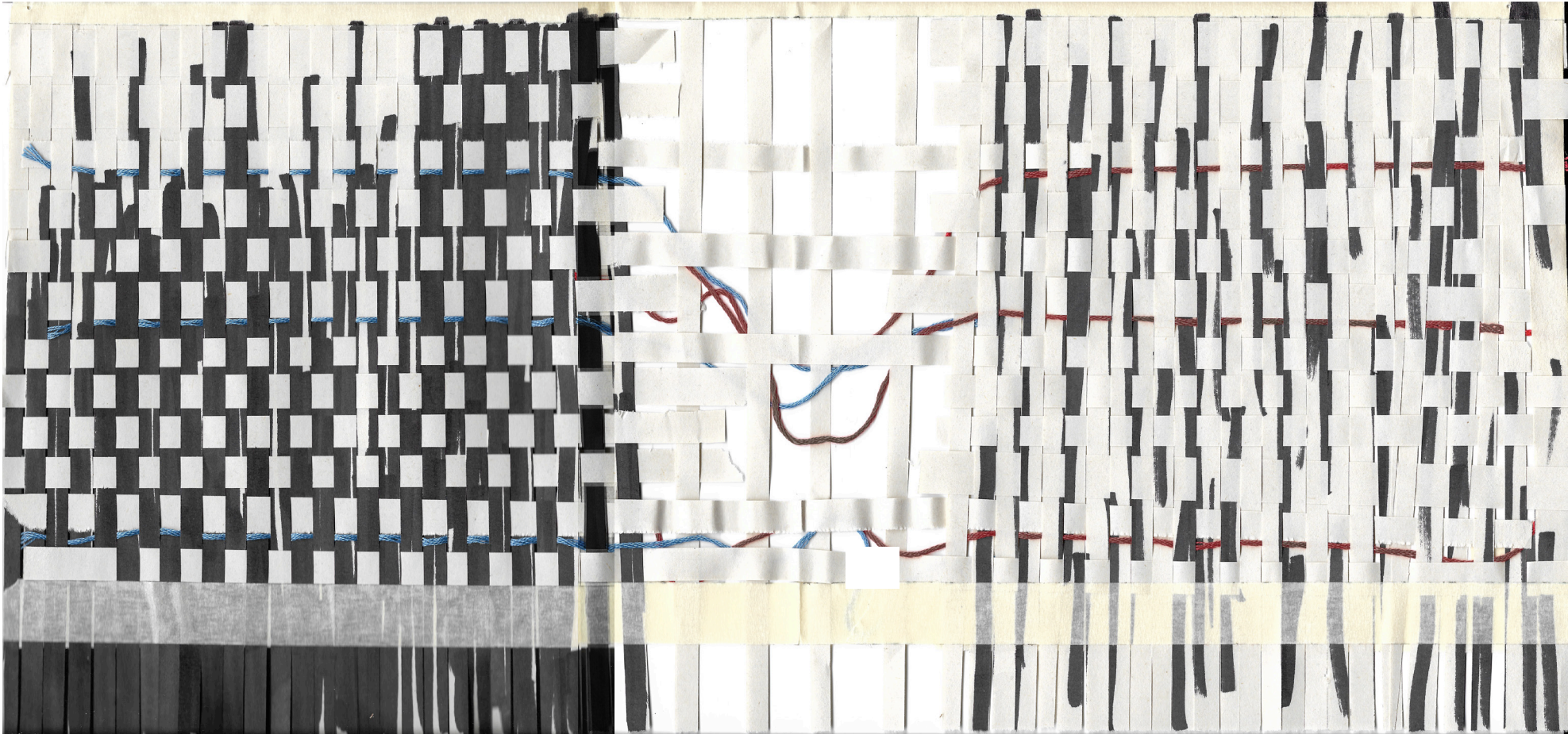
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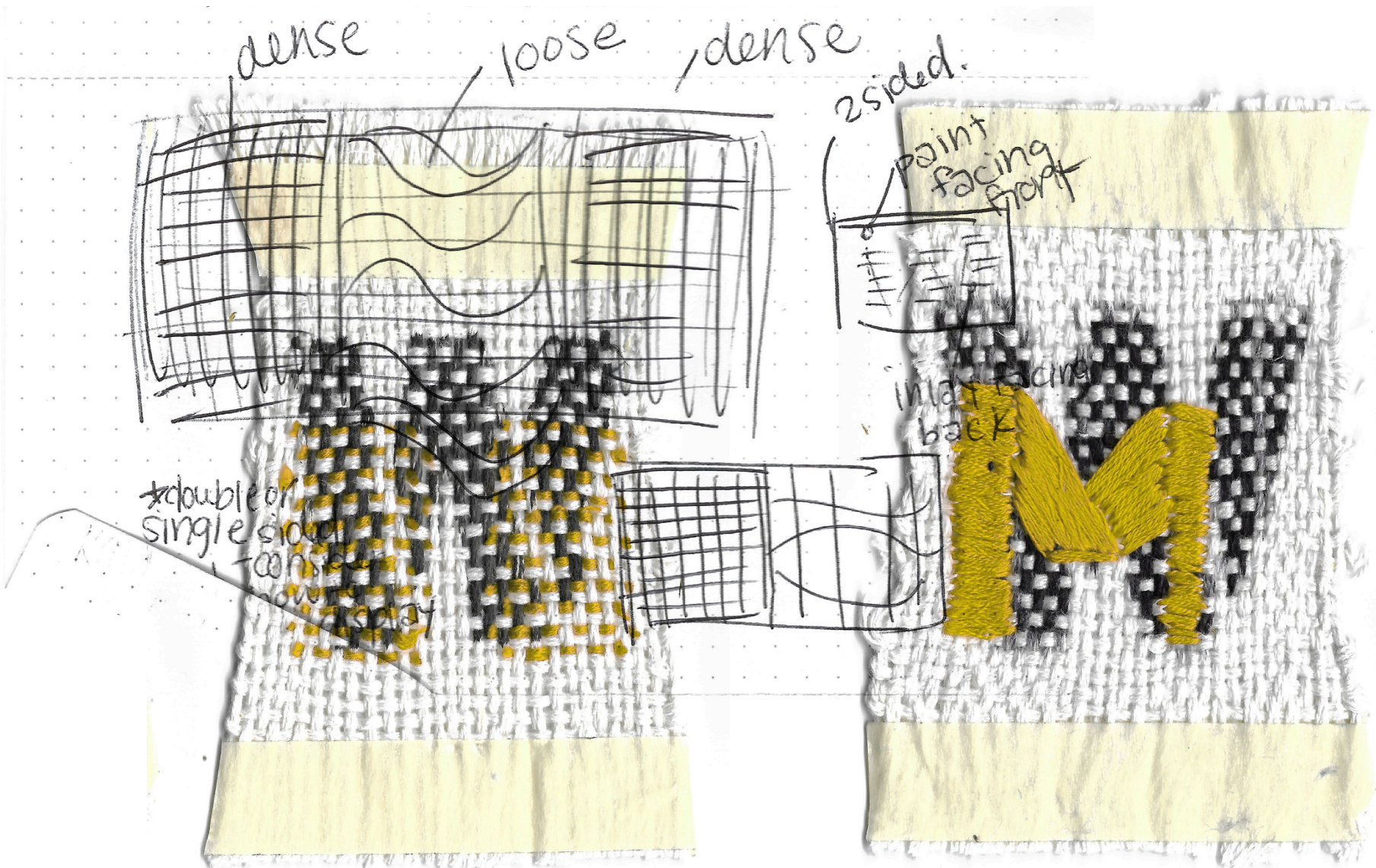
In an interview with Lee Krasner from 1983, she talked about studying under Hans Hofmann. She explains that he was usually negative, but one day gave her praise for her work. He told her "this is so good, you would never know it was done by a woman (6)." These societal roles and expectations placed on women are no modern concept. I found an ancient Chinese proverb that states "men plough: women weave."

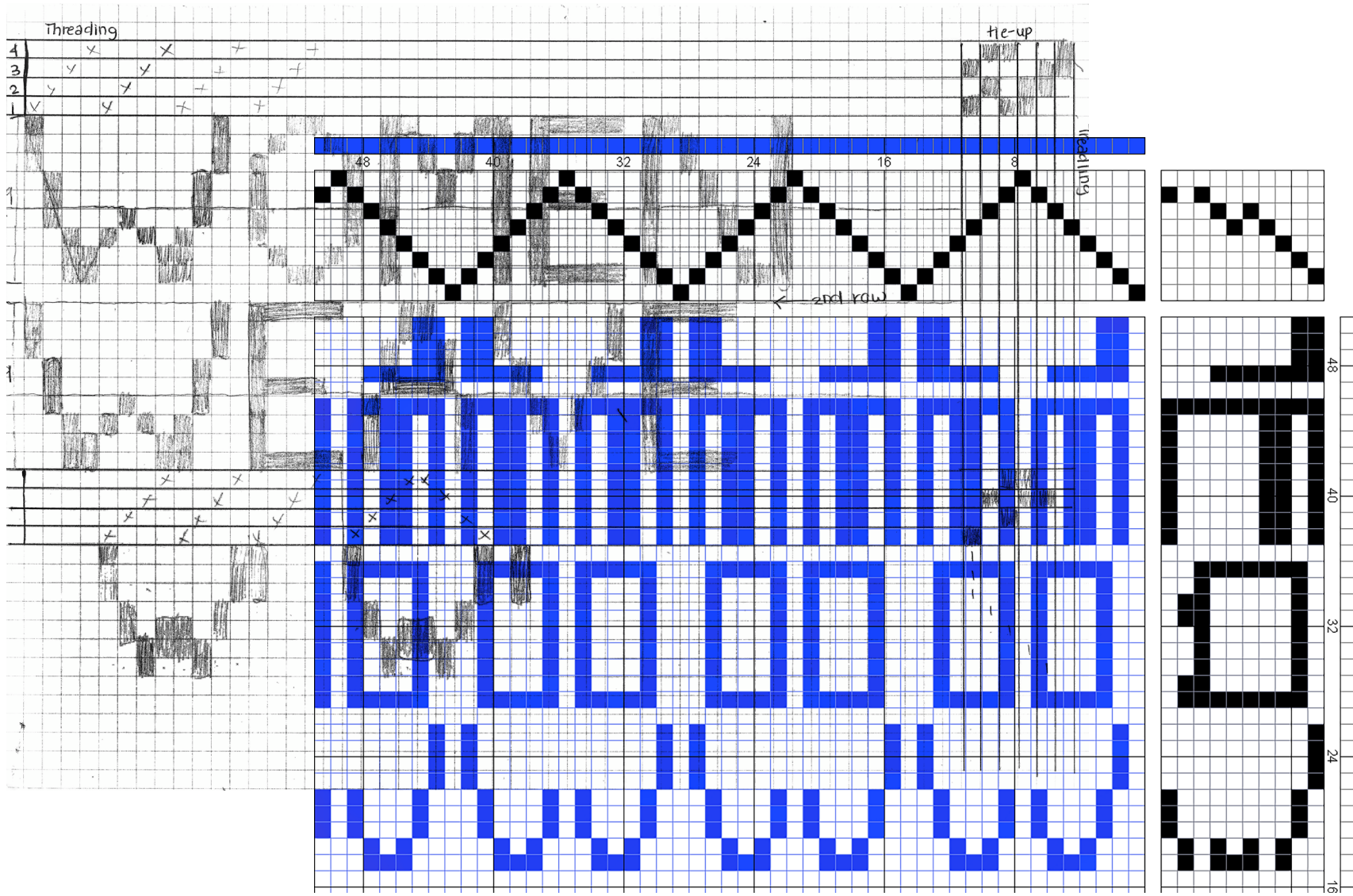
The unheard achievements made by women and the oppression of women that has kept artists from succeeding is what I want to focus on. Using the predominantly women's art form of weaving, I want to start a meaningful conversation about these issues. Future achievements made by women can come to light if given equal opportunity within the art world.

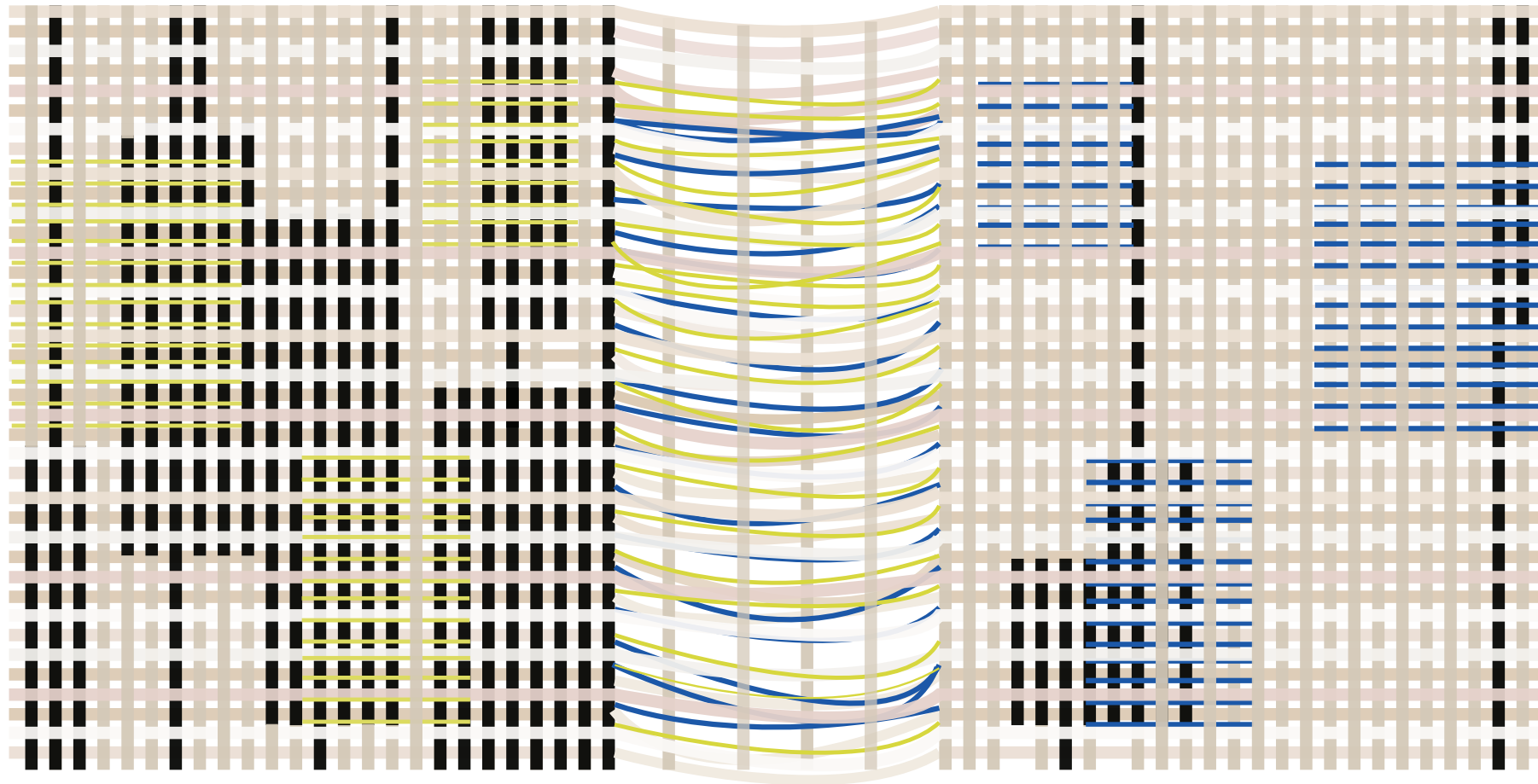
Plan ning













Indeed, it is largely due to Albers that the ter



In a study of 820,000 exhibitions across the public and commercial sectors in 2018, only one third were by women artists. (The Art Newspaper)

Women working across arts professions make almost \$20,000 less per year than men. (Artsy)

There are no women in the top 0.03% of the auction market, where 41% of the profit is concentrated. Overall, 96.1% of artworks sold at auction are by male artists. (Bocart et al., Glass Ceilings in the Art Market)

Only 13.7% of living artists represented by galleries in Europe and North America are women. (artnet News)

Women earn 70% of Bachelors of Fine Arts and 65-75% of Masters of Fine Arts in the U.S., though only 46% of working artists across all arts disciplines are women.

Sta

tistics

A recent data survey of the permanent collections of 18 prominent art museums in the U.S. found that out of over 10,000 artists, 87% are male, and 85% are white. (Public Library of Science)

famous for her "Big Eye" paintings which

Nearly half (45.8%) of visual artists in the United States are women; on average, they earn 74¢ for every dollar made by male artists. (National Endowment for the Arts)

In the top 20 most popular exhibitions around the world in 2017, only one was headlined by a woman artist: Yayoi Kusama: My Eternal Soul at the National Art Center, Tokyo. (The Art Newspaper)

On average, only 30% of artists represented by commercial galleries in the U.S. are women. In Australia, it's about 40%; in China, 25%; in Hong Kong, 22%; and in Germany, less than 20%.

Women in the arts are found not to experience the "motherhood penalty" which in other industries results in a loss or stagnant income after children. But men in the arts do experience the "marriage premium,"—an increase in pay for married men of roughly \$7,200 per year that neither women nor single men experience. Men working in the arts also receive an income bump when they become fathers. (Artsy)

As of the first half of 2018, there were only 5 women on Artnet's list of the 100 best-selling artists at auction. The number of women on this list has fluctuated between just 2 and 6 since 2013. (Artnet Intelligence Report)

"74¢ for every dollar"

The discount for women's art at auction is 47.6%; even removing the handful of "superstar" artists that skew the data, the discount is still significant at 28%. (Adams, et al., Is Gender in the Eye of the Beholder?)

The most expensive work sold by a woman artist at auction, Georgia O'Keeffe's Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1, sold in 2014 for \$44.4 million—over four hundred million dollars less than the auction record for a male artist: Leonardo Da Vinci's Salvator Mundi, which sold in 2017 for \$450.3 million, shattering the previous record of \$179.4 million for a work by Picasso. (artnet News, New York Times)

In an analysis of the 3,050 galleries in the Artsy database, economist Claire McAndrew found that as much as 10% of galleries have no women on their books at all, while only 8% represent more women than men. Almost half (48%) represent 25% or fewer women. (The Art Newspaper)

Famous for her Big Eye paintings

1917-1929

The annual Freelands Foundation report found that at London's major arts institutions, only 22% of solo shows were by women artists—an 8% decrease from 2016 data. (Freelands Foundation)

“only 22% of solo shows were by women”

Weaving

though only 46% of working artists across all arts disciplines are women. Eye paintings, and eye painting.

"Am I interested in fibers because of the material and processes, or am I predisposed to liking fibers because I am a woman and it is a traditionally feminine art form?"









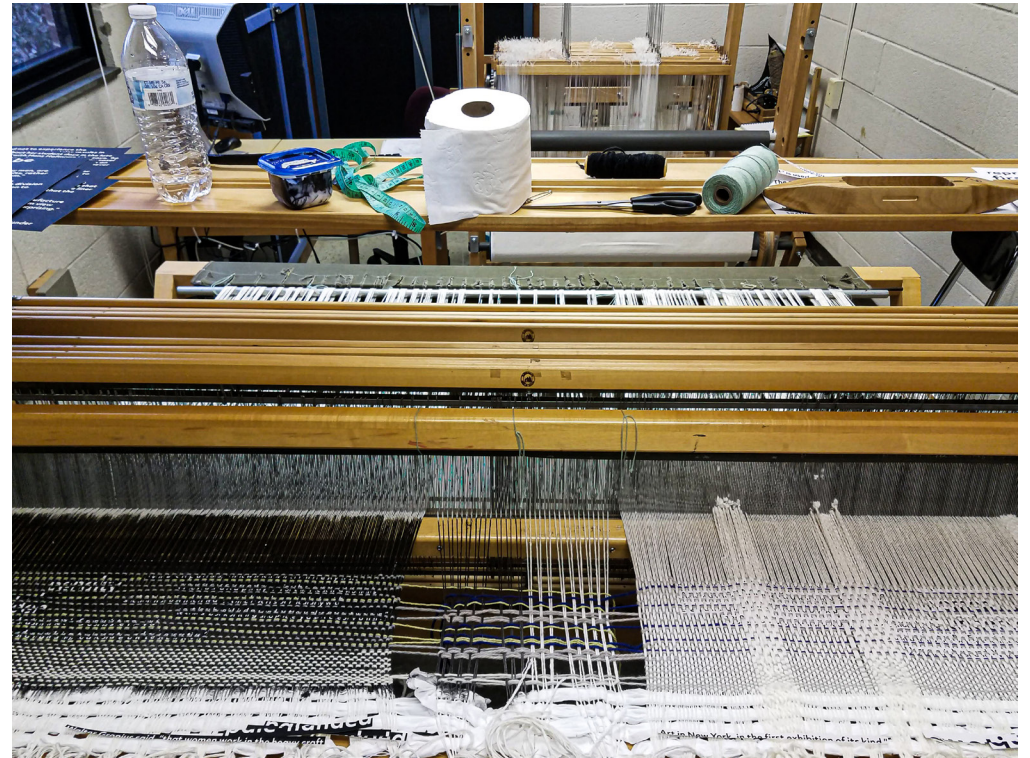
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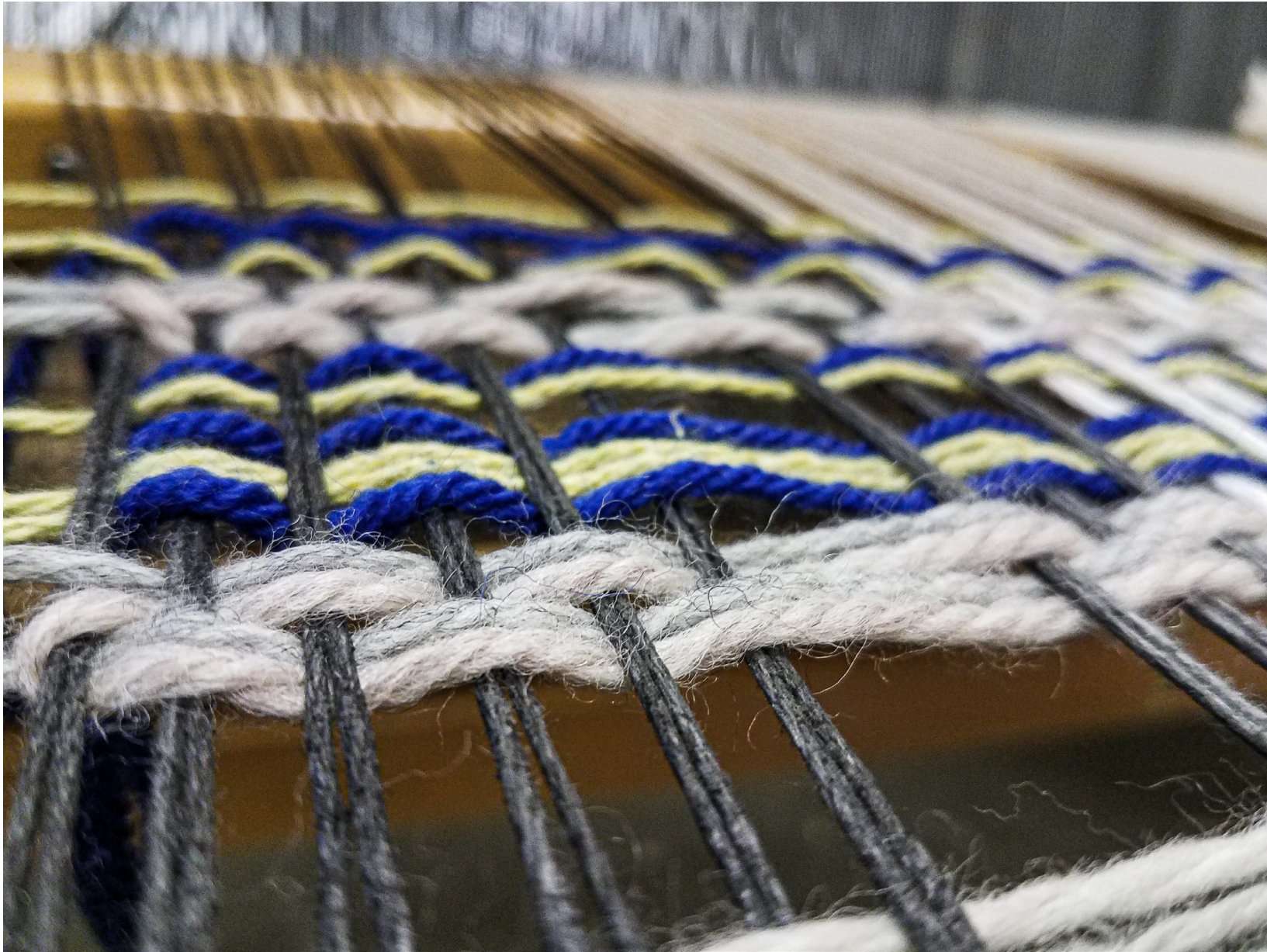
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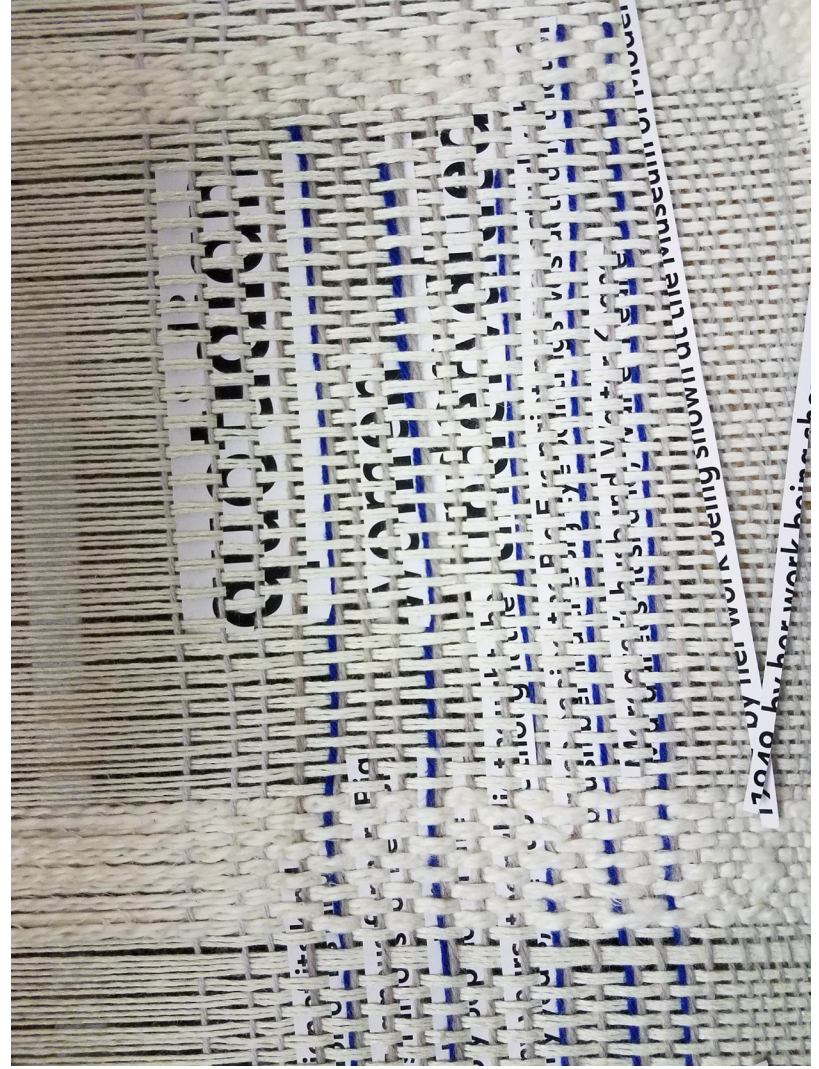
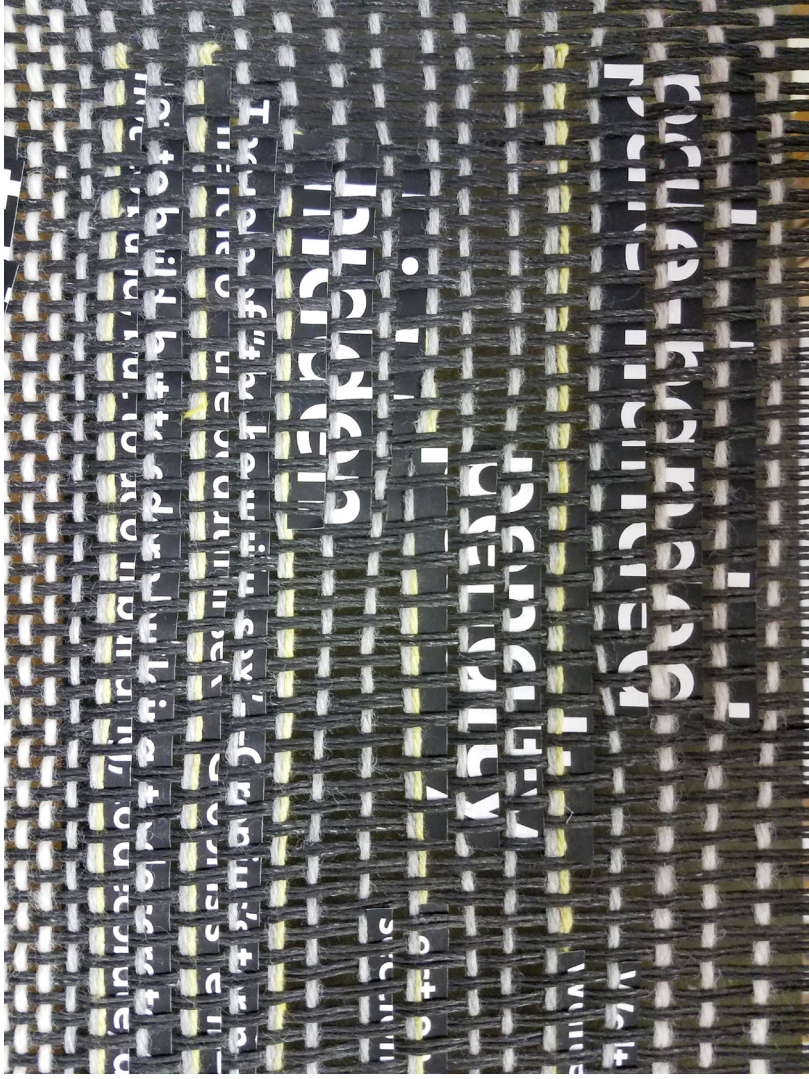




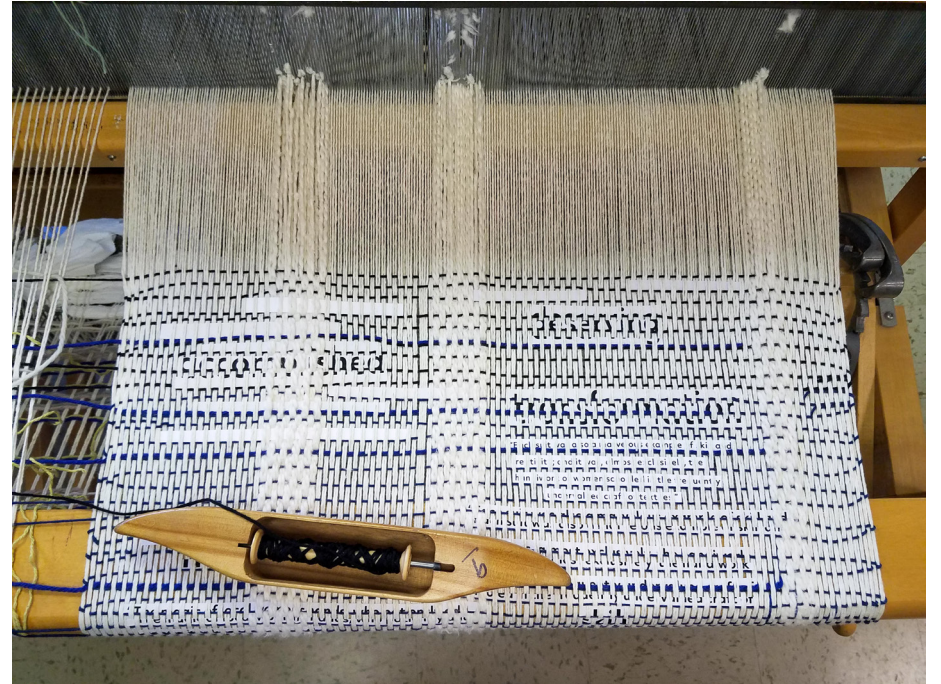


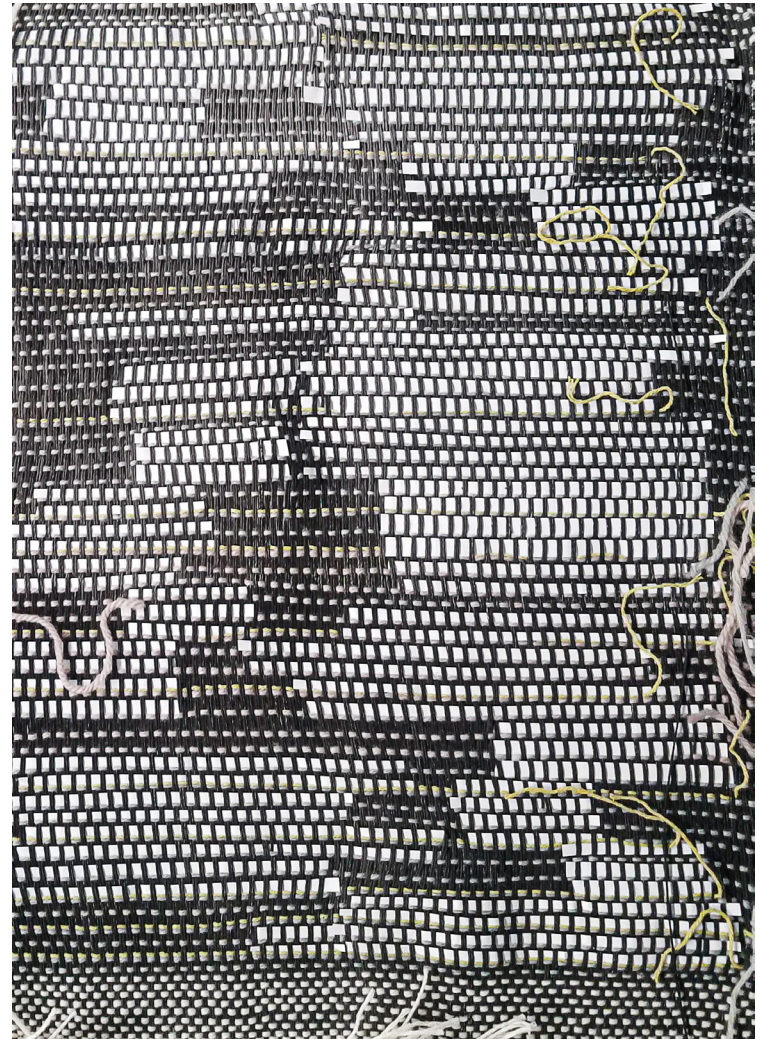
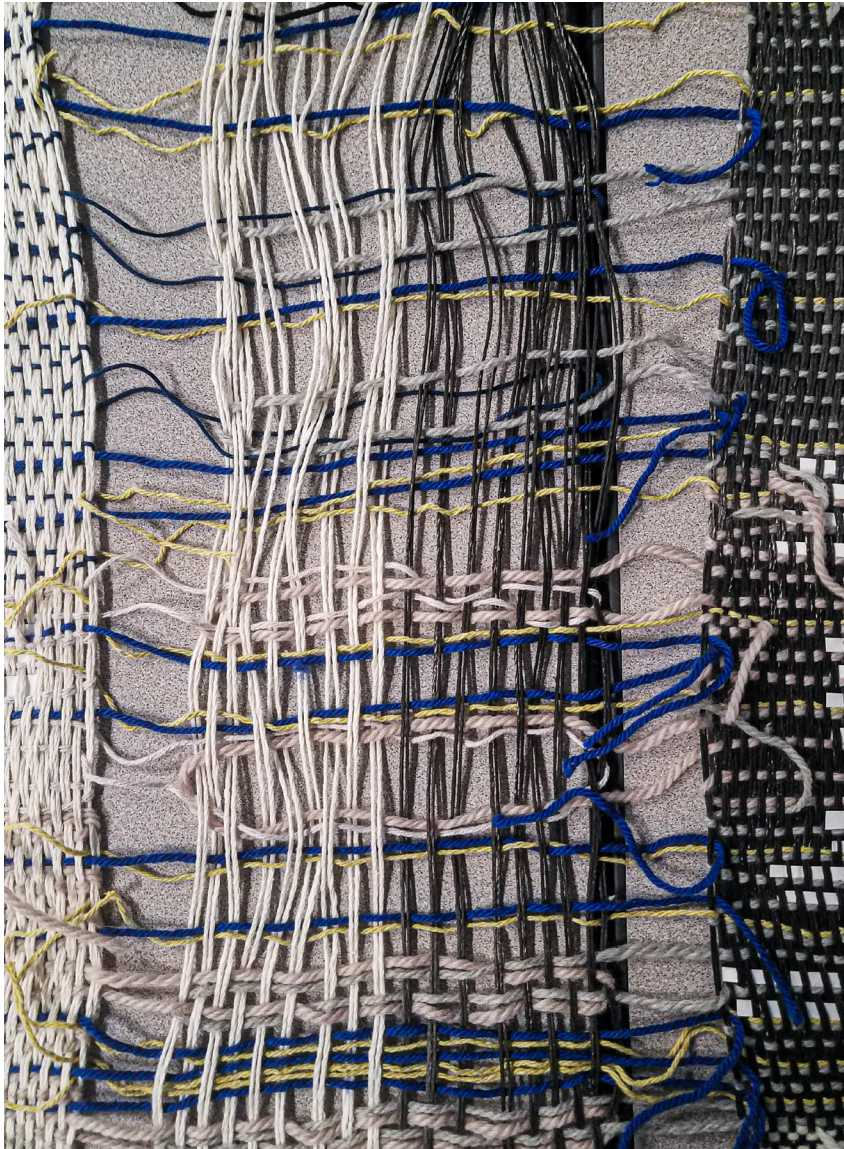


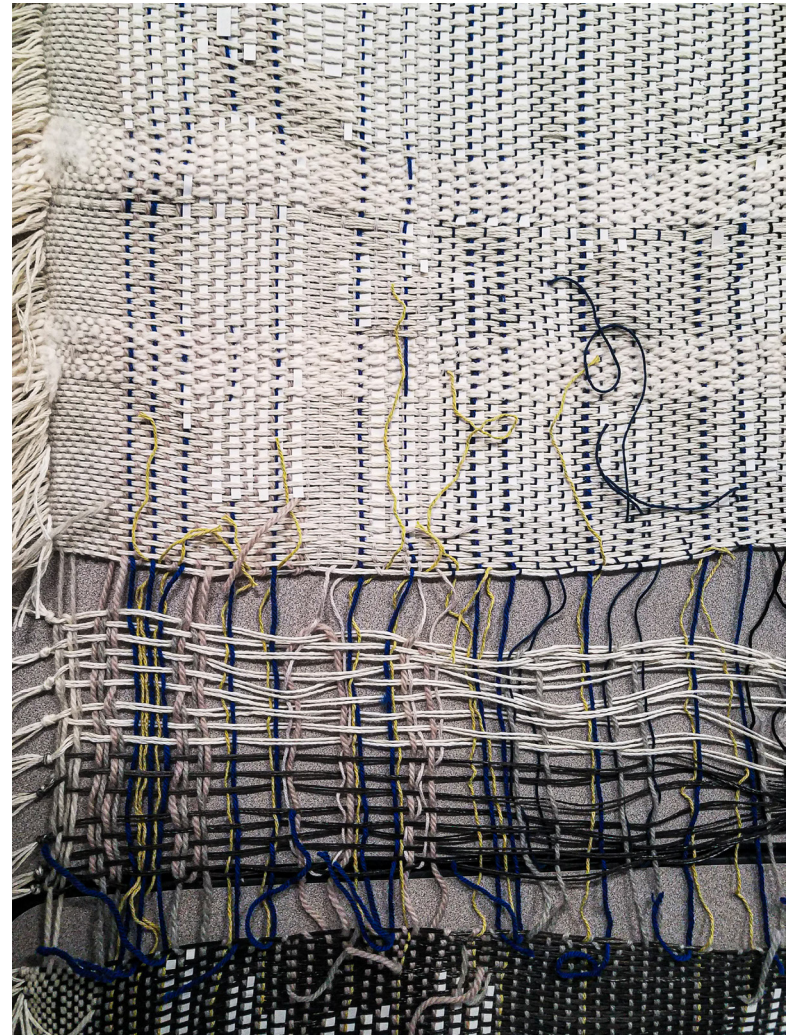






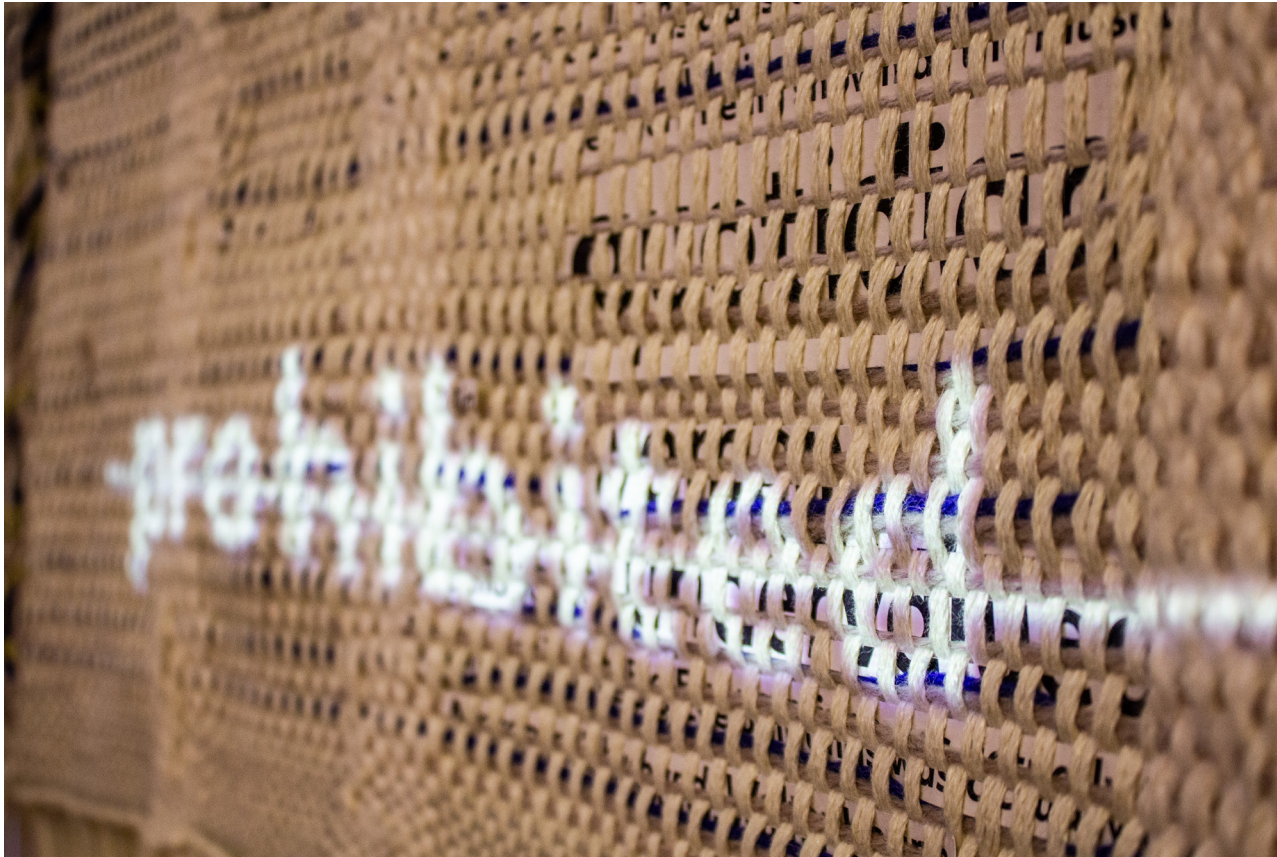


















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disproportionate struggle

prohibited

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dwarfed

forgotten

pale-handed

"I did better than him on a test and he was surprised I did well because I'm an art major."

penalty

hidden

deserving

transformation

accomplished

"Women artists are systematically disadvantaged across cultural fields."

"Men outnumber women as creative producers in almost all artistic fields."

first

"People in the art world want to think we are achieving parity more quickly than we are."

skill transformation

-Susan Fisher Sterling

Visit the National Museum of Women in the Arts (nmwa.org) to get the facts.

representation

earn

quotidian

women

undervalued

Kaitlyn Robinson

Gender Inequality in the Arts

2019 Fall Graphic Design Exhibition

Analysis

"Working primarily in fibers is especially complicated, as I feel like fiber artists are either consistently forgotten or are required to justify their reasoning for working in a "low craft" medium (which is, probably not coincidentally, still associated with women). Meanwhile, white men have historically produced art of all kinds with little to no questioning of their intentions or motivations."

"White men are the "default" artist, and I can't help but feel like I am condemned to a life spent playing catch-up with these counterparts."

I remember someone telling me once that "women are paid lower wages because we are too timid and scared to negotiate higher ones."

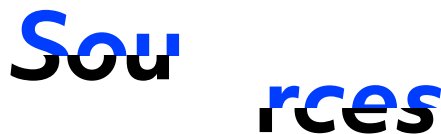
"I did better than him on a test and he was surprised I did well because I'm an art major."

"As a woman earning a degree in design, I have spent lots of time considering how to make myself stand out in a male-dominated field. Knowing that biological factors out of my control could potentially affect my chances of being chosen for a job position is terrifying. I want to defy the odds and not be just another statistic, but I'm worried that hard work alone can't always guarantee success."

Researching the ways that women have been excluded historically from the art world is discouraging. Women have much more opportunity in today's society than 100 or even 50 years ago, but the societal gender roles and associations are still very prevalent. I don't want my work to be automatically dismissed or undervalued because of my gender. I constantly feel as though I have to prove myself and my work worthy because I am a woman.

This research is discouraging to read, but women are gaining more opportunity with every passing year. While I do have fears and doubts about being successful in the art world after graduation, these facts and statistics will not deter me from pursuing my goals. I have always had the belief that hard work pays off and this research is even more incentive for me to keep pushing myself to become a better artist and designer."

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Personal accounts from:
 Mary Lauren Willis
 Luna Jareo