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*Confide with The Moon* is rooted in peace. I confide through the Moon with my father, who is in heaven. When I see this particular circle of light at night while I go walking or through the window, it gives peace and silence to the night and creates solitude time for father and daughter. The imaginary night landscape I create is made of plain weave fabric and other two-dimensional materials like thread, buttons, and zippers. Thread is taken thoughtfully from the fabric and sewn back in again to create textures. I created these artworks with a limited color palette to evoke inner feelings of calm.

CONFIDE WITH THE MOON

by

Hediyeh Bondar

A Thesis

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the Faculty of The Graduate School at

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

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Approved by

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Chris Cassidy  
Committee Chair

## DEDICATION

*Dedicated to my family and My father, who we have lost, and he impressed me on this journey.*

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis written by Hedyeh Bondar has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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## CHAPTER I: HOME, LAND, AND FAMILY

I grew up in an uneducated artist family. Since I was a child, I have always been interested in art and have developed my skills using crayons and different types of paints. I always remember my mother weaving something, and my older sisters were often writing and painting. My father had a book in his hands, and my grandfather, who had a significant influence on me, is a great and famous artist. I used to create games with my grandfather using my art skills.

After finishing middle school, I went to an art high school and studied graphics. I pursued photography seriously and professionally during this period and received awards. I loved volunteering as a designer for decorative wall painting. Later, I went to college and studied architecture.

While in the architecture program, I focused on the culture and lifestyle of the Qashqai, natives of Southern Iran, where I had traveled and created an extensive collection of photographs. My last project, studying Qashqai's daily lives, won the university's best award.

My following education was at the Art University in 1999. I studied for a bachelor's degree in Handicrafts. During this time, I was educated about different materials and making art. In my third year of university, I made textile art and installation using various fabrics and techniques. During my senior year in college, I focused on painting fabric, batik, and fabric printing. I wrote my dissertation on the similarities of weavers from the Navajo people of North America and the Qashqai and possible causes for such similarity.

After graduating, I successfully presented my works on batik and fabric print in exhibitions in Tehran, Iran. Afterward, I used a mixture of Navajo and Qashqai patterns in my works and used the batik technique on silk. Fabric is the base material of most of my works.

I have also used these patterns in designing various stamps and stencils. Later, silk's beautiful texture and light transparency made me think about experiencing glass as the foundation material for my work. I started to use such glasswork in interior design and designed various windows. Before studying for my Master's degree, I developed and showed digital patterns for textile, wallpaper, and rugs using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Lastly, I was a graphic designer in Iran, my country, for many years. I worked for many publishers.

Since I immigrated to the United States, I have been interested in pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. It greatly interested me because I believed it could provide new input and a different perspective on my future artistic creations. This prestigious program has helped me challenge myself in many different ways, especially textile art and installation, and has advanced my creative pursuit.

The projects that I have been involved in throughout my art career have contributed to the development of my current work, which is mainly inspired by nature and landscape, coming from memories of my father's garden.



## CHAPTER II: ACCRETION OF EXPERIENCES

It is enjoyable to think about everything that warms my heart and carries me to the past. I grew up in a big city, so nature meant heaven to me when I was a child; My father's garden was exactly like heaven in my mind. The base of this garden was farmland, but some part of it was wild. It was an hour away from the city. At that time, it was not easy to go there whenever we wanted. My father stayed there for the farming time, and we went some weekends and summers when we did not have school. I played around the trees and wheat fields constantly with other kids and my younger sister. The garden had a small home with basic furniture that we stayed in. We ate food from the garden, but my mother brought whatever we needed from the city because there was no grocery around that area.

I accompanied my father when he walked into the garden and looked at the trees. I saw how he took care of the trees, and it was essential for him that they were healthy. If a tree was hurting or bending over, it would be saved and repaired by him, which was extraordinary and heroic. He even helped the animals, tried to keep them safe, and taught us how to care for them.

My father had a great personality, was kind, and was a family lover. I could see love in his eyes, and when he saw we were happy, he enjoyed it. His feet were my chair; I do not know, did he feel pain in his feet when I sat there for a long time? When I left home to study at school, his mind warmed my heart because I knew somebody was behind me and supported me. He sold the garden in 2000, and we said bye to physical heaven forever. My father went to heaven in 2007 and left us alone.

This garden meant freedom to me. The sky was shiny and transparent because it was far from the city, and there was no air pollution. I lay down under the moonlight and chose the

biggest star next to the Moon for myself. While far from my father, I talked to him through the Moon. I had believed he could see the Moon as I see.

Moreover, when I go out for a walk at night or when I look out the window, I can communicate with heaven through the Moon where I can see my father. Moonlight, Moon, and stargazing are particularly associated with the garden at night. I can connect and talk to my father without any intermediaries while I was and am far from him. When the day was going dark, and the Moon appeared, the tension and fatigue of the day gave way to the calm and silence of the night.

In the past, there was less technology, and people spent their time together and enjoyed each other. It had been the same for my family and me. I liked my childhood because I had a great time with my parents and sisters. We were happier at that time. Now each of us is in a different corner and far from each other, making me pathetic and longing for that time. These days, if we have time, we can see each other by video call. All of us are busy having more worldly things, and we cannot gather.

Making art from my heart is a beautiful experience that I had in 2021. I did not think about anything and just ran toward heaven and worked with my heart. I looked back to the past and illustrated my best memories with fabric and wood. Working with these materials brings back all those good feelings from my childhood and makes me feel like I'm back in my father's garden at night while the Moon, a circle of light, watches the world from the sky and makes the night beautiful with its light. This is what I show in my works. I reflect on my nature experiences by recalling my childhood memories and observations, including my reaction to people who injure nature. I capture everything my eye sees, something like a snapshot of a moment happening.

I am interested in textile and installation art, and mark-making such as shadowing, scratching, scarring, piercing, wrapping, and stitching is essential for my practice. Through these changes to the materials, I show that caring, harmony, and healing are fundamental. Mark-making in fabric involves damaging it and repairing it. This injury and repair of the fabric models my concern about planet earth in the future. It is essential because many people do not care about their environment, so I try to show my concern through aesthetic strategies.

Woven fabrics are such an essential part of our everyday lives that we unknowingly spend much time thinking about colors, designs, the level of comfort we demand, and other factors while choosing. I consider what goes into the creation of textiles and how the raw material is transformed into exquisite apparel, a piece of art, or even a rug.

Some artists have impacted my art practice; their works have helped me grow and expand my thoughts. The artists who inspire me are Helen O'Leary, Elfi Cella, Glen Martin Taylor, Patrick Bermingham, Takao Momiyama, and Paulo Coelho is the author who impresses me most.

"She did not quite know what the relationship was between lunatics and the moon, but it must be a strong one if they used a word like that to describe the insane."<sup>1</sup> Paulo Coelho's books offer adventures and events that transport me away from the mundane and material world. Reading his books has influenced me in both art and life. *The Alchemist* is one of my favorite books. The book's central theme is about finding one's destiny. When I create a work, I think of nothing but it, and I somehow make it with my soul and feelings. I distance myself from all material things and live only in that moment and make a destiny for warp and weft of that piece.

Helen O'Leary is an Irish-American artist who converts traditional painting structures into new and vibrant images through deconstruction and reassembly. Like O'Leary, I also

deconstruct and reassemble the traditional structures of painting, but I combine these structures with textile. The other part of her work that I also do in my works is contemporary installation artwork, mainly textiles, based on the memories associated with the making.

Elfi Cella is an artist from Switzerland who mixes colors and textiles into surprisingly innovative mixed media. She includes buckles and zippers, buttons, and laces in her artworks and combines fabrics and painting.

Looking at artists' technical skills like Glen Martin Taylor is also helpful in experimenting with different materials to make art. He is from Ohio, United States, and is a contemporary artist. He repairs ceramics of all kinds, some made by him and others bought. He uses everyday objects, from twine threads to metal elements such as gold and silver, to repair broken pieces. It is a method of transforming an imperfection and damage into something even more beautiful and perfect.

Patrick Bermingham is inspirational to me because he also makes work set at night. He is an internationally recognized contemporary Canadian artist whose career spans decades as a sculptor and painter. He has multiple night painting series created with beautiful color palettes.

I am interested in varying formations of dense and sparse stitches, which Takao Momiyama does in his works. He was born in Japan, and he lives in Sweden. Momiyama's work focuses on the Japanese sewing technique and has evolved from design to more accessible expression by incorporating ideas about patching and repairing. The basic stitch is when the needle and thread go up and down on the textile surface and make stories; that is how I do mark-making.

### CHAPTER III: IMAGINARY NIGHT LANDSCAPE

My observations, sketches, and photos from outside give me ideas. When I want to make a work, I review them and start working on what fabric I have or prepare the materials I need. My pieces are made of different sizes, but most are big, to match my feeling of the landscape. It is interesting to see quick sketching become a big piece of art with minimal color. I am very pointedly deciding to abstract or simplify elements--trees, the Moon, etc., because abstraction permits me to create a general idea of what I want to have. The process instructs me to remove all specific details and patterns that will not help me solve my problem. It is also helpful for my ideas to create details and mark-making on my works.

My works are mixed media and two-dimensional. The primary material is fabric; wood has a vital role to play as the armatures in my pieces. However, wood is more than holding in some of my works, and I try to use it in different ways. I use wood elements purposefully and even paint them as major parts alongside the textile (figure 1).

My particular fabric is a plain weave, also called a tabby weave. Generally, it is made from cotton, which comes from nature. It allows me to create art by taking out threads quickly and repairing the fabric again to give meaning to where the thread came out of my work (figure 2).

There are also buttons and zippers to complete the landscapes in my work. Zippers and buttons play the role of connectors in my works and make the relationship between two pieces of fabric (figure 3).

I have also added a mesh garden fence to my artworks, which allows a different kind of weaving (figure 4).

Textiles encourage me to make marks by investigating the sense of physical and emotional landscapes and our lives' warp and weft patterns. I injure and repair fabric by cutting and sewing. I am restoring the threads which I pulled out of the original textile. I put them back into the fabrics again, like returning to nature and weaving a new life (figure 5).

Layering the fabrics is one of the techniques that I enjoy doing. Layers can be seen in most of my work. This helps me better evoke the shadows created to feel the night and the moonlight at night, which are beautiful and impressive in the landscapes (figure 6).

Breaking perceptual rules to see the elements does not happen in nature; it is exciting for me. In *Midnight*, I placed the Moon between the tree trunk and its branches and sewed it so that the stitches would show it in the right place (figure 7).

The color palette I use includes gray or blue contrasted with white. The most important thing is the Moon, which is prominent in the frame and the source of light in my exhibition. (figure 8).

Some of the works are one piece and include all objects such as Moon, tree, and land (figure 9).

There are different kinds of sewing, such as sewing machines and hand sewing. The regular stitches in my artwork are naturally more straightforward, closer to my identity when I look at it. Thread comes out more organized and thoughtfully from textiles and makes textures (figure 10).

Finally, my artworks' other essential parts are lighting and shadows. The works are in a dark place with purposeful lighting. It causes the viewers to feel like they are at night times. Most gallery hours are in the daytime, so they step into a different time when the viewer comes

to the gallery. I want them to enjoy the night and feel calm in their moment and situation with the sound of crickets and the fragrance of earth (figure 11).

In the other exploration, I have used only white cloth to show peace and protection of nature. During my trip to the Smoky Mountains, tall and dead trees stood out against the thick green canopy of the forests. It was a sad sight to my soul and a monstrosity in my mind on that trip (figure 12, 13).

Behind The Walls are double pieces. They are almost three-dimensional works where the viewers could turn around and even move these works. I practiced adding materials so that the viewer could turn around to see the physical form of one object in the combination of flat characters, something like merging both of them in a three-dimensional work. It could be a 3D form with 2D objects, a trick that makes the first viewer see 3D, and when the viewer looks carefully, they notice 2D things (figure 14, 15).

In conclusion, my works were created between many grays, blues, and white textiles. I was running through my memory and sewing my feelings of happiness and concern about the land. I confided, laughed, and cried with the moon, and my father watched me. Moon and trees protected whatever grew on the ground and made it captivating. Threads are taken from fabrics and given back to them with more aesthetics. Zippers and buttons made a relationship. And the result was to evoke inner feelings of calm in viewers. This story is not finished because the earth is more extensive than my imagination, and I could still create more and more.

## ENDNOTES

1 Paulo Paulo, *Veronika Decides to Die*. Translated by Margaret Jull Costa. (New York, NY: Perennial, 2001).



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APPENDIX A: CATALOG OF IMAGES

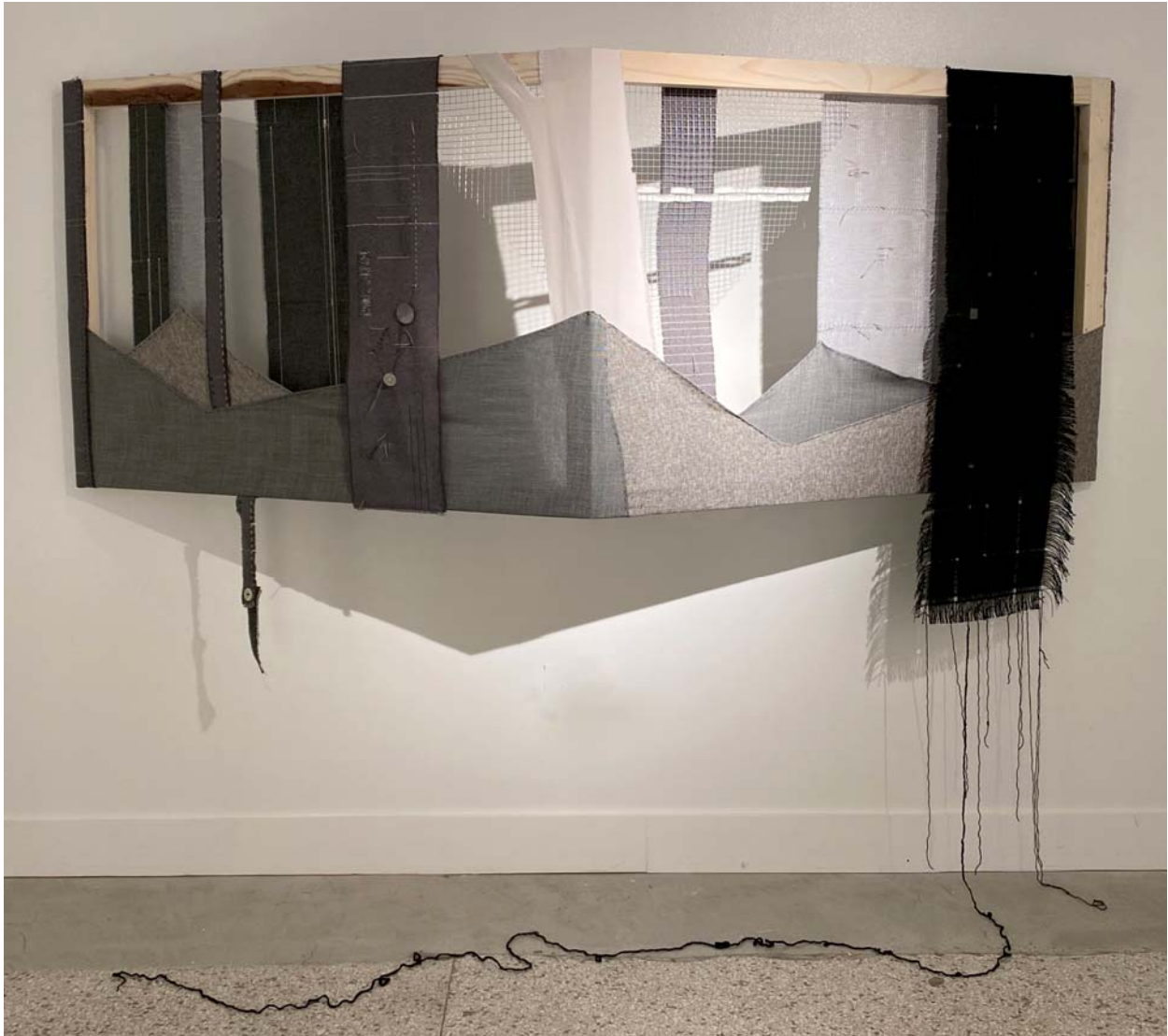


Figure 1. *The Corner of Landscape*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button Wire Mesh, Thread, Frame, 48" x 92", 2021



Figure 2. *Night Blooming*, Plain Fabric, Thread, Wood, 25" x 60", 2022



Figure 3. *Land Under Moon*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Wire Mesh, Thread, Wood, 52" x 23",  
2022



Figure 4. *Red Moon*, 43" x 48", Fabric, Zipper, Wire Mesh, Thread, Frame, 2021



Figure 5. *Weaving Night*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Thread, Wood, 58" x 30, 2022



Figure 6. *Layers of Night*, Fabric, Thread, Wood, 64" x 60", 2022

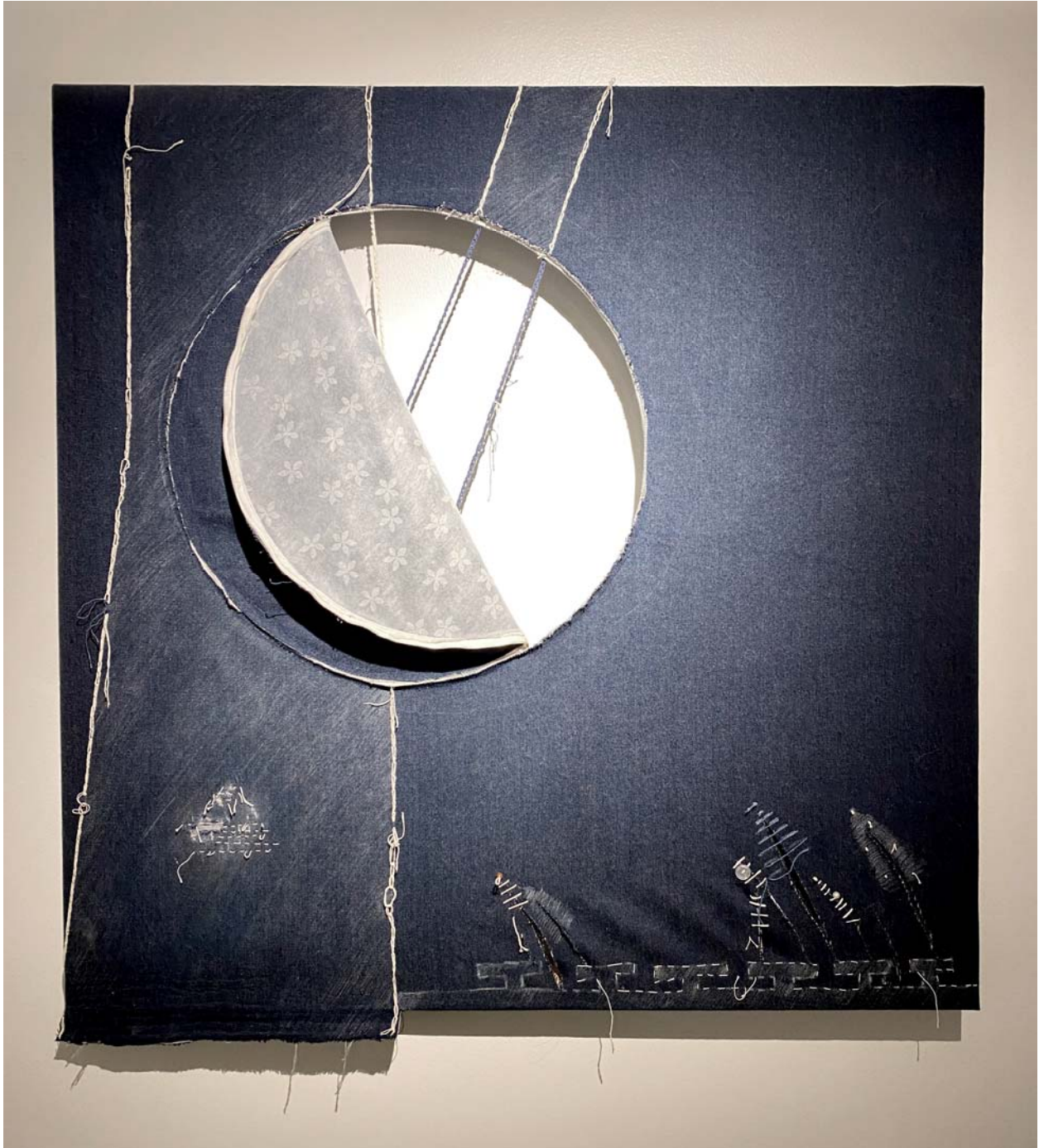


Figure 7. *Midnight*, Denim, Fabric, Zipper, Button, Thread, White Pencil, Frame, 44" x 42", 2021



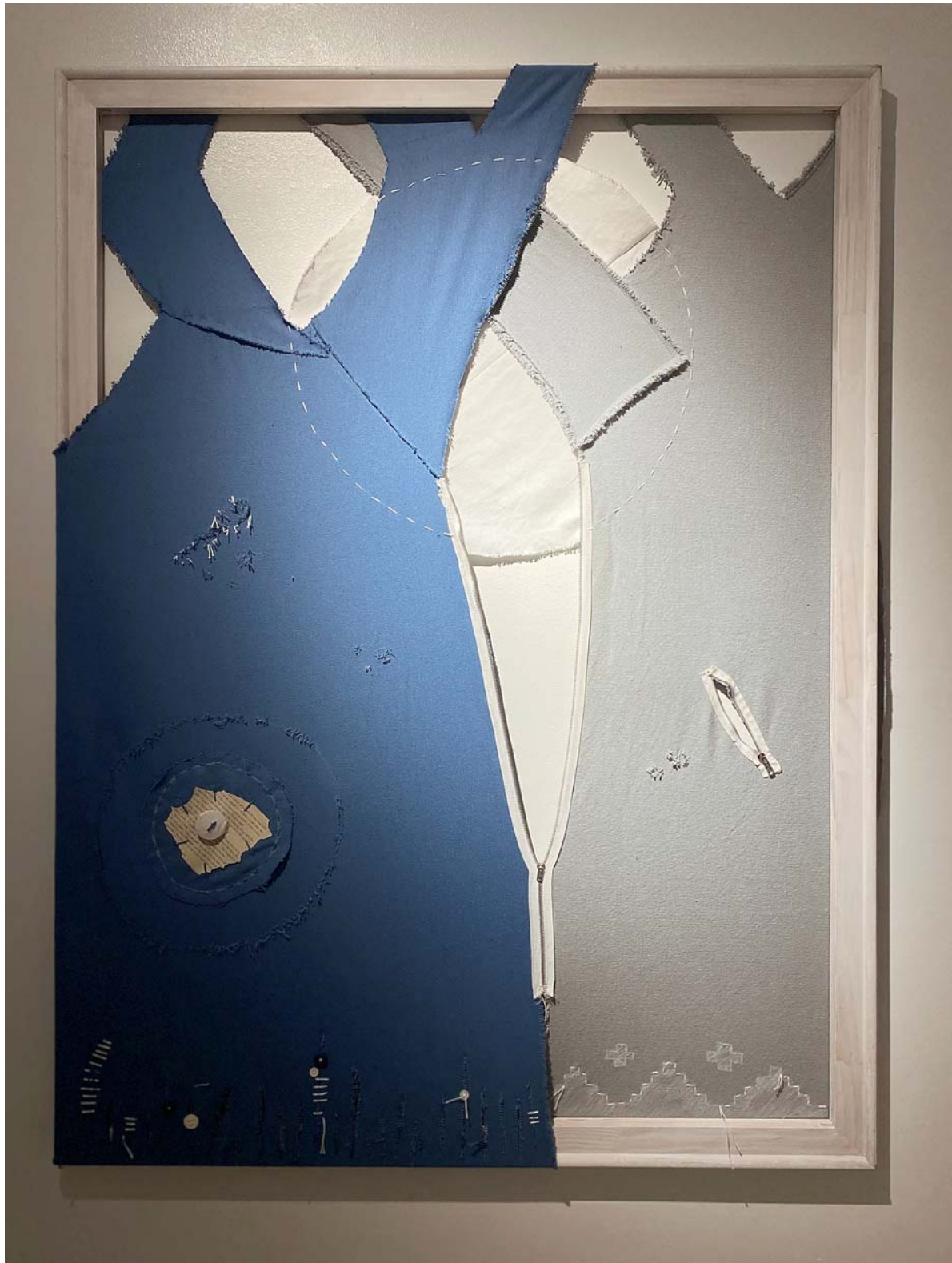


Figure 8. *Friends*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Thread, Paper, White Pencil, Frame, 58" x 42",

2021

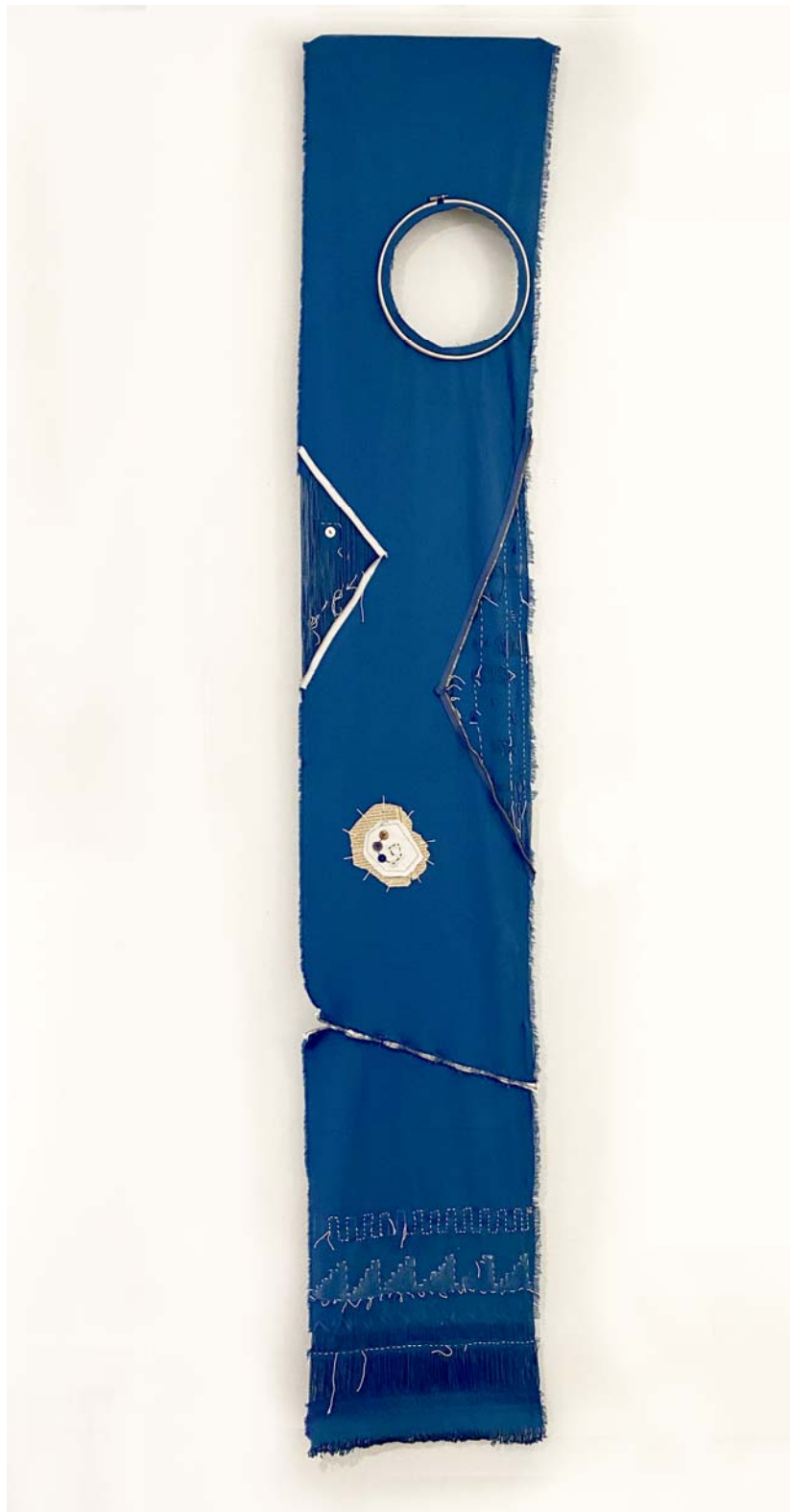


Figure 9. *Lonely Tree*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Embroidery hoops, White Pencil, Thread, Wood, 96" x 17", 2021



Figure 10. *Night Stock*, Plain Fabric, Crochet, Embroidery hoops, Thread, Frame, 28" x 31", 2022



Figure 11. *Sky Tellers*, Plain Fabric, Embroidery hoops, Wire Mesh, Thread, Wood, dimensions variable. 2022

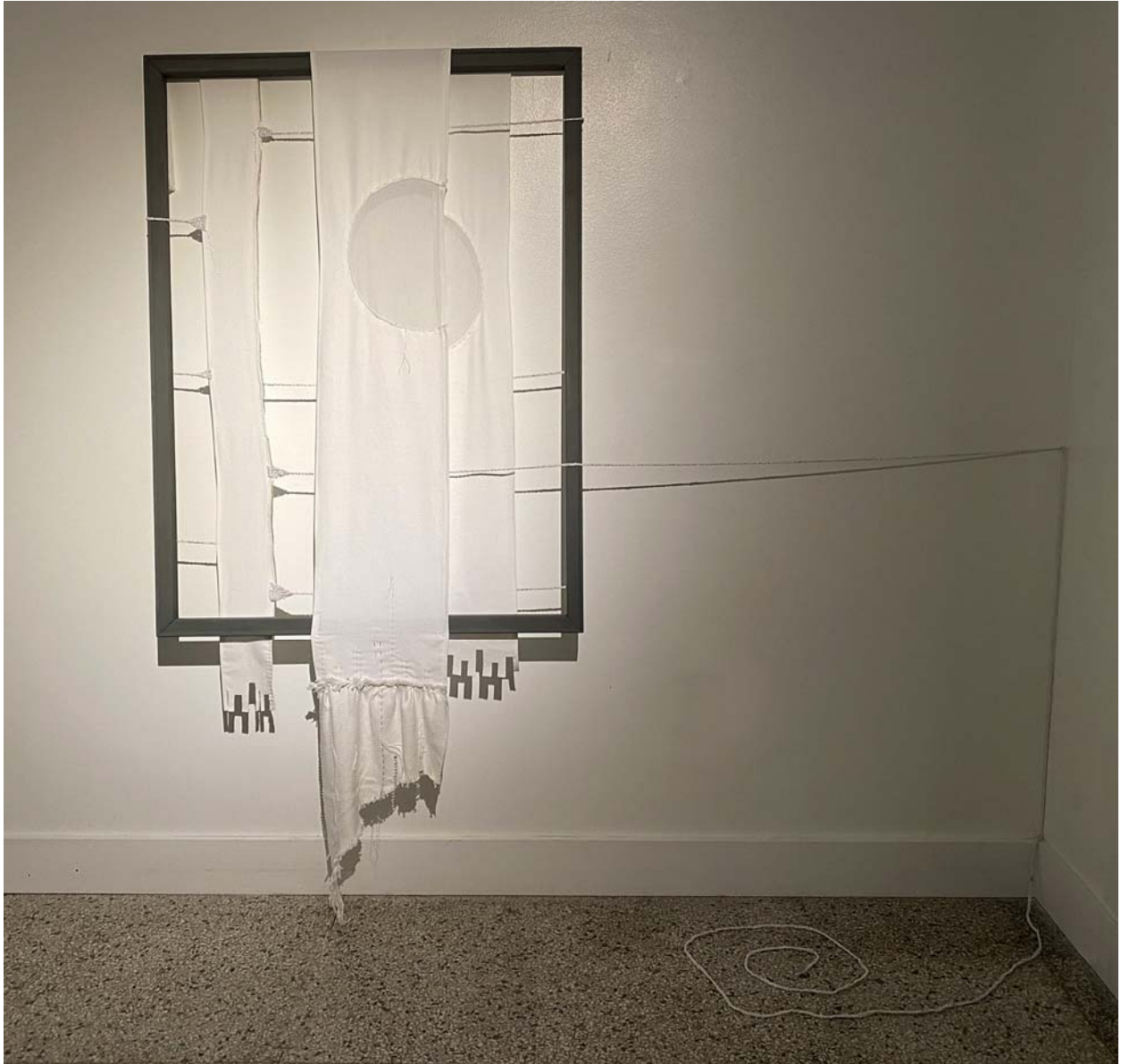


Figure 12. *White Night*, Fabric, Zipper, Crochet, Thread, Frame, 75" x 36", 2022



Figure 13. *Lunar and Stellar*, Plain Fabric, Zipper, Thread, Wood, 58" x 36", 2021



Figure 14. *Behind The Walls*, (double piece), Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Thread, Frame, 72" x 96", 2021



Figure 15. *Behind The Walls*, (double piece), Plain Fabric, Zipper, Button, Thread, Frame, 72" x 96", 2021