

Artist Statement



Spin Club Tapestry

An exploration of memory

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I grew up in a small farming village in Northern Germany. A village that is bound to its history and that stands out through its traditions even today. Long ago, village women met regularly in "Spinneklumps" (Spin Clubs) to spin wool, embroider, and stitch fabrics for their homes. I imagine their conversations as they worked, the beautiful stories that lifted their spirits, as well as the stories of sadness, sorrow and loss. In modern times, village women continued to meet in this tradition, but shared stories over coffee and cake instead of needlework. These close-knit groups of women often stayed together until their death.

In this series, my composite images take the form of tapestries, combining images of embroidered Spin Club fabrics with new and old photographs from the village. I connect the present and the past by re-creating and re-imagining pieces of the embroidery. Spin Club tablecloths, napkins and wall hangings (some dating back to 1799) have been passed down from generation to generation. By following the stitches in these fabrics, I follow a path through the lives of my ancestors - their layout of a perfect pattern and the mistakes they made. Along the way, I add my own mistakes. The fabrics also reveal the passage of time, stained and distorted after sometimes decades of use. The patterns I have stitched myself into the paper are only abstractions of the original Spin Club designs, fragments of memory. After all, memory is fleeting, and changed forever in the act of recollection. Sometimes the stitching is incomplete, creating an invitation for future generations.

Every decision we make is influenced by our history, our environment, and the society we live in. The tapestry of my life belongs to me but is stitched through with the beauty and heartache of past generations.

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