



GUEST JUROR AWARD

Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen

Bedford, New Hampshire, US
and Boston, Massachusetts, US

IN a world both fragmented and whole, the collaboration between artists Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen explores the meaning of connection. “Chiaroscuro No.11” is created from the remnants of hand-dyed scraps of fabrics from Nguyen’s studio (circa 2010–2019). The explosion of art elements—colors, lines, shapes and textures—is a rebirth and celebration of a new cloth, new life.

The two artists’ conversation pays homage to the craft of traditional patchwork, honoring the material. Its contrasts and movements reveal the process of creation. The nature of thread connects us to the past and emphasizes the inherent coexistence of the universal: day and night, light and dark.

Gilmore and Nguyen were familiar to each other through connections in the textile community.

Their works in cloth and paper have been featured in many international exhibitions, art journals, fiber magazines and books such as the *Artistry in Fiber, Vol. 3: Wearable Art* book by Anne Lee and E. Ashley Rooney, *Ornament Magazine*, *Surface Design Journal*, “Excellence in Fibers” by *Fiber Art Now* magazine, *Korea Bojagi Forum*, the SUSFUTURE 2024 International Design Exhibition: *From Tradition to Future - Sustainable Fashion Journey*, Smithsonian and Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft Shows, *From Lausanne to Beijing International Fiber Art Biennale* and others.

In 2023, Gilmore invited Nguyen to collaborate on the “friendship kimono” project. The artists began by creating a few initial quilt blocks and having a conversation in fabric. Experimentation with scraps of hand-dyed cloth opened new possibilities to reuse fabric in many interesting design combinations. They separately created compositions of numerous squares and then met to connect the pieces and progress on the project. Explorations of chaos and order as well as balance through color and texture

made for compelling blocks that honored the tradition of piecing and quilting.

Bottom: **Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen**, *Chiaroscuro No.11* (front), 2024. Sewn and hand-dyed linen and thread, 13 x 12 inches. Left page: detail. Photos by the artist.





Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen, *Chiaroscuro No.11* (detail), 2024. Sewn and hand-dyed linen and thread, 13 x 12 inches. Photo by the artist.



Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen, *Chiaroscuro No.11* (back), 2024. Sewn and hand-dyed linen and thread, 13 x 12 inches. Photo by the artist.

Evident in each individual block is an exploration of history and memory, individual expression and ever-evolving vision. As in a black-and-white photo, the blocks celebrate moments in time. They are works of art themselves, which organically developed into a much greater project than expected. The physical and visual direction of these pieces became the conversation. The act of putting the pieces together and shaping the fabric flowed naturally. Discussion about the initial size and shape of the kimono pattern as well as the evolution of color and, eventually, the expansion to a double-sided kimono, were essential.

The project took more than a year to finish. Stitched into the two-piece kimono are universal themes of impermanence, darkness and light, rebirth and celebration, mourning and honoring. Stitching together in a community is of the essence during times of instability as well as moments of celebration. The long history of women gathering to stitch together has always offered a time to share stories and ponder community.

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Ania Gilmore and Amy Nguyen, *Chiaroscuro No.11* (in progress), 2024. Sewn and hand-dyed linen and thread, 13 x 12 inches. Photo: Jerry Gilmore.