



# Sustainability and Mindful Fashion:

## Mending as a Practice in the Art Room and Beyond

REBECCA BAYGENTS TURK, PHD

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION 2020 & OHIO ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION 2019



This darning egg belonged to my maternal grandmother. It sat on the end table near her spot on the sofa. Now it sits near my sewing desk in a caddy with other tools.

Weight: 2.2 oz., Length: 5.75 in., Diameter at widest point: 5.75 in., Materials: Painted wood.



# Global Connections Track Studio Workshop

- ▶ Learn and share simple hand stitches to make functional and artistic repairs to existing garments.
- ▶ Explore sustainability through fashion with visible mending techniques inspired by sashiko, quilting, and embroidery traditions.

# Relevance to teaching and artistic practice

- ▶ Students' interests in the environment, fashion, society, and culture
- ▶ A new way to teach or emphasize elements of art and design such as line, color, shape, space
- ▶ Cross-curricular opportunities involving history, geography, mathematics, ecology
- ▶ Opportunities to establish intergenerational teaching-learning and community partnerships
- ▶ Applicable and adaptable to K-16, museum, and community settings

# Definitions to get started...

- ▶ **Mending** – repairing textiles using stitching techniques, visible and invisible possible
- ▶ **Darning (reweaving/reknitting)** – mending a hole or tear in a textile by connecting the original threads/yarns with stitching, no patch
- ▶ **Patching (applique)** – layering a textile above or beneath another, can be purely functional or decorative or both, held together with stitching
- ▶ **Sashiko** - “little stabs” – the types of functional and decorative stitches used in quilting & mending (Japanese, Edo era)
- ▶ **Boro** – “rags” - mended or patched textiles, hemp and cotton
- ▶ **Quilting** – joining layers of fabric with stitching, three layers (top, batting, back)
- ▶ **Running Stitch** – a stitch used in multiple techniques - basting, hand-quilting, mending, regular/even/uniform stitch that goes in and out – in and out
- ▶ **Embroidery** – decorative stitching on fabric, such as satin stitch & stem stitch



# Darning

(reweaving/reknitting) – mending a hole or tear in a textile by connecting the original threads/yarns with stitching, no patch

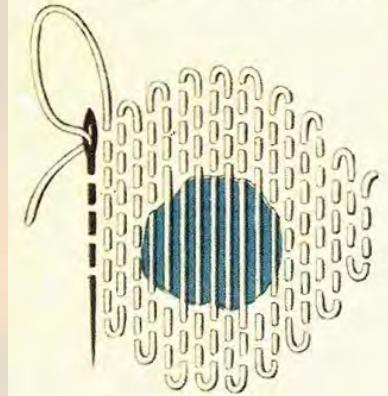
## Functional (& Artistic) Darning Inspiration

Darned cuffs by [Collingwood-Norris](https://www.collingwoodnorrisdesign.com/knitwearblog/visible-mending-cuffs) and instructions from the WWII Make Do and Mend campaign by the British government



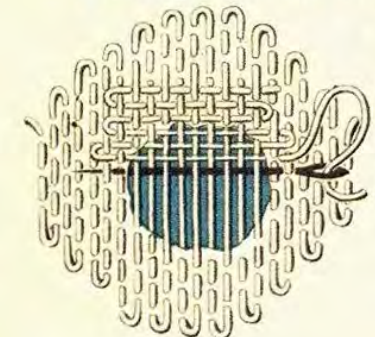
### DARNING A HOLE

First clear the loops of fluff and broken ends of threads from knitted garments or clip away ragged edges from machine knit fabrics. Always use a darning ball under large holes.



1. Make the darn the shape of the hole.
2. Darn up and down the hole first; work on the wrong side.
3. Choose mending as fine as the material of the garment.
4. Begin a good distance away from the hole in order to reinforce the thin parts round the hole.
5. Space the rows of darning the width of a strand of mending apart.
6. Pick up the backs of the loops only unless the material is very fine.
7. Leave loops at the ends of each row and darn so that stitches alternate with spaces between stitches in the previous rows.
8. Pick up the edge of the hole in one row then go over the edge of the hole in the next row. If you have cleared the edges of the hole you will find this will be easy and will make a neater mend on the right side of the garment.
9. Continue the darn over the thin place beyond the hole.

### Darning over the first rows of darning



1. Darn over the hole only and about two stitches of darning beyond.
2. Leave loops at the ends of each row, and only pick up on the needle the darning stitches.
3. Pick up the alternate strands of mending in first row.
4. In alternate rows, pick up the strands of mending you passed over in the previous row.



# Darning Materials & Tools

- ▶ Darning Needles – blunt or less sharp with large eyes
- ▶ Darning egg, mushroom, or similar to shape (knit) fabric
- ▶ Thread/yarn of similar texture and weight of the garment to be repaired, usually cotton or wool







The nine-year-old's jeans. Darned using variegated blue embroidery floss. Now there is a scar that features the lives of the garment and the wearer.



# Patching (applique) – layering a textile above or beneath another, can be purely functional or decorative or both, held together with stitching

## Contemporary Art & Visible Mending Inspiration

Patch on top with finished edges (applique) by [Marie Plakos](https://www.marieplakos.com/) and beneath with the raw edges of the hole featured by [Nora Knox](https://noraknox.com/blog/2018/12/26/inspiration-sashiko-visible-mending)



<https://www.marieplakos.com/>

<https://gailcreativestudies.wordpress.com/2017/08/18/stitch-art-that-satisfies-my-soul-guest-blogger-marie-plakos/>

<https://noraknox.com/blog/2018/12/26/inspiration-sashiko-visible-mending>



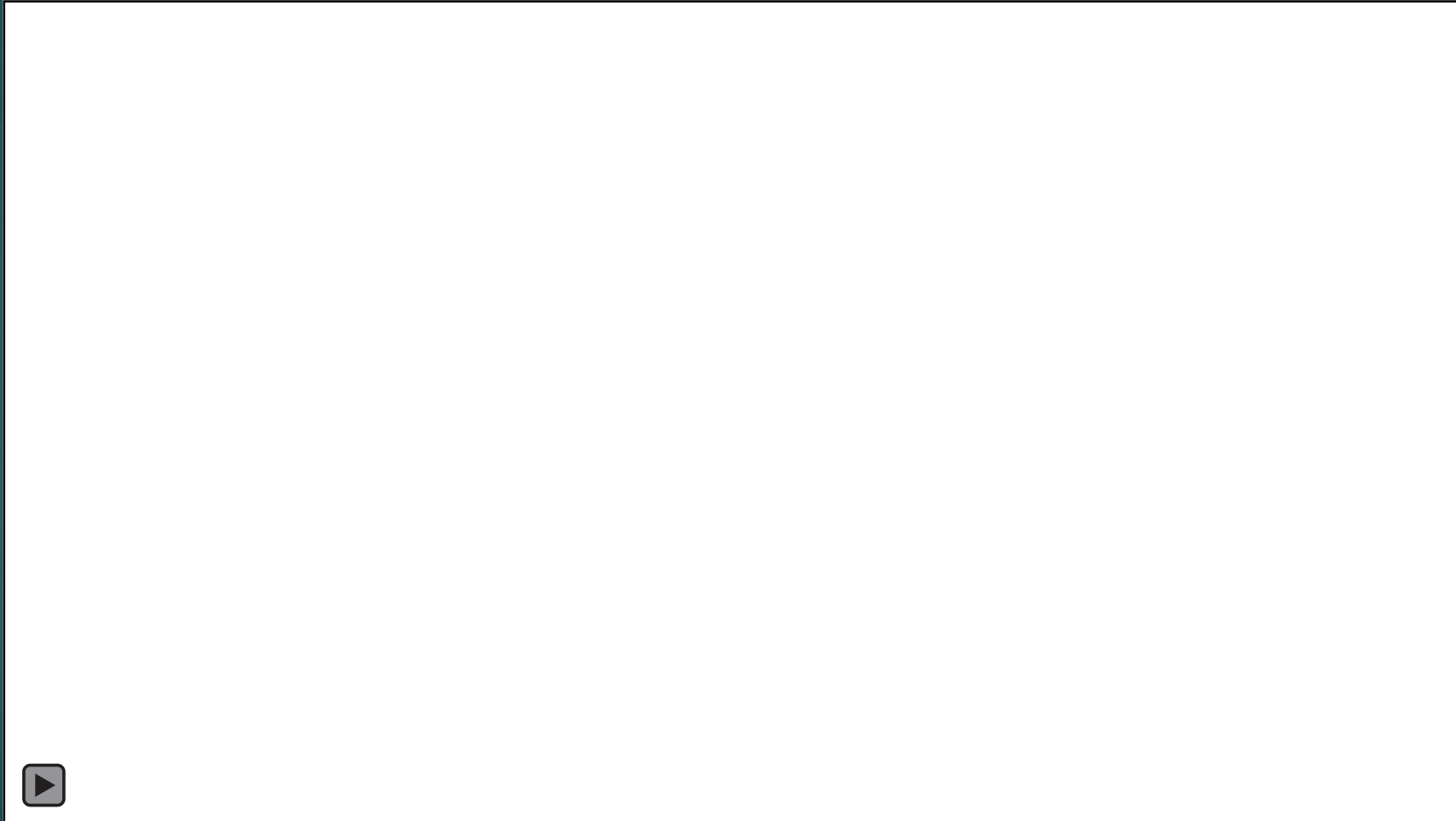


The thirteen-year-old's jeans. Two holes in the same leg. Patched with circular pieces of quilting cotton that are larger than the holes.



# Running Stitch

– a stitch used in multiple techniques -  
basting, hand-quilting, mending, regular/even/uniform stitch  
that goes in and out – in and out



Short video demonstrating the running stitch





Utilized a running stitch attach the patches. Drew overlapping circles with a Mark-B-Gone marker. Continued running stitches to secure and strengthen patches around/over holes and decoratively.



# Sashiko - “little stabs” – the types of functional and decorative stitches used in quilting & mending (Japanese, Edo era)

## Traditional & Modern Sashiko Inspiration

Kakinohanazashi (persimmon  
flower stitch) in progress by  
[Aya Studio](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aya-studio/3056169324/) and work by  
[Kate Herron Gendreau](https://khgarts.com/)



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/aya-studio/3056169324/>

<https://khgarts.com/>



# Sashiko Materials & Tools

- ▶ Sashiko thread - soft, strong cotton thread in matte white usually, made with specific type of twist
- ▶ Sashiko needles – long, very sharp, and rigid
- ▶ Traditionally indigo cotton fabric of medium weight with a loose weave
- ▶ Gridded ruler
- ▶ Water Soluble white pencil
- ▶ Grid or stitch stencil





# Quilting

– joining layers of fabric with stitching, three layers (top, batting, back)

## Quilting inspiration

[Gee's Bend](#) quilts often made with recycled textiles and fashions by [Emily Bode](#) made with recycled quilts



<https://www.soulsgrowndeeep.org/gees-bend-quiltmakers>

<https://www.bodenewyork.com/>  
<https://www.gq.com/story/emily-bode-profile-nyfw-preview>



# Quilting Materials & Tools

- ▶ Hand quilting needles (betweens) – sharp, thin, shorter
- ▶ Quilting thread – thin, cotton or cotton covered polyester
- ▶ Quilting cotton – tightly woven
- ▶ Quilting frame



# Quilting Connections

- ▶ The Underground Railroad
- ▶ NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt
- ▶ Amish Quilts
- ▶ Quilted Armor
- ▶ Sashiko (Japan)
- ▶ Kantha (Bangladesh)
- ▶ Ralli (Sindh, Pakistan, western India)







Repaired holes in collar fabric by layering another piece of fabric on top the collar and stitching through all four layers of fabric reminiscent of quilting.



# Embroidery

– decorative stitching on fabric, such as satin stitch & stem stitch

## Embroidery Mending Inspiration

Decorative stitching to mend and/or to embellish mending





# Embroidery Materials & Tools

- ▶ Embroidery needles based on *various types* of embroidery, larger eyes than regular hand sewing needles
- ▶ Embroidery hoops
- ▶ Embroidery floss or thread - separated





# Embroidery Connections

- ▶ Human History – as early as 30,000 BCE
- ▶ Various types to explore
  - ▶ Needlepoint
  - ▶ Cross-stitch
  - ▶ Sashiko
  - ▶ Crewel
  - ▶ Stumpwork
  - ▶ *and on and on*





# Brainstorming

## Lessons, Objectives, Connections...

- ▶ Drawing and “painting” with thread
- ▶ Exploring line, space, and shape with stitching
- ▶ Understanding and appreciating historical and contemporary contexts of the techniques and uses
- ▶ Designing a line of fast, slow, eco, or sustainable fashions
- ▶ How might mending practices impact the environment?
- ▶ Understanding and appreciating the labor and resources (material & environmental) used in the production of clothing
- ▶ Connections with practitioners past and present
- ▶ What can we adapt from cloth mending practices for our art of any medium?
- ▶ Mending as artrepreneurship or activism



# My Pinterest Boards

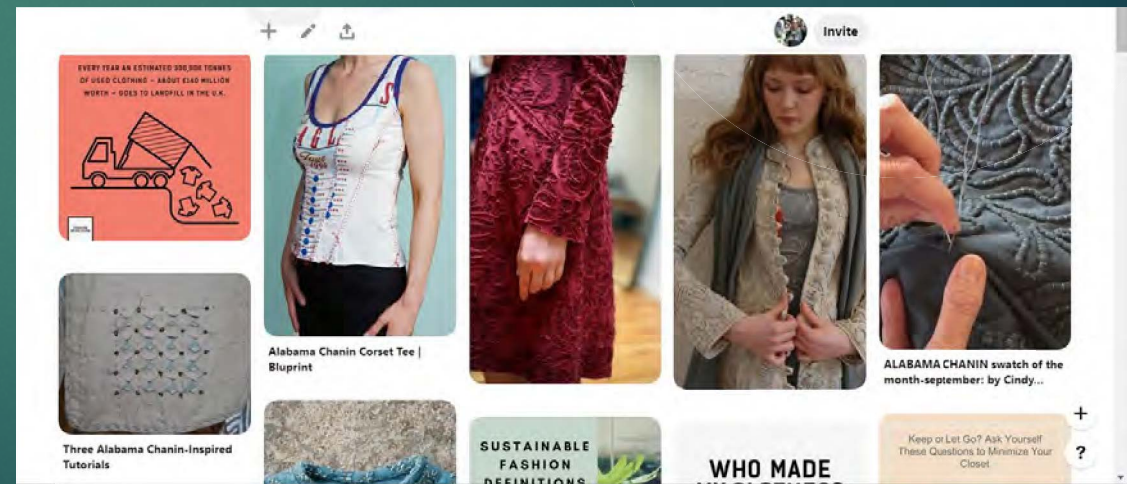
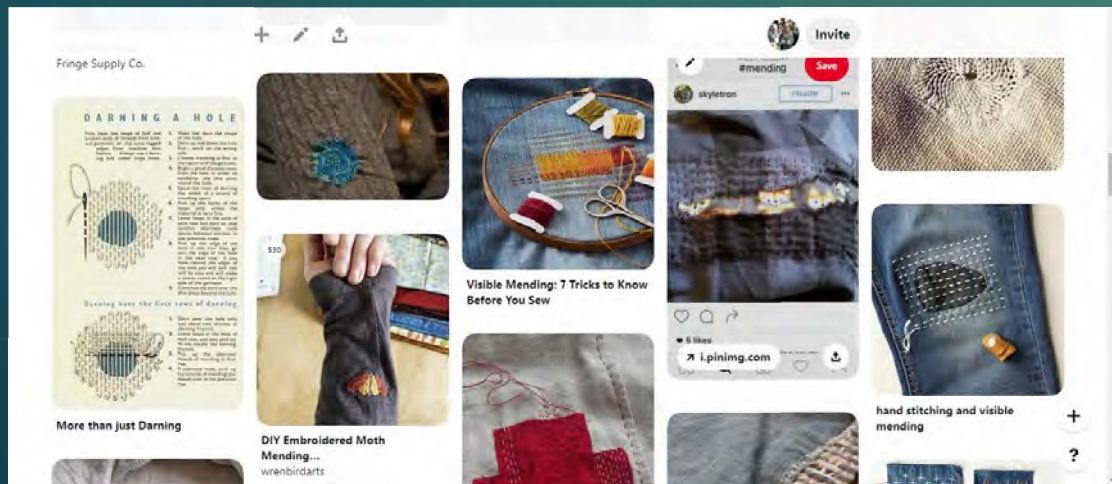
<https://www.pinterest.com/costumebecca/>

## (in)Visible Mending

- ▶ <https://www.pinterest.com/costumebecca/invisible-mending/>

## (Slow) Fashion & Sustainability

- ▶ <https://www.pinterest.com/costumebecca/slow-fashion-sustainability/>





# Helpful tutorials & samples by others

- ▶ <https://sublimestitching.com/pages/tutorials>
- ▶ <https://upcyclestitches.com/sashiko/>
- ▶ <https://visiblemending.com/>
- ▶ <https://suzyquilts.com/how-to-hand-quilt/>
- ▶ Running Stitch Video from Needle 'n Thread -  
<https://youtu.be/W4nhj8kMpAI>
- ▶ Backstitch Video from Needle 'n Thread -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ\\_wVC84UmM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ_wVC84UmM)





# Applicable **Enduring Understandings** from the National Core Arts Standards – Visual Arts

- ▶ Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed. (Anchor Standard 1)
- ▶ Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches. (Anchor Standard 2)
- ▶ People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives. (Anchor Standard 2)
- ▶ Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising, and refining work over time. (Anchor Standard 3)
- ▶ Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding. (Anchor Standard 6)
- ▶ Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments. (Anchor Standard 7)
- ▶ Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences. (Anchor Standard 10)
- ▶ People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art. (Anchor Standard 11)



# References

- ▶ Ayastudio. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.etsy.com/shop/ayastudio/>
- ▶ Ayastudio. (2020, April 28). Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/people/aya-studio/>
- ▶ Bode, E. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.bodenewyork.com/>
- ▶ Collingwood-Norris, F. (2019, October 7). Visible mending: Darning cuffs - Collingwood-Norris. Retrieved April 28, 2020, from <https://www.collingwoodnorrisdesign.com/knitwearblog/visible-mending-cuffs>
- ▶ Gendreau, K. H. (2020, April 15). KHG Arts. Retrieved from <https://khgarts.com/>
- ▶ Hine, S. (2018, February 4). This emerging brand is winning the New York fashion race with quilts (Yes, quilts). Retrieved October 10, 2019, from <https://www.gq.com/story/emily-bode-profile-nyfw-preview>
- ▶ Knox, N. (2018, December 26). Inspiration: Sashiko & visible mending. Retrieved from <https://noraknox.com/blog/2018/12/26/inspiration-sashiko-visible-mending>
- ▶ National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. (2014). National core arts standards. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>
- ▶ Plakos, M. (2017, August 18). Stitch art that satisfies my soul – Guest Blogger: Marie Plakos. Retrieved from <https://gailcreativestudies.wordpress.com/2017/08/18/stitch-art-that-satisfies-my-soul-guest-blogger-marie-plakos/>
- ▶ Plakos, M. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.marieplakos.com/>
- ▶ Souls Grown Deep Foundation. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2019, from <https://www.soulsgrowndeeep.org/gees-bend-quiltmakers>



# Thank You!

- ▶ Rebecca Baygents Turk
- ▶ [costumebecca@gmail.com](mailto:costumebecca@gmail.com)
- ▶ [rebeccaturkdesigns.com](http://rebeccaturkdesigns.com)
- ▶ Instagram: [@costumebecca](https://www.instagram.com/costumebecca)