

ARTIST STATEMENT

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When I think of the word 'literature', I think of old books treasured by librarians, scriptures written by hand, or elaborate scrolls containing epic poems. I think of paper, pens, and printing. I think of something mass produced and well-circulated. I think of marketing, of educational institutions and massive chain bookstores. I don't think of anything short and simple. I don't think of short stories or things that are carefully made by hand.

For this project, I want to propose the concept of using textiles as an avenue of literature. My constraints will include staying away from the use of paper, pens, and printing – I want to literally take this work *out of the book*. I will only use the tools and methods that a seamstress might use, stitching my words onto pieces of fabric, and then sewing them together to create a collection. In this practice, I want to juxtapose the printing industry, emphasizing something personal, handmade, and unique. I also want to take something that was traditionally considered a 'feminine' hobby or skill as a way of inserting myself into the space that was historically dominated by men. With a bit of humor and spite, I want it to announce that we women can do what they do, but we don't have to give up our personality or femininity to showcase dominance in that field.

I also want to put forth the idea that literature can be something very short. Instead of long epics and stories that reveal moral dilemma, I want my sources to be something private, familiar, and straightforward: I want lists, messages, and notes. I sourced these items from friends and family and compiled the words and phrases from scribbles on the corner of an agenda, a message in a birthday card, a text from a friend, and so on. In sourcing these materials, I constrained myself to only use notes that are intended for me to read or me to use. I also made sure that they were short enough to sew, and had to choose to edit some of the messages and cut them down (as I'll be sewing each letter, I had to keep time and the size of my fabric square in mind). My original idea included the use of different types of fabric per square (colours, textures), but considering the recent pandemic I used a simple white bedsheet and the thread that I had on hand. I started out sewing with a machine and liked the cursive and almost unreadable font that arose from that, reminding me of someone's handwriting. However, the machine's needles kept breaking, so I switched to hand stitching instead, and although the letters were more structured, the words came out easier to read. The act of sewing each one by hand also made me feel more attached to the words, consciously putting a lot of attention and time into each stitch; an attachment which is something I feel is lost in this era of modern technology and effortless communication.