

SEWING CIRCLE WITH MARIE WATT

VISUAL DESCRIPTION

Marie Watt invites communities to participate in large-scale distributed embroidery projects during open-to-all Sewing Circles. Sewing Circle participants are invited to gather around tables set up in a large shared space. The core tenets of a sewing circle are visible on a 45in by 66in sign. The sign has a sky blue woolen ground, peach coloured satin bindings at head and foot, and block letters stitched in varying shades of yellow. The sign states:

Sewing Circle

Invitation to participate

- I will trade a print for your time; and feed you when circumstances permit
- No sewing experience necessary
- Come and go as your schedule permits
- Bring a friend

This is an intergenerational project– participants to date have included individuals from ages 3 to 93. For reference there will be a binder with dispersible images of embroidery on past works, as well as embroidery samples to communicate different types of stitches in a tactile way. A clipboard is present and optional for participants to share their names and email addresses for project updates.

The surface of each table is covered by an assortment of pre-prepared individual panels of wool fabric ranging from 7 inches to 30 inches. The panels are composed of reclaimed wool blanket pieces and are shades of white, cream, and blues. Each panel has a word taped

in the center with masking tape. The words are inspired by Joy Harjo's poem "Singing Everything" and by a recent social media call inviting people to consider what they want to sing a song for in this moment. Several words include: breath, healthy granddaughters, pollinators, memory, and wild comfort.

Participants are encouraged to stitch to the right side, left side, above and all around the taped words, avoiding puncturing the tape when possible. Pre-threaded needles of varying sizes are provided. Marie Watt, studio members, and Whitney staff are available to assist in threading needles. The embroidery thread available is in vibrant and neutral shades of blues.

In this community making experience, the individual's unique handiwork is appreciated, especially in how every individual stitch contributes to create a larger collective whole. Any and all types of stitches are welcome. As participants take up space around tables, opportunities arise to meet new people and spark conversation. The goal is not to complete a panel, but rather about the call-and-response that happens when multiple hands stitch on the same panels over time. This practice leaves a variety of signature marks that come together in the final piece. The many hands and voices brought together during sewing circles inform and define the eventual piece, embedding the participants' stories into the very stitches and knots.

In gratitude for the shared time, Marie offers small limited edition prints for each participant.