

QUIET MOMENT

14" x 11"

Elizabeth Fram

Waterbury Center, VT

elizabethfram.com

Photograph: Elizabeth Fram

At the start of 2015, in order to revive my drawing skills, I began to sketch common household items and tablescapes daily. Concurrently, my textile work had become increasingly more reliant on pattern via shibori dyeing, color, and intensive fields of stitches. It was a natural progression to look for ways to create overlap between these two separate areas of practice, such that they could challenge and complement each other. The resulting pieces investigate image and surface, separately and together, celebrating each for the qualities they contribute to elevate the other.

The images in this series originate from my daily sketches of everyday household items. My goal was to present these objects in a new light, elevating them to a level of special regard via stitched marks and a surrounding framework of mokume-shibori. Calling attention to the dueling qualities of image and surface within each piece straddles a line between realistic portrayal and abstracted sections of pattern and marks. I began with a length of plain, raw silk. I settled on the

shape and size of the framework to house the image and the placement for the image within that frame. Once I outlined where the areas of pattern and open color would appear, I hand-stitched rows of running stitches into the spaces that will be filled with pattern. The threads of those stitches were tightly pulled and knotted before dyeing. I used transparent dyes, valuing their ability to blend color in the same way as watercolors. The dye was so concentrated that I applied it with eyedroppers to offer a loose element of control in the placement of each color. Dye cannot access the areas between the tightly gathered stitches, resulting in the mokume (wood grain) pattern, which was revealed once the threads were clipped and removed. Areas that were not pre-stitched appeared as fields of color. After the dye process was completed, I backed the silk with a layer of harem cloth for added stability when stitching. Using my original drawing as a reference, I loosely sketched the image within the window of the shibori framework, and finished with stitches of silk and cotton threads of varying colors and plies.

