

**ABSTRACT**

*Yesterday and Tomorrow*

**By**

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This thesis is written in support of the creative body of work entitled *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, a work of digital weaving and printing that examines memories, familial history, and cultural identity. This work presents the transformative economic life of my family by combining a series of five digitally composed photographic images woven in large-scale. Within this body of work, viewers are invited to explore the story of a widow with five daughters and her unique relationship with the youngest daughter.



# **YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW**

A Report of a Creative Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Art and Design

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MFA Art

By

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December 2015

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother for being the inspiration and the strength behind my desire to reach this goal. Thank you for making all things possible in my life.

To my husband, Mazen, I dedicate this work to you for helping to make the completion of this degree possible. I am forever indebted to you for your patience, assistance, and understanding of my absences in body and in mind, during this process and, most importantly, for understanding my need to make this dream come true. I could not have survived this experience without you.

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*“My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her.”*

George Washington

## **INTRODUCTION**

Growing up in a big family, and losing my father at an early age, forced my sisters and me to rely on my mother to do all the responsibilities that my father used to do. Seeing this made me into the strong woman I am today; a woman who aspires to be just like her mother.

Watching my mother working on embroidery and making traditional wedding dresses in order to earn money to feed her kids was a learning experience for me. It taught me to express myself and my cultural background.

In this current work, I used digital technology and its practical applications within the arts. I am intrigued by the qualities that exist when combining new tools with ancient and traditional practices, or the merging of sophisticated technology with traditional art forms, such as using digital printing and weaving with quilting and embroidery.

This body of work, *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, represents a confluence between traditional textile techniques and new, state-of-the-art technology. It combines elements of photography, digital printing and weaving, and surface design to highlight the story of a widow and her five daughters. This work also illustrates the special bond formed between the mother and the youngest of her five daughters. The story spans the mother’s life from the age of 14 until the age of 70 and details the sacrifices that she made in order to raise her kids. *Yesterday and Tomorrow* combines the past and the present of this widow and how that affected her life.

## PROCESS

### **Designing in *Adobe Photoshop***

My design process begins in *Adobe Photoshop*, a digital imaging software program that is used to execute the designing of overall compositions. To create this series, I collected the images that have a significant meaning to me and could express the different stages of my mother's life. I ended up with five photographs, which symbolize the number of daughters my mother has. The pictures I chose show my mother's life beginning with her marriage, her experience of losing her husband, the time she took control, the stage when she became a happier person, and ending with the reciprocity of time. I scanned each one of these pictures and manipulated them by using *Adobe Photoshop*. This digital imaging software was the key to creating color combinations, repeats, and photomontage in my thesis work.

All of the plates started with a photograph. Changing the scale and colors of the actual photographs were a vital step in my work because I wanted the colors to reflect the overall mood and to express the emotions of the characters through the diverse stages of my mother's life. Once each element was scaled and colored, I placed them into one of two layouts, a block repeat and a brick repeat.

Using *Photoshop* allows me the ability to create a separate layers for each of the design elements in the composition. For one of the layers in *Her Many Sacrifices* (Plate 1), and *Happiness is Seeing Your Mother Smile* (Plate 4), I chose a 6" × 6" small portrait and used a block repeat. The motif is flipped along both the vertical and horizontal axis, creating a pattern-mirroring effect in both directions. The weaving creates a textured effect, especially in the dark areas of the background of this motif. The opacity of this layer is 100% in Plate 1, while Plate 4 has two different opaque layers. The opacity of the left side of Plate 4 is 70%, which refers to the dark side

of my mother's life, while the right side is 50% and represents the bright side of her life and how she is happier now in her later years versus her former years.

In *A Moment That Will Never Be Forgotten* (Plate 2) I used a brick repeat. This piece has three layers of the same photo in different scales. The first layer is a large-scale portrait of my mother and her youngest daughter. This photo was taken in 1991 during the last picnic that my father would attend with his family. The second layer has a brick repeat, which is reminiscent of the standard brick formation in the construction of buildings, and is included to show the viewer how organized and structured the familial relationship was prior to the loss of the patriarch of the family, my father.

*Photoshop* was used to create an optical illusion by filling one photo with many smaller portraits using a mosaic design. *Reciprocity* (Plate 5), is made up of smaller pictures of the best moments and fondest memories of my mother. The artwork contains 20 small photographs designed to create a mosaic as one layer, while the second layer of this piece is a large-scale portrait of my mother's face. Black and burgundy colors surround the perimeter of her face, while beige encompasses the central area of her face. The contrast in color gives the viewer a better perspective on the light and dark values of the mosaic and is representative of the reflection of these light and dark moments in my mother's life as depicted on her face in the small mosaic photographs.

Photomontage combines photographic elements together to create a single composition. This technique is accomplished by using the tools available in *Photoshop*. The photomontage used in this body of work combines photography and scanned patterns of hand embroidery and weaving. One of the scanned patterns used is the traditional woven strips designed by my mother for her daughter's wedding. A Saudi tradition is to use items made by one's mother during the week you will marry. In *Her Many Sacrifices* (Plate 1), the image of the woven strips designed by

my mother years ago was used, with the exception of the top and one of the sides, which were replaced with my own work. The use of my mother's strips reflects the importance of my culture and my desire to connect with my mother through her work.

The second pattern using photomontage that expresses my familial heritage is a hand woven wall piece that was inherited from my grandmother. It has a complex pattern based on geometric design. A photograph of this valuable family heirloom was taken and used in Plate 4. The inherited piece is 3' x 5' but for my work, I scaled the size of this traditional woven piece and used it as the first layer of my final piece.

The photomontage pattern used in *Nothing Is Impossible* (Plate 3) is a hand embroidery pattern that was made by my mother. I grew up watching my mother make traditional wedding dresses for her daughters and for others as a way to make a living. She would embroider using the chain stitch to create geometric designs of squares and triangles in red, yellow, and burgundy. I scanned one of the first patterns my mother made when she was young, then created a photomontage as one of the layers. The use of that photomontage pattern illustrates how my siblings and I depended on my mother's handiwork to live, while also demonstrating her craftsmanship.

### **Digital Weaving**

At this point, all compositions for the designs of this thesis were complete. My intention was for the work to be presented as woven works of art. However, ECU's School of Art and Design did not have the equipment necessary to allow me to produce weavings with sophisticated complex structures and imagery. Therefore, the designs were woven digitally by a specific textile mill using an industrial Jacquard loom. The *Jacquard loom* is a mechanical loom invented by Joseph Marie Jacquard in 1801. It simplified the process of manufacturing textiles with complex structures and imagery (Holyoke, 2013).

As a textile designer who comes from a culture that uses the hand to create artwork, I wanted to experiment with the use of modern technology. Today, working with digital cameras, scanners and Jacquard looms, the textile artist is a designer who uses technology as medium to serve the artist's creativity. Besides the designing capacity of digital technologies, there is the potential for textiles to be designed and woven in different locations. The designer can create a digital image and send it to a mill.

### **Embellishments**

**Hand Embroidery.** *Nothing is Impossible* (Plate 3) includes a traditional embroidery that reflects my cultural background and showcases the traditional pattern used in the western region of Saudi Arabia. This type of embroidery pattern is created using geometric designs of squares, triangles, and symmetrical lines. After losing my father, my relationship with my mother grew closer and I would sit and watch her embroider with the desire to learn to do just as she did. Colors used in traditional Saudi embroidery are red, burgundy, golden yellow, and basic blue. In this plate, these same colors in the embroidery were used, along with DMC embroidery thread, as this thread is strong and adds luster to the piece.

**Digital Printing.** *A Moment That Will Not Be Forgotten* (Plate 2) contains three layers of the same photo in different scales. One of these layers is the same portrait of my mother and her youngest daughters in a different scale which is digitally printed on silk organza fabric. It was then attached to the woven panel. The type of printer used to print the design was an Epson 9890 inkjet printer using a special paper-backed fabric, which allowed me to put it through the printer. I chose silk organza due to its transparency and its soft texture. The combination of the soft material of the silk organza with the textured woven material of the panel signifies the structured smooth life prior to my father's death versus the unorganized rough life after his death.



## **PLATE STORIES**

*“I am saying to be a hero...means you step across the line and are willing to make a sacrifice, so heroes always are making a sacrifice. Heroes always take a risk. Heroes [are] always deviant.*

*Heroes [are] always doing something that most people don't.”*

Philip Zimbardo

### **Her Many Sacrifices**

The word *sacrifice* and what it means varies from one person to another. To me, my mother embodies the true definition of sacrifice. At the age of fourteen my mother was forced into an arranged marriage, as was the custom for so many young girls at that time. She could not live as some of the other children lived, playing and dreaming of their future. Instead she, was forced to marry and move from the city to the village with my father, who was wealthy at that time and who already had one wife. My mother became his second and youngest wife, and had no idea what married meant nor did she know how to be a wife. My mother's inability to grasp the expectations of her new role was apparent on many days.

The door behind my mother in this artwork is the door to the first house my mother lived in after getting married. The house was small, only having two bedrooms and one shared bathroom. That door was made of corrosive wood. I remember one of her old stories about when she was afraid of an aggressive dog that used to break the door and eat her dough before baking because of that door. My aunt (the first wife) taught her how to sew, embroider, and to depend on herself. She loved my mother and the two of them built a strong relationship that was as close as sisters. As years passed, my mother became a strong woman who always sought to challenge

herself first, and then prove to her family and others that she would persevere despite being sold into marriage and left to fend for herself. She worked hard every day to show everyone that she could still smile and still work. She could compete with women much older than her who spent their time making garments and other works of art for family and friends, to trade, and to sell. She worked hard to position herself as someone well-known in the community, someone who other women, young and old, looked to for advice and looked up to as a role model.

With all of the hard work that she has done throughout her life, with all of the tears that have filled her eyes, heartache she has endured, and sacrifices she has made, she still laughs and makes jokes with her children, family and friends. She is the true definition of a survivor. In *Her Many Sacrifices* (Plate 1), I chose to begin with a portrait of my mother in the present time that emphasizes her gorgeous smile, and has her wearing her favorite dress in black and red, which represents the primary colors used in her embroidery from long ago. The background of the portrait is the old door of the first house she lived in, and how that house affected her life to make her the woman that she is today. The rationale for including the door as a backdrop was to serve as a reflection of her painful past, while making the statement that my mother can now put the past behind her and step into the present and her future.

Being the youngest of eight siblings, I was able to build a strong relationship with my mother. Just as my mother embodies the definition of sacrifice and is a true survivor, beauty is reflected in her face. For that reason, I decided to create a block repeat using one image focused on my mother's face in two different shades. The first one is close to her real features, and represents the happier times in her life. The other face, which appears darker and hides the beauty of her face, shows the more tumultuous times of her life, and how these two sides manifested themselves in my own life experience.

Growing up, watching my mother making traditional garments for her daughters when they were ready for marriage, inspired me to want to do the same things. I often watched her as she worked on embroidery during her free time to compete with other women who created traditional costumes for their relatives. She always wanted to be one of the top crafts women and have her own unique style of making tassels and traditional wedding dresses. She wanted to make what the girls needed from their mother when they moved out on their own to start their lives. I believe that my mother missed those moments from her family, and many others, due to the fact that she was sent away at such a young age. In fact, I cannot recall her speaking about my grandmother, her mother, in an emotional or loving manner. She rarely ever spoke about her family at all.

One of the traditional pieces of artwork that my mother prepared for her daughters was the woven stripes, which symbolizes a wealthy life. She bought two woven stripes from one of the famous weavers in our village. The weaver made them for my mother, specifically after a long negotiation to let my mother have input on the design of the fabric. That weaver did not allow any other woman to design the pattern, but she believed that my mother could create a unique design. Those two stripes are so important to my mother because no one in our village has created the same design that she created. It has her own signature of style and color. I photographed them and used them in this piece to show the talent of my great mother and to show just how proud I am of her work.

The colors used to create this artwork emphasize the overall tone of my mother's life; black, dark blue, shades of turquoise. Red and burgundy are the primary colors of the traditional customs in my region. I am using these colors in every aspect of my thesis artwork as homage to my heritage and cultural customs.

*“I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father’s protection.”*

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

### **A Moment That Will Never Be Forgotten**

In 1991, my family became a big extended family. At that time, my mother had a strong relationship with my father. One of my brothers was serving in the military, stationed in Kuwait during its war against Iraq. His safety was a constant cause for concern for my family. We moved into a brand new house of three floors with a basement and garage. The old house that had many sad days became a school and was one source of financial support for my father. He opened his own market and his business grew gradually. This new experience of wealth, joy and happiness made us all forget that it is possible to wake up one day and all of our blessings be taken away from us.

When I was six years, my oldest sister was engaged and preparing for her wedding and my two oldest brothers were married and waiting for their first babies to be born. My father was proud of his family and wanted to celebrate by taking a trip with the family together, including my aunt and grandmother, as he normally took them as well. That trip was one of the few memories that I still have of my father.

It was a Thursday morning and the climate was ideal to go camping. At that time, my father was around 60 years old and my mother was almost 30. When we would go on any trip, the responsibilities were distributed amongst our family members. For example, my father was responsible for the cooking, while my mother was responsible for the preparation of the food, starting from cutting the vegetables to rinsing the rice before making it. My oldest sister would assist my father, while the rest of my sisters were setting up the place and were also responsible

for the cleaning the dishes after the meal. That trip was our last trip with our father. Even though he was tired, he tried so hard to spread the joy and happiness among his family members and make that trip the best one possible for us. He was hiding his worries and fears about what might happen to his son in Kuwait during the war and had no idea whether or not my brother was dead or alive.

My father used to drive back and forth from the village to the city to get news about the war in Kuwait, until that fateful day when we lost him in a car accident. It was on that day that we, my siblings and I, lost our innocence, happiness, and joy. That one quick moment changed our lives completely. One month later, after our wonderful family trip, we became a family with no father. I remember every single detail of that day and I have not been able to erase that moment ever.

The death of someone close to us left us shocked with grief. We could not understand how one minute this person was there, and the next, he was gone. The truth is that those we love are never truly gone. The body may have run its course, but the soul lives forever. The only truth that exists all the time is that my father is gone and the only thing left behind him was his photos with us and the memories that remind us of his generosity, kindness, love, and honesty.

One of the pictures I found in my family's album was the one which has taken at our final trip with my father. The picture I love was the one with my mother rinsing the rice and the water pitcher beside the rice bowl. My four year-old sister, Eptisam, and I were sitting beside my mother, who was in the middle of us. That picture was a notice of our upcoming life, and how the whole family would be changed since my father passed away. I have used this photo in order to express all the feelings I felt and how they affected my life.

Living alone in the village, especially after my oldest sister had her first child and moved far away from us, gave me a chance to get to know my mother more closely. She treated my sister Eptisam and me differently because she thought that we really needed our father at a young age. She did what other women could not do in raising five daughters alone. She was young when her husband passed away and had a chance to live her life. She preferred to be a widow, and that was her second sacrifice.

*A Moment That Will Not Be Forgotten* (Plate 2) illustrates the relationship between my mother and her youngest daughters. Our final trip with my father was a key factor in the process of getting to know my mother better. I used the photograph that contains my mother and her youngest daughters on that trip to reflect this mother-daughter relationship in two ways: first, on a large-scale after changing the colors of the regular picture and choosing blue with turquoise as a way of expressing our grief at losing our father; and then second, by using a brick repeat of the same pictures in blue and turquoise colors. The size of this tile is 6" × 6", and is a standard brick formation, which shows the viewers how organized our lives were prior to my father's death.

This particular type of repeat adds design elements to this work of art. Having two layers of the same portrait in two different ways and two different sizes gives the piece a faded look which expresses the lost through the hidden features of the small tile. Another design element I created in this piece is printing the tile portrait on silk organza using a large format inkjet printer. This time I did not change the color of the original photo because I wanted to add a unity to the piece that has a realistic look of transparency and that reflects the dilemma we faced at the reality of life after losing our father. The method by which I attached the printed silk organza onto the piece illustrates how our sorrows were great at first, and then diminished as the loss became a part of our daily lives. The bottom of this work has the most printed silk organza, but as the

viewers' eyes move upward towards the top of the work, the realistic image printed on the transparent fabric is not as visible. The mixing of these two materials, silk organza and woven cloth, created a complex composition, and a unique dimension while showing the impact that losing our father had on us all.

*“Determination, perseverance and hard work make the impossible possible.”*

Abderrahman Haasi

### **Nothing is Impossible**

I grew up watching my mother make traditional dresses that have embroidery and beads, and I was sitting adjacent to her studying and doing my homework the whole time. She was making the beads by herself, using a heat source and a wooden stick. Wearing her eye glasses and watching her face when the beads turned to a red color because of that heat source, my mom would pick up the silver beads using a wooden pick, then dip those beads inside a mug filled with cold water. My mother skillfully mastered the art of hand-making beads from fine metal strips. The beads of these garments are small, with about seven beads per centimeter threaded together in a fringe, or five or six per centimeter stitched onto a garment. She would spend the afternoons making the garments, with each one taking her many hours to make.

Clothing in the Taif region is usually tight-fitting, and fully lined for warmth in the cold mountain climate. Lavish embroidery, always in vibrant colors and geometric designs, adorns hems, side panels, cuffs, back, and headdresses. The bodice is often left bare to allow for cascades of silver or gold jewelry and silver belts. The dresses are usually made within the family, by a girl's mother, or her grandmothers, for her wedding day, and would subsequently be worn on special occasions. The basic and most common cut is T-shaped, with the fabric folded over the top of the shoulders, a hole or slit cut for the head, and sleeve panels added. The stitches themselves are simple, small and packed together to form colored borders and delicate edges. The other techniques used to decorate these garments are appliqué and beadwork, one adding color, the other adding glitter of applied strips, usually on the sleeve and the bodice.



My mother was providing me with the knowledge of making beads and she showed me how to embroider using a chain stitch, which was the primary type of stitching used to make the traditional clothing in my region (Taif). My passion for sewing and embroidery has grown over time. I always wanted to be like my mother and she has been my motivation for doing my work. I see my mother as a person who was never broken. She always found a way to live to the best of her abilities, she challenged herself before anybody else could, and that is what makes her stand out from any other woman that I know.

In *Nothing is Impossible* (Plate 3), I used a photograph of my mother and me was sitting beside her in the corner of our bedroom. That image shows the relationship between a mother and her young daughter. The image illustrates the mother wearing eyeglasses taking a break during her handwork on the embroidery for one of the traditional garments. She was working on that garment during the holiday without thinking of setting aside time for herself. On that particular day, I was watching my mother smiling, as usual, but she was hiding her worry and the fear of what the future held. It is clear that misery appears in our eyes. Fear, loneliness, fatigue, and the father's absence are all obvious in our outfits, the darkness of the room, and the way we were looking at camera. This image evokes bad emotions of when my mother forgot to be happy and instead chose to focus on working hard to support her family.

The background of this image is a scanned embroidery pattern that was made for my oldest sister's traditional wedding dress. The use of this pattern as a background of my mother's portrait served as a reminder that we still relied on our mother's handiwork to live at that moment. The work my mother did with her hands contributed to the women that my sisters and I are today. She taught us how we should conduct ourselves as women by using her own experiences and upbringing as an example. She, herself, served as a great model for us to follow

with the determination, perseverance, unrelenting hope, and honesty that guided her life. One of the elements that my artwork incorporates is surface design. The hand embroidered embellishments in this piece adds a unity that would not exist without it. I used one of the primary stitches that my mother used when she would embroider, following the geometric design and colors on the scanned embroidery pattern. The hand embroidery in this piece highlights my cultural background and illustrates the skills I learned from my mother. At the same time, this piece represents a confluence between traditional textile technique and modernized state-of-the-art technology as it again combines hand embellishment with digital weaving.

*“A people’s relationship to their heritage is the same as the relationship of child to its mother.”*

John Henrik Clarke

### **Happiness is Seeing Your Mother Smile**

I developed a great admiration for my cultural heritage through the example of my mother’s artwork. She was one of the most gifted craftswomen who cared deeply about our region’s heritage and traditions such as designing Sadu weaving, which is one the most popular designs in Saudi Arabia. This type of weaving is one of the main desert crafts through which women show their artistry and manual skills. My mother was not a weaver but she knew how to design the traditional weaving patterns that have been used for centuries to decorate the bridal house during the week before the wedding ceremony. In my region, young girls start to learn how to weave at an early age, watching and assisting their mothers in spinning, dying and weaving basic designs. By the age of sixteen, Saudi girls are able to weave and execute almost all of the patterns, except for the very intricate designs, which need great skills and extensive training. Since my mother had to get married when she was fourteen years old, she did not get adequate training from her mother. After marriage, she taught herself gradually to design the patterns, dye the yarn, and to spin and weave some easy structures. Her knowledge of weaving originated from a friend who was well-known for her traditional weaving. This friend’s work had a great deal of variety in color, design and technique. The loom that is used for traditional weaving in my region is the horizontal loom, which dates back to ancient Egypt, but may have been used much earlier in China. The loom is portable, and if the weaving has not been completed, it can be rolled and set up in another place at another time; therefore, it is an ideal loom for a nomadic people (AL-SADU, 1998).

One of the heritage woven pieces which my mother inherited from my grandmother was a series of five pieces. This series has three primary historical designs. It was made of goat hair and filled with warm and dark colors, which was used for wedding decorations. My mother loved those woven pieces and thought that these were the only thing that made her feel that she was important to her family. She always felt that she was unwanted due to the fact that her family forced her to get married at such a young age. Another reason that made my mother prefer those woven pieces was the unique pattern which set those weavings apart from the other weaving works.

My mother has used this inherited woven series five times in each of her daughters' weddings. She is keeping them now in good condition for future use. In the summer of 2015, my mother gave me one of these pieces as a gift. She appreciates the art and wanted to find someone in my family who has a sense of art and who knows enough about weaving to want to share her knowledge and skills.

I used this heritage weaving in my work as a way of expressing who I am, to show my roots, where I came from, and to what culture I belong. This weaving is one of the primary wedding customs in my region, as well as the traditional wedding dress. My mother has been my inspiration in most of my work with her smile and the great effort she gave while she was embroidering, designing, dying yarns to weave and creating a pleasant artwork that reflects our Saudi culture and identifies who we are as the Bedouin society.

In *Happiness is Seeing Your Mother Smile* (Plate 4), I scanned one of the major pieces of the inheritance weaving to combine the ancient hand weaving with digital weaving. Instead of making the same design by hand, I created a new way to protect the heritage and added a new feel to the technology of making a flexible work, which has modernity and heritage at the same

time. It is an expression of thanks and gratitude to the great mother I have for giving me one of her favorite pieces. I used her image and chose the block repeat as a second layer when I created this piece, which illustrates her personality that is full of energy and shows the hope in her facial expressions. I used the center portrait of my mother as a third layer to show her at the present moment. By watching this piece, you will realize that behind the innocent smile of my mother's image, you can see the darkness and the hard work she tried to hide all the time. The center portrait of her reflects the clear side of her personality and her genuineness, while the repeated images illustrate her sense of joy and her desire to live even with pain and suffer.

*“Love is made of two keys sacrifice and acceptance. Sacrifice everything you have for the person to make their lives better no matter how much it may hurt and to accept the person for who they are no matter what, even if they change. These keys are tied together by your willpower. Once the person you love sees you doing these things, they will do the same for you. That is true love.”*

Reuben Lyimo

### **Reciprocity**

While my mother spent her years worrying about her children and ensuring that they lived good lives with their own families as adults, she did not realize that she, herself, had gotten older. With that realization came the thoughts of the many years of neglected health and aging that was now upon her. As a family, my siblings and I decided to give our mother the life she deserves and has always dreamt of. To us, she deserves to live the rest of her life in comfort and without worry.

Our lives are better now and my mother is grateful for all that she now has. She has no regrets about being forced to marry at such a young age, experiencing such tragedy as losing her husband and son, having to raise her children alone, nor any other aspect of her life. She knows that her life, as well as her children, are a blessing from the God, and that she would never need to ask for anything else.

*Reciprocity* (Plate 5) illustrates her best moments and shows the transformation that occurred in her life and how this change is reflected on her face. Over the years, my mother changed physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally; this is all reflected in the last piece. The life she now lives and the way she expresses her joy and happiness are obvious in this artwork. The piece contains twenty repeated mosaic images that were taken at her best moments,

and this serves as the first layer of the piece. The second layer is a large-scale portrait of my mother taken during the holidays. This piece illustrates the differences in her smile during the holiday time when she was 36 years old (*Nothing is Impossible*), and her smile at the age of 70 (*Reciprocity*). The smile of age 36 was hiding fear, loneliness, suffering, and loss, while her smile at age 70 reflects confidence, joy, trust, and relief. My siblings and I have tried to repay our mother for all that she endured to raise us, but to see her smiling confidently is all the reciprocity we need.

## **CONCLUSION**

My thesis research was an effective experiment in integrating expressive work with forms of cultural identity. The finished product portrays the different stages of my mother's life and memories from my childhood through digital weaving and printing and surface design. The memories of being raised by my mother alone and experiencing the loss of my father are both conveyed throughout this work.

I am a woman who finds her voice through visual arts and seeks to reflect her cultural background through art work. This body of work allowed me to celebrate my mother's journey and express my sincere gratitude to her for her many sacrifices while raising my siblings and me. It also gave me an opportunity to demonstrate a time-honored cultural tradition.



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**APPENDIX A:**  
**PLATE PHOTOGRAPHS**



Plate 1

*Her Many Sacrifices*

2015



Plate 2

*A Moment That Will Never Be Forgotten*

2015



**Plate 2. *Detail 1***

***A Moment That Will Never Be Forgotten***

**2015**

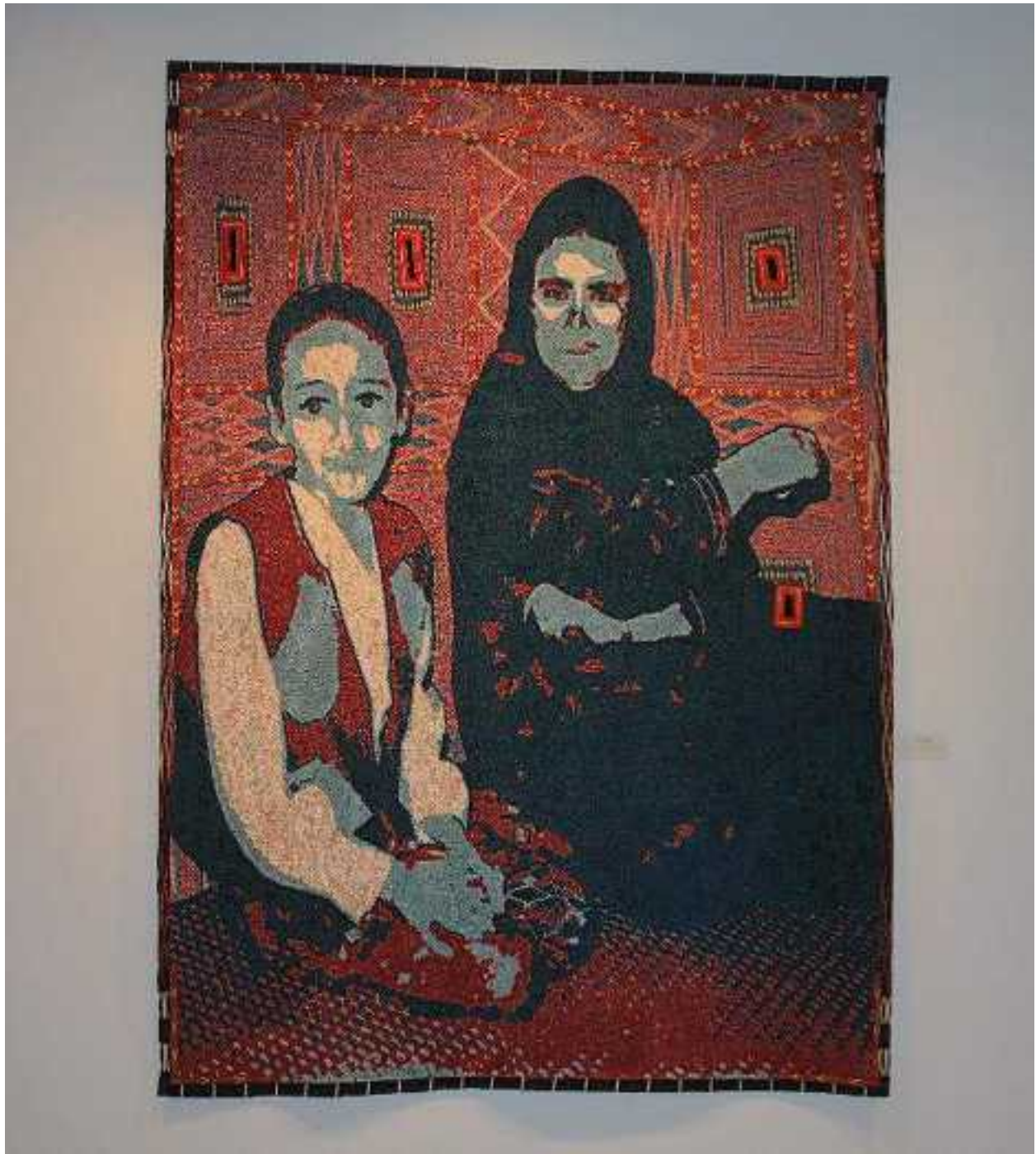
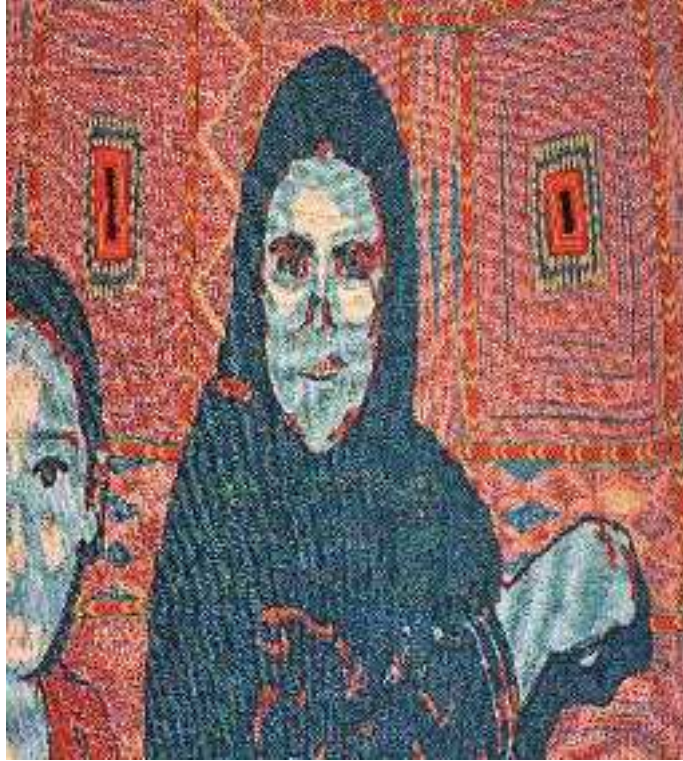


Plate 3

*Nothing is Impossible*

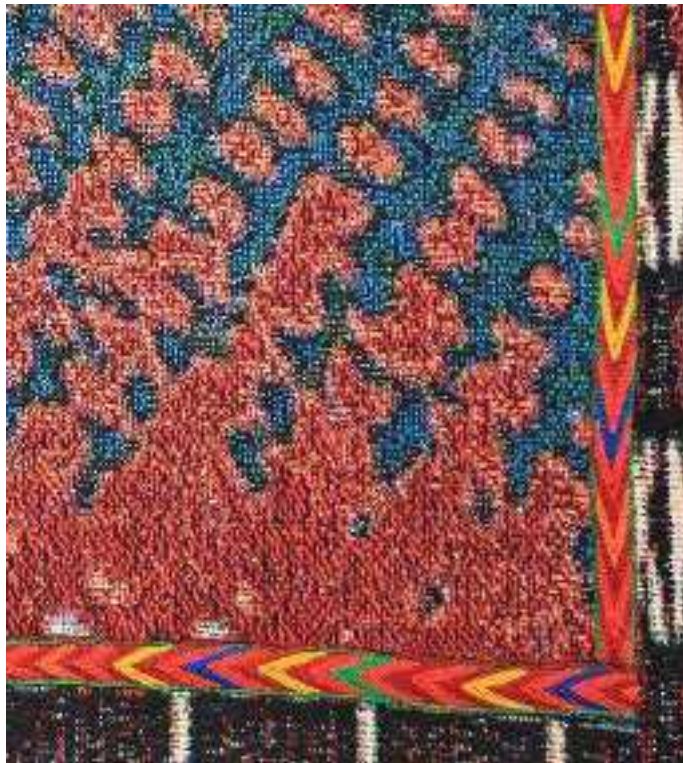
2015



**Plate 3. Detail 1**

*Nothing is Impossible*

**2015**



**Plate 3. Detail 2**

*Nothing is Impossible*

**2015**



Plate 4

*Happiness is Seeing Your Mother Smile*

2015





Plate 5

*Reciprocity*

2015

**APPENDIX B:**  
**INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPHS**



**Plate 6.1**

**Installation of Work at The Greenville Museum of Art**



**Plate 6.2**

**Installation of Work at The Greenville Museum of Art**



**Plate 6.3**

**Installation of Work at The Greenville Museum of Art**



**Plate 6.4**

**Installation of Work at The Greenville Museum of Art**