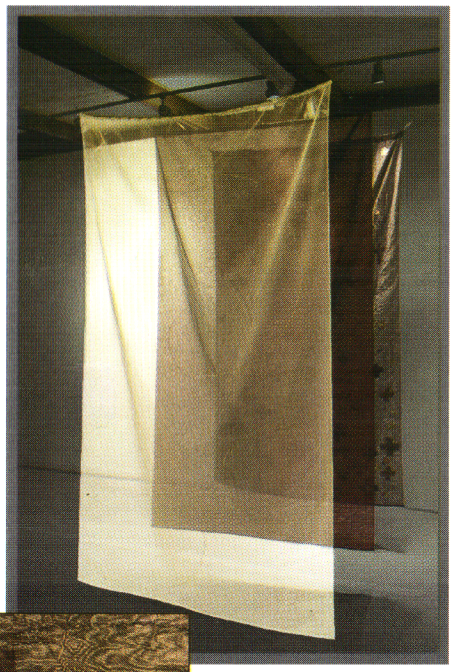
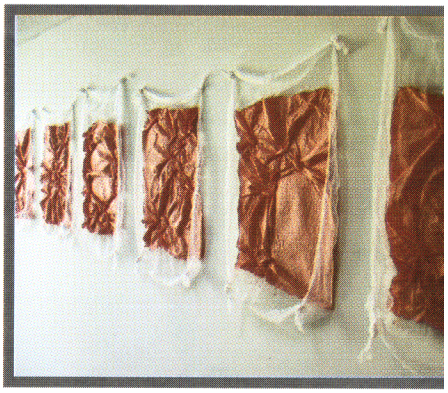
e usually do not think twice about discarding things that—worn out or used up—are no longer functional or no longer serve a purpose. With a different mindset, could we make things last as long as possible? And would we refuse to part with some things, no matter how worn they had become, understanding that they might still be invested with the memories and associations of their use?



Mary Babcock, artist and curator of *Tattered Cultures: Mended Histories*, an international exhibition of contemporary fiber art, notes that "Tattering might be inherent … it is part of the wear and tear—some necessary, some not so necessary. But we seem to fall short on the art of mending." She goes on to state: "My vision in curating this exhibition is to reveal 'mending' as a potent metaphor for cultural enrichment and transformation." The exhibition of twenty artists, including eight from Hawaii or the West Coast, thus reveals, in different ways, the intersection of two forces: the sometimes centripetal tendencies of history—colonial, multicultural, migratory—that fray the fabric of individual cultures, and the work of individuals as they seek to find once again an intact center of identity. "Mending," as Babcock suggests, is not only the inverse of tattering in a material context, but a way of making whole in an existential sense.

Mending as metaphor may be represented in the relationship between textile substrate and the stitched pathways that articulate its surface, as in the layers of Consuelo Jimenez Underwood's *Frontera (Border) Spirits* (2005-06). Here, three suspended panels of silk organza carry increasingly complex patterns of stitching, from a panel of white, delicately marked with abstract linear tracery in gold, to a dark, double-layered panel within which are caught embedded cross and petal forms along with denser stitched pathways. Each element represents an aspect of the danger-fraught lives of those who move across the southern border that splits the North American continent. Sharon Marcus's *Undocumented* (2008) was also inspired in part by the fabrics and clothing discarded in border crossings. Where Underwood employs the stitched line to articulate the complex narratives of such geographic thresholds, Marcus uses the structure of tial structure of Maile Andrade's *Access* (2007). Each translucent layer o dense text, silkscreened on sheer cotton colored in the muted tones of land, sea and sky, carries the chants that invoke the protection and guid ance of Native Hawaiian gods and ancestors. Lisa Solomon's set of fou portraits also makes use layered imagery to sugge cultural tension and allu the in-between space of bicultural heritage. *3 Generations (Me, Mom/ Ocasan, Obasan/Grammy)* (2008) consists of silk, stretched taught on four tage embroidery hoops, carrying a stitched portra and backed with a simple outline map of Japan and the United States.

Like Andrade, Gail Tremblay also addresses troubled history of her o indigenous heritage in *A Then There is The Hollyw Indian Princess* (2002). Us the Fancy Stitches of Iroquois basketry, Tremblay—instead of the traditional ash splint and sweet grass—has used recycled 16 mm leader and film on sexually transmitted diseases, elegantly subverting multiple stereotypes. Though Seiko Atsuta Purdue shares with Solomo Japanese-American heritage, she, like Tremblay, focuses on a darker sid that history, with allusions to devastations of World War II. The seven panels of *Bullet Cloth* (2007) each consist of a layer of fleshy orange pap couched on a layer of gauze; each carries the raised outline of several b lets, around which the paper and fabric pucker and pull, like wounds n fully healed, forming scars on the skin of memory never fully mended.



Clockwise from top left: Consuelo Jimenez Under *Frontera (Border) Spirits,* 2008, silk organza, 8' x (Photo: Ron Bolander.); Gail Tremblay, *And Then T is The Hollywood Indian Princess …,* 2002, wover basket using an educational film on sexually trans ted diseases, 10" x 7-1/2"; Seiko A. Purdue, *Bull Cloth VI,* 2007, installation, paper, cheesecloth; Lis Solomon, detail of *3 Generations (Me, Mom/Ocas Obasan/Grammy),* 2008, silk, embroidery; Sharon Marcus, detail of *Undocumented,* 2008, mixed-me weaving; Consuelo Jimenez Underwood, detail of *Frontera (Border) Spirits.*

—Marcia M