Exhibition Booklet

EMBROIDERED PROTECTIONS

Collaboratively crafted digitally augmented interactive sister quilts to explore notions of women's safety

A quilting recipe for cross-cultural digitally augmented craft practices

This project aims to raise awareness of the links between women's safety and textiles, and to build solidarity among women who may have experienced un-safety.It is about togetherness that worked across cultures, borders, organisations, and craft practices.
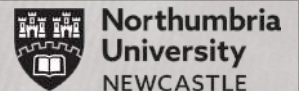
AUTHORS

Angelika Strohmayer[1], Özge Subasi[2], Pinar Apaydin[2], Sena Cucumak[2], Lily Madar[1], Zeynep Sölen Yildiz[2]
1 Design Feminisms Research Group, Northumbria University, UK
2 KOÇ University, Turkey

@embroideredprotections

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I

INTRODUCTION

"The sister quilts are connected not only metaphorically through the collaboration, but also through their digital augmentation."

Opening notes

The aim of this project was to collaboratively craft digitally augmented interactive sister quilts to explore notions of 'women's safety'. This project was intended to digitally and physically enhance in-person collaborations in the UK and in Turkey, as well as metaphoric collaboration between the people working across the two countries.

With this project, we hope to raise awareness of the links between women's safety and textiles, and to build solidarity among women who may have experienced un-safety. Together, we worked across cultures, borders, organisations, and craft practices – building cross-cultural collaborations. We participated in training from local craftspeople in the UK and in Turkey, followed by digitally-mediated participatory crafting workshops in

neighbourhoods.

Throughout its history, Istanbul has been a physical and metaphoric bridge between East and West; a melting pot of religions, cultures, and craft practices. Today, Istanbul is a mega city struggling with issues of unsafety and precarious work conditions. With this project, we respect this rich cultural heritage and look towards the potential of novel hybrid crafts for the future; using digitally mediated and augmented practices. At the same time, we connect the growing issues of the city, such as women's (un)safety. The project broadens participant's horizons, encouraging them to think beyond their own practices, borders, and beyond western ideas of women's safety and traditional forms of craft.

In this booklet, we outline the process of the

> *"Using Turkish symbols, we cross-stitched Augmented Reality markers, which are embedded into our sister quilts."*

both countries to create sister quilts, which are artefacts and physical manifestations of our shared (un)learning, understanding, and hopes for the future.

The sister quilts are connected not only metaphorically through the collaboration, but also through their digital augmentation. Using Turkish symbols, we cross-stitched Augmented Reality markers, which are embedded into our sister quilts. These markers are the same for both quilts. When scanning these markers with a smartphone, additional information about our project and quilts appear on the screen – photos of our process, a photo-representation of the other quilt, and a report produced by the Turkish team based on a workshop with the local city council to address topics of safety in Istanbul's

project. We start with a description of the training we had and the impacts this had on our work. Following this, we discuss the various meanings and metaphors embedded in our pieces before discussing the collaborative process of our work. Following this, we outline how the quilts are connected materially, metaphorically, and digitally. To end the booklet, we present some reflections and learning we take from this project.

II

QUILTING AND EMBROIDERY TRAINING

"Quilting is the last thing we do, but should be thought about from the start when planning a project"

Throughout the project, we hosted different types of textiles technique training for the research team in both countries. The trainings took place at the start of the project, and served as starting points for inspiration for our sister quilts. We approached craftspeople from the UK and Turkey to run this training, and we were able to attend these in different formats. We outline the training below: (1) quilting training in the UK, (2) patchwork and quilt, embroidery types, crafts communities and a contemporary arts use of traditional crafts training in Turkey.

Quilting Training in the UK

Kim Suleman provided quilting training for the project on the 20th of January 2022. This training took place in-person at Northumbria University, but was also virtually connected to the research team at Koc University. The full-day training was split into two parts. In the morning, she covered the history of quilting in the North East of England and included many details about how patterns were/are developed and used in quilts. Kim talked us through different quilt styles, and indicated which kinds of quilts were particularly popular in the North East of England (strippy and whole-cloth quilts). She also shared resources with us, such as which books include useful information and patterns. In the afternoon, Kim shared her skills with us. She introduced us to materials and techniques, showing us how to create and transfer a pattern onto fabric, how to assemble a quilt, and then ultimately how to hand quilt a mini project.

The main take-aways we took from this training for our sister quilts:
- Be inspired by the objects around you to create patterns
- Cream and pink fabrics were most commonly available, but patchworks with expensive fabrics were made by poor communities using offcuts from quilts for the gentry, which were sold
- Transferring pattern onto quilt top used to be a separate job and is important
- Medallion quilts (which are made by adding layers of borders around a central piece) were very popular in the uk
- Quilting is the last thing we do, but should be thought about from the start when planning a project

Patchwork, quilt, embroidery, communities and crafting as artwork training in Turkey

The training on Turkish techniques was split into three parts: (1) Anatolian patchwork and quilt embroidery; (2) Embroidery types, crafts communities; and (3) Crafting as artwork. Due to language differences, these were organised as asynchronous opportunities for the UK team to learn from video, transcripts, and conversations with the Turkish team.

Part I: Anatolian patchwork and quilt embroidery training in Turkey

The first part of the training was on the Anatolian practice of patchwork and quilt techniques. This was led by Fadim Ağcıoğlu, who graduated from Konya Selcuk University's Department of Clothing. Ağcıoğlu has been a teacher at Sar yer Public Vocational Training Center for 33 years and gives lessons on clothing and patchwork. This training session lasted 2 hours online.

The training started with an introduction to the history of patchwork and how it is interpreted in Anatolia, and how gathering necessary materials changed through history. Ağcıoğlu gave an example of how people working on patchwork projects used to have a sustainable relationship with tailors. They would collect tailors' leftover fabric for the patchwork piece. Another trend is that people use older laces or such craftworks to their contemporary patchworks. Inspired by these practices, we bought our patchwork fabrics from a local store that produces sustainable fabrics and who sells leftover pieces. We also observed people using the same tactics (of integrating other crafts such as lace) to increase the aesthetics of our patchwork pieces.

Different folding methods were introduced, such as dinosaur backs and seashells. The characteristic of an Anatolian work is described as consisting of covers made in the form of squares and triangular folds put on the edge of the piece. We also discussed the differences between hand and machine sewing when creating patchwork. Following with the introductory section, Ağcıoğlu showed different patchworking styles that use different shapes such as basic blocks (wrench), the diamond-cut star, stripes and drunkard's path. For creating a specific pattern, she

introduced us to a method that used cardboard.

In the training we learnt that 'providing the materials' and 'outsourcing' to other craftspeople are important but currently also problematic aspects of the textile industry. The making of our quilts was a trial to change this model to a more sustainable cooperation.

Lastly, we learned that due to the globalisation of the textile industry, instead of conserving unique local patterns, similar patterns and shapes from the common sources such as pinterest are studied by the craft technicians. To reverse this, we have integrated Anatolian motifs into our quilt design.

Part II: Embroidery types, crafts communities training in Turkey

history of quilting and how it relates to Turkish culture as a collaborative making activity. She talked about the historical and cultural meanings of the common symbols and how these are used in different contexts, using different techniques to convey emotions and stories of the women. She showed examples of her work and the work of her students, along with their stories and making processes (how they decide to use colours, techniques, fabrics etc.). She also showed how she uses her classes to engage with different women around the city and works towards empowering them. Her work with mothers of children with autism is a good example of how she approaches her work as a way of communication, therapeutic process, and empowerment.

Importantly, we learnt more about how quilting, embroidering, and making together might hold

> *"Due to the globalisation of the textile industry, instead of conserving unique local patterns, sources such as pinterest are studied by the craft technicians. "*

The second part of the Turkish training was carried out by Arzu Danyer who runs an atelier called "Theraphy Cafe" in Izmit (a city in the west of Turkey, near Istanbul). This atelier focuses on quilting, embroidery, and similar craft practices. The atelier combines Arzu's own textile practice with training and classes that are mostly attended by women. She considers these classes as workshops as well as socialising and therapeutic activities for women. The training lasted 2 hours and took place online.

Arzu Danyer started the training with her personal history and how she started to be interested in quilting. She then presented a

opportunities for opening a space to connect and empower each other as women. This is in direct relation to the aim of the project and final quilt design, how the stories of women in Turkey and UK will have a space to come together and intersect, how we can begin to know one another, and learn from each other's experiences.

This training helped the team build relations with the women who later created the central artistic pieces for the sister quilts. The 'Therapy Cafe' approach also helped us understand how textile work is about 'making together' – deepening our understanding of this based on primarily anglophone and Western European work as

outlined by, eg. the Stitching Together good practice guidance we also used in our work. [1]

Part III: Crafting as artwork in Turkey

The third part of the training was conducted with Hilal Polat, an artist and artisan with a formal painting and sculpture background. She works with various tangible materials like textiles and threads. Our training lasted for 2 hours and took place online. Hilal briefiy talked about her mother's infiuence on her art, materials and techniques she used, exhibitions and works she created, and her way of working. She mentioned collective practices and solidarity happening around culture, geography, and embroidery topics from her perspective and experience, mentioning crafting as the way she also creates her secure space and language.

Finally, we spoke of touching, which is her way of communicating with the world, and how touching finds its place in the context of art and its relationship with technology. We learnt how arts and craft come together in Hilal's works as a language of her own in solidarity with other women. We realised the possibility of how the artistic approach and conventional craft approaches feed one another. This training motivated us to look into empowerment stories more closely and connect the stories to our finished sister quilts.

1   See the Stitching Together Website (**https://stitchingtoget-her.net/**) for further information, including their very useful Good Practice Guidance.

Image: OCEM Mums embroidery workshop in Turkey

III

QUILT MEANINGS

"The sister quilts represent rupturing traditional roles, combating poverty and working inwards, from the margins and the resistance."

Learning from the training sessions in the UK and in Turkey, as well as additional desk-based research by the research team, we began to define what our quilt should mean and represent. In looking over our shared online whiteboard asynchronously, and then discussing ideas as a team in meetings, we settled on three main foci for our work:

Rupturing traditional roles

We want the quilt to embody notions of rupture, breaking, and unmaking traditional gender roles. This includes traditional roles for women as being domestic and docile; we wanted to rupture traditional ideas of femininity being tied directly to marriage, birthing children, and other aspects of women's lives as captured in traditional roles and textile crafts patterns. This rupturing of roles also relates to the rupturing of gender as being binary, and ensuring that our project is explicitly trans-inclusive.

Combatting poverty and working inwards, from the margins

As we discussed the ways in which different forms of oppression that all women face, we kept coming back to issues of systematic oppression and poverty. Both of these seem to infiuence so much of our lives and repeatedly undermine projects and attempts of improving women's safety. We wanted our project to speak to these underlying issues of poverty and marginalisation as central themes to combatting physical, emotional, and digital violence against women.

Resistance

After pointing to two central social aspects that relate to women's safety but are often forgotten when designing immediate support interventions (rupturing traditional roles and combatting poverty), we wanted the final purpose of our quilt to be a call to action; a call for resistance. Resistance to violence through sisterhood and allyship; resistance to precarity and neoliberalism through collective action and cooperatives; resistance to individual concerns through intercultural collaboration.

These three core meanings of our sister quilts shaped our methodology and approach to making. It shaped the words we chose to embroider on one side of the quilt, the symbols participants embroidered onto patchwork pieces, and is illustrated in our choice in quilting pattern as well as the 'finishing' of the quilt. We outline all of these below.

Machine-embroidered words

First, we will discuss the side of the quilt that is made up of machine-embroidered words. These words were stitched onto the white cotton fabric, using industrial embroidery machines. Below, we outline our reasoning for using specific threads as well as our choice of words and phrases.

Glow in the dark thread

Quilts protect us from the cold, they give us warmth when we wrap up in one, and offer up protection when we hide under one. Stitches tell stories, and represent histories - and they can show us that we are not alone; someone else has experienced something similar. Using ideas from traditional North East English wholecloth quilts we learnt about in our training, as well as the ways in which sewing can foster solidarity as we

learnt in Part 2 and 3 of the Turkish training, and to foster this notion of protection and exploration, we chose to use glow in the dark threads to embroider words onto the 'back' of the quilt.

We found several brands, types, and colours of glow in the dark thread. In the end, we used two different types: Gütermann Sulky Glowy threads in white and Madeira Luna threads. The Sulky threads were easy to work with, did not tear in the machine, and seemed to have the best 'glow' effect from those we trialled. However, sulky glowy was not available at an affordable price in Turkey, meaning we searched for an alternative. We ended up using Madeira 'Luna' threads with similar quality.

When looking at them in light conditions, the threads appear white, but turn into a glowing green colour in the dark. Traditionally, the backs of quilts are left blank, but we wanted to use this space to create additional meaning – to highlight what can happen when we unearth stories of unsafety; to highlight what can happen we start talking about this topic with others in similar situations. We hope that people who interact with this quilt touch and explore the embroidery on the 'back' of the quilt; and we hope it brings some comfort to those who have experienced safety or worked with people who have done so.

they're all a similar kind of green glow in the dark colour - though the white one glows the best

What colour do the first 3 glow?

have the nicest glow

glow in the

Previous page: Madeira Luna glow-in-the-darkth-read

Right: screenshot from shared online whiteboard showing an annotated photo of a glow in the dark embroidery test piece

dark threads

whipped back stitch seems to look best
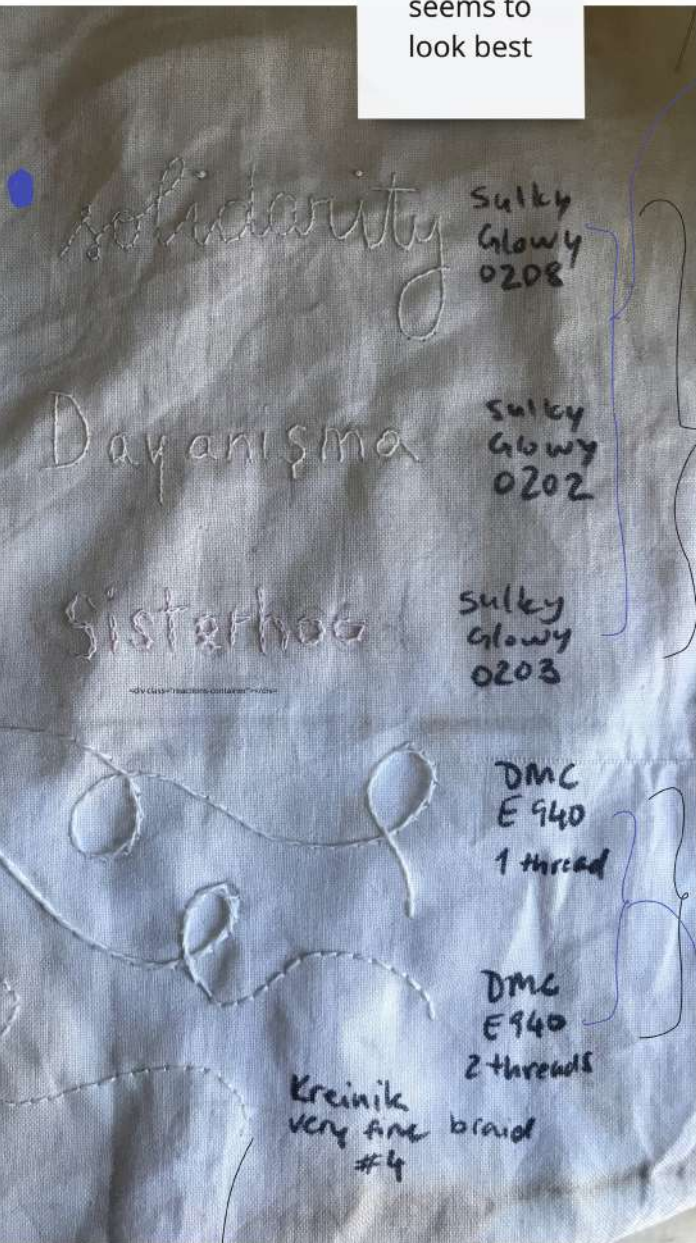
only 1 thickness available

solidarity — Sulky Glowy 0208

Dayanışma — Sulky Glowy 0202

Sisterhood — Sulky Glowy 0203

feels nice to work with

looks awesome too!

DMC E 940 1 thread

ok to work with.

DMC E 940 2 threads

Kreinik very fine braid #4

6-stranded thread that can be separated.

Threads don't like to stay together like normal DMC embroidery floss.

horrible to work with. Feels like fishing line ---- braided thread.

can you order the sulky glowy and/or DMC threads in Turkey??

Choice of Words

We used words that we had recorded on our shared online whiteboard based on the various training and research engagements we carried out (which we describe further below). The list was compiled by the research team asynchronously from post-it notes, comments, and interpretation that were shared on the board both in English and Turkish. We collated the list of words, added and took away words, and translated each of the words and phrases into English and Turkish (we expand more on this process in our recipe booklet). The words on the quilt have been selected through meetings with different parties like trainings,NGO and council meetings, interviews and published reports. Quotes by women, stressed terms and notions have been included in the list of words.

It was important for us to consider not only the written text, but also the connotation associated with them – in both Turkish and English. This was especially important when finding a direct translation was hard. Since Turkish is an agglutinative language (with suffixes), there were also instances where we had to adjust the placement of words on our pattern, to ensure suffixes that would change the meaning of words were not cut off. For example, While *dayanışma* refers to a positive meaning "solidarity", *dayanış-ma* refers to "do not cooperate" due to the suffix '-ma'which means 'do not'.

On the sister quilts themselves, we used the same words, in the same order. However, the choice in language is mirrored in each of the quilts. That means that if a word is embroidered in English on the British sister quilt, it is embroidered in Turkish on the Turkish sister quilt. We present the full list of words that we used in the table opposite.
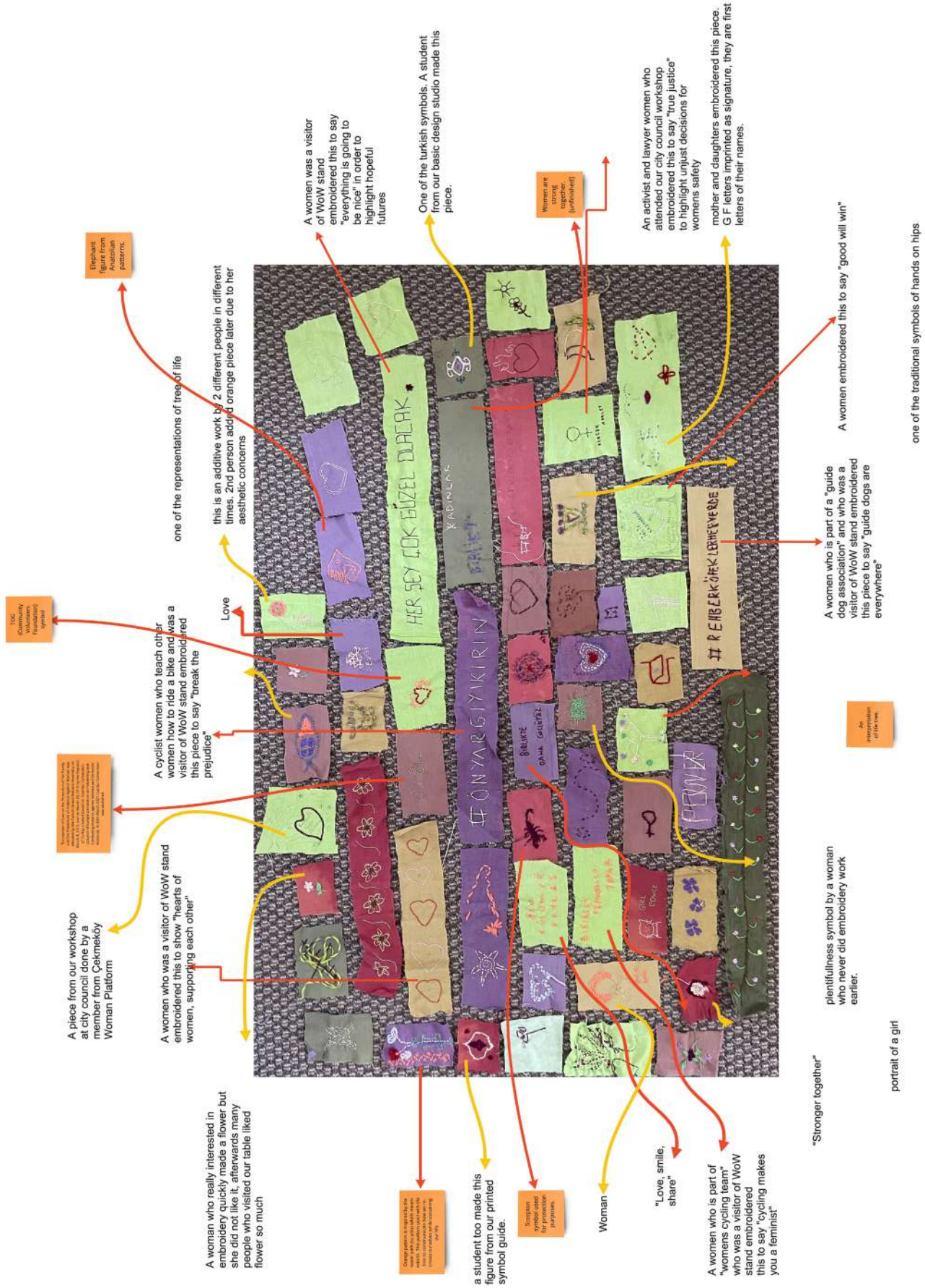
> *"It was important for us to consider not only the written text, but also the connotation associated with them – in both Turkish and English."*

Use of computer algorithm to create the pattern of words in the pattern

From this list, we used a computer algorithm (written in JavaScript) to randomly pick the English or Turkish version for each quilt. With a first version of the algorithm, the assignments felt unbalanced, sometimes picking too many words in the same language for one quilt. In the first version, we'd also assigned a position for each word pair; a second version aimed to keep a 50/50 balance of English vs. Turkish on each quilt and also randomly swapped the word's position in the list (still keeping the matching translation on the sister quilt). Both versions of the generator are available on GitHub (https://github.com/Lily2point0/embroidered-protections/tree/main/words)

Turkish	English
tekinsizlik	insecurity
dayanışma	solidarity
kız kardeşlik	sisterhood
umut	hope
bizim emeğimiz	our labour
mutluluk	happiness
içimdeki kadın	the women in me
belki de sorun değildir	maybe it's just okay
anlayış	understanding
güvenlik	safety
kutlamak	celebration
paylaşılan hikayeler	shared stories
hissetmek	feel
sorumluluk	responsibility
birliktelik	togetherness
iyileşmek	healing
kibarlık	kindness
gücünün farkında ol	aware of our power
beraber	collective
paylaşılan mücadeleler	shared struggles
sevginle sar	embrace with love
oturup yapmak	sitting and making
güvensizliği görünür kılmak	making insecurity visible
çok boyutlu direniş	multidimensional resistance
güvencesizliğe karşı dayanışma	solidarity against precarity
birlikte hareket etmek	acting together
şiddete karşı dayanışma	solidarity against violence
sevgi	love

Patchwork pieces

Elephant figure from Anatolian patterns.

A women was a visitor of WoW stand embroidered this to say "everything is going to be nice" in order to highlight hopeful futures

One of the turkish symbols. A student from our basic design studio made this piece.

Women are strong together. (unfinished)

An activist and lawyer women who attended our city council workshop embroidered this to say "true justice" to highlight unjust decisions for womens safety

mother and daughters embroidered this piece. G F letters imprinted as signature, they are first letters of their names.

this is an additive work by 2 different people in different times. 2nd person added orange piece later due to her aesthetic concerns

one of the representations of tree of life

A women embroidered this to say "good will win"

one of the traditional symbols of hands on hips

Love

TOG (Community Volunteers Foundation) symbol

A cyclist women who teach other women how to ride a bike and was a visitor of WoW stand embroidered this piece to say "break the prejudice"

A women who is part of a "guide dog association" and who was a visitor of WoW stand embroidered this piece to say "guide dogs are everywhere"

An interpretation of life tree.

A piece from our workshop at city council done by a member from Çekmeköy Woman Platform

A women who was a visitor of WoW stand embroidered this to show "hearts of women, supporting each other"

plentifullness symbol by a woman who never did embroidery work earlier.

"Stronger together"

A woman who really interested in embroidery quickly made a flower but she did not like it, afterwards many people who visited our table liked flower so much

a student too made this figure from our printed symbol guide.

Scorpion symbol used for protection purposes.

Woman

"Love, smile, share"

A women who is part of "womens cycling team" who was a visitor of WoW stand embroidered this to say "cycling makes you a feminist"

portrait of a girl

The maker of this piece used the 'fly stitch'. Inspired by its name, they thought of people 'flying' and freedom

These two pieces were made by the same maker [insert lorem ipsum]

this maker used random stitches in blue and gold to represent a sea of complexity that is conjured up when talking about 'women'

This person was thinking about a particular place in the North East of England, and the relationship of place and safety

The maker of this piece used basic couching stitches to create visual 'scars'

the maker used to wear orange a lot as a child, bt no longer does. it is an organic shape, to represent transition from child to adult

This piece was inspired by the anatolian symbol of the labyrinth of knidos

this is a safety pin - it has a clasp and a sharp edge. Similar to the topic of 'safety', it contains hidden sharps. The maker used to wear them in their rings, in case of needing to use them

this piece was a representation of a cat, because the person felt 'safe here' during the workshop

This piece represents a deconstructed 'evil eye'. It was made by someone to represent the protection of their own family, placing the evil eye on a yellow background

The central motif

Looking towards the other side of our quilt, we wanted to use this side to incorporate craftworks produced by people outside the project team. We organised a series of in-person and hybrid events (which we describe in more detail below) so participants could create small patchwork pieces. These were then attached to the sister quilts, surrounding a central motif.

During the design discussions we decided to have two central pieces in both quilts. One of the trainings gave us access to the Otistik Çocuklar Eğitim Merkezi (OÇEM) Anneleri (OÇEM Mums) community with multiple embroidery artists. The two central pieces are embroidered by one of the mums from this community. The two pieces were already designed,the artist did some months of embroidery work, but left them incomplete and later abandoned as we approached the artist. We found it meaningful to get them completed for our central piece, as getting something unfinished and supporting it to finish was well aligned with the values of our sister quilts. The colourful compositions of the pieces reflect a fairy tale environment where sadness is left behind. Both pieces contain a safe and happy home under trees.

Quilting pattern

To connect the two sides of the quilt, we used traditional hand-quilting techniques. Using standard white quilting threads, we sandwiched the glow in the dark embroidery layer and patchwork layer together, with cotton wadding between the two layers. The patterns used for the quilting lines were created by the project team – using and adapting traditional motifs.

Symbolism of the Water Path

In the Turkish sister quilt, we used a version of a traditional Anatolian waterpath motif. Motives and symbols are thought to be reflections of real life through the centuries, while they change meaning and name from region to region, the meaning creation, inspired by nature and daily life remains the same[1]. In Anatolia, water is considered the source of both life and death. The water that Anatolian women engage in during their daily lives has become a motif for weavings. Water path motifs called "zigzag" or "meander"
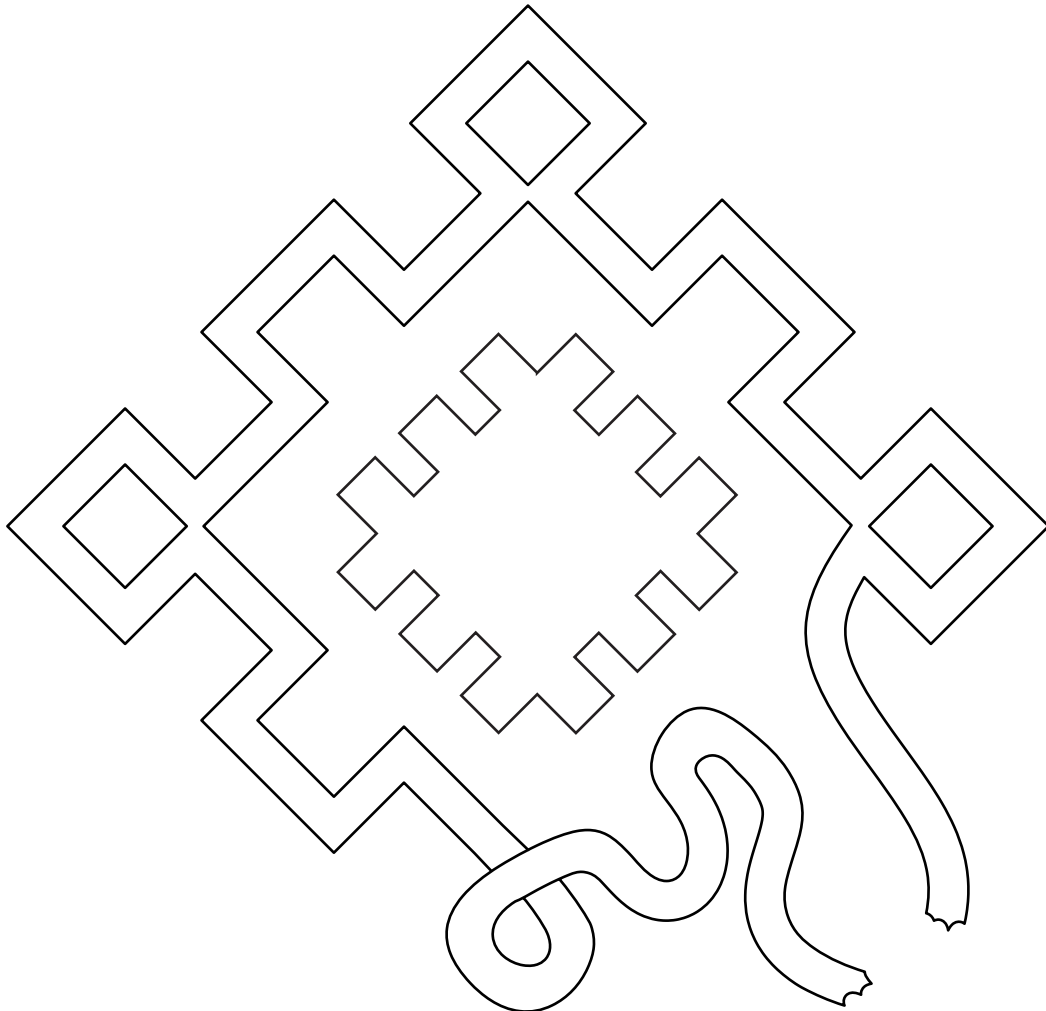
were primarily applied to pottery made of terracotta. Waterpaths are used in several types of crafts to frame different motives, such as on kilims, carpets, weavery and craftwork. This motif[2] symbolises rebirth, bodily and spiritual renewal, continuity of life, wisdom, purity and virtue.
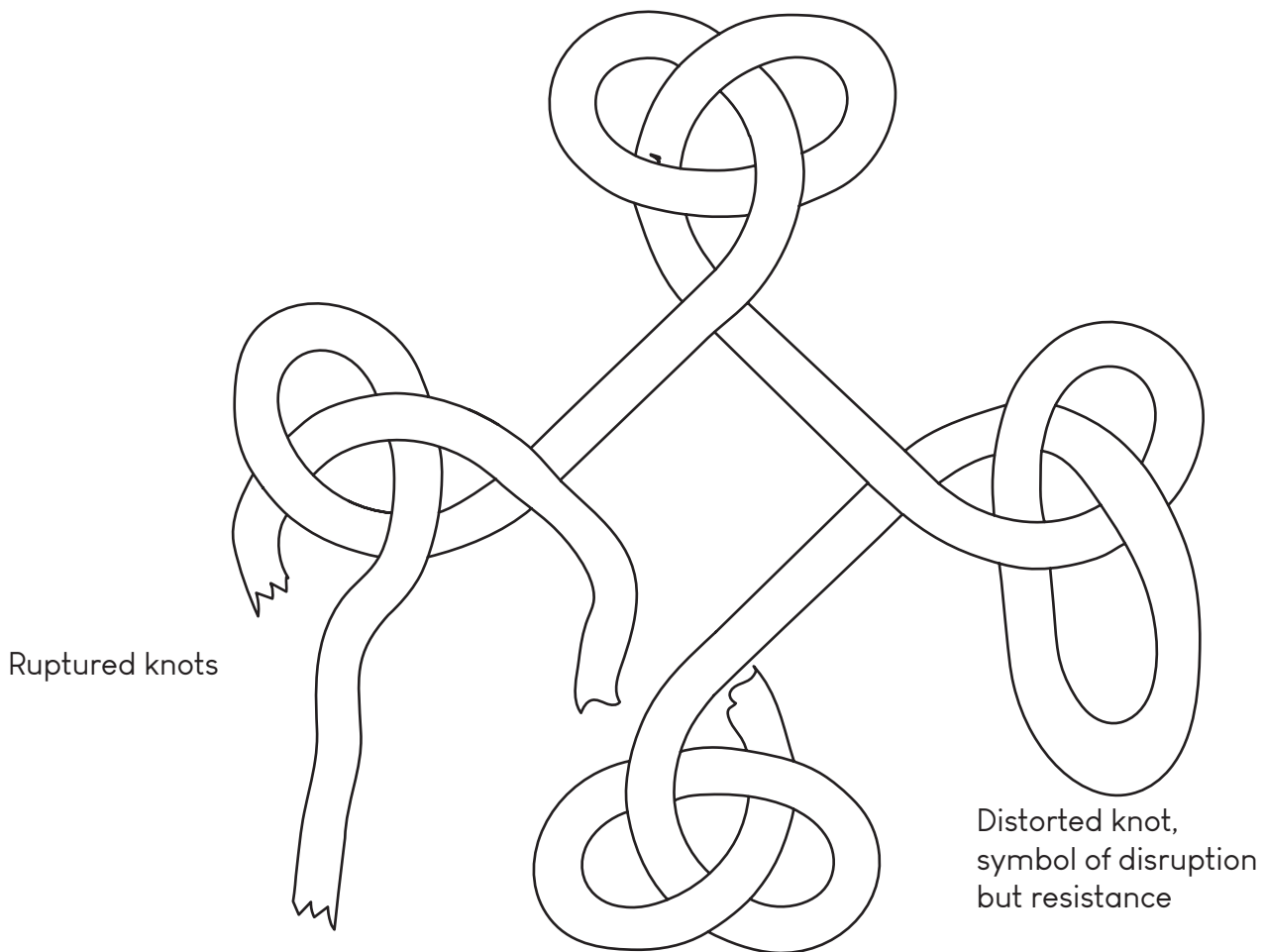
Symbolism of True Lovers' Knot

In the UK sister quilt, we used a version of the True Lovers' Knot motif – drawing on Dorothy Osler's Quilt Design Sourcebook (1996). This pattern is made up of a series of interlocking lines to create a complex knot and was used often in the North of England. It represents the idea of wholesome love, embodying the idea of an idealised 'true' love. We chose to use and adapt this pattern precisely because of the links that we can draw between traditional patriarchal understandings of 'true love' and the oppressions women face in society because of some of these traditional ideals, including violence perpetrated against women by their partners.

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1   Ates, M. (1996) Mitolojiler semboller ve halilar. Symbol Yayincilik.

2   See this link for further information: https://egitim.tarimorman.gov.tr/elazig/Sayfalar/Detay.aspx?OgeId=9&Liste=Slogan

Ruptured knots

Distorted knot,
symbol of disruption
but resistance

Breaking traditional patterns

Taking inspiration by these traditional motifs, we created our own versions of these patterns for our sister quilts. Using this traditional knowledge, we also built on our research as outlined in our quilting recipe book: rupturing traditional roles: explanation; combating poverty and working in from the margins: explanation; and Resistance. Building particularly on the notion of rupturing traditional roles and resistance, we decided to adapt the traditional motifs – bringing in notions of 'breakage' and adaptation. We created space for centrepieces within the patterns, where we could highlight the work of Turkish women, and ruptured the smooth, clean, complete lines that make up both the water path and true lovers' knot motifs.

Similar to the quilting pattern, we are also rupturing ideas of how to 'finish' a quilt, as well as notions of 'finishing' craft and design projects. To illustrate this, parts of our sister quilts are intentionally unfinished – providing additional layers of meaning to metaphors of women's safety (as unfinished business, globally), as

well as reparative work that is needed after a traumatic experience (which may be unfinished work for the rest of our lives).

Of course, this rupturing and resistance to traditional gender roles is also highlighted in the explicit trans-inclusion of our project, as well as our understanding of gender beyond traditional binaries.

IV

COLLABORATIVE PATCHWORKING

"Women's Safety is a contemporary topic of discussion in Turkey and was the focus of the British Council Women of the World festival."

After the training finished, the research team worked synchronously in meetings, and asynchronously using a shared online whiteboard. In this process, we developed the patterns for our embroidered, patchworked, and quilted aspects of the project. Below, we outline each of the events that we carried out to develop the co-created patchwork pieces. In this report, we outline three of the main events: (1) the Women of the World Festival organised by British Council in Turkey, where we hosted a small sister-event online and in Newcastle, (2) an event organised with Istanbul City Council, and (3) an event hosted as part of the Design+ exhibition hosted at Northumbria University's School of Design.

Istanbul Women of the World Festival Event

The British Council Women of the World (WoW) Festival was held between 19th - 20th March 2022 at Museum Gazhane, a cultural heritage and creativity hub for citizens owned by the Istanbul Municipality. Usually, free concerts, panels, talks and workshops are held at Museum Gazhane. Besides our project, non-governmental organisations participated in the festival and offered information on their activities. We introduced our project at the Civil Space throughout the festival, where each non-governmental organisation had a stand. We collected patchwork pieces that convey messages, symbols from visitors, volunteers, and people working at the festival. Women's Safety is a contemporary topic of discussion in Turkey and was the focus of the festival. Some of the patchwork makers reminded us that March 2022 marks one year after the abolishing of Istanbul Convention in Turkey, which also affects Act No. 6284 "The law to Protect Family and Prevent Violence against Women" in Turkey. The abolishing of this convention marks a key event in Turkey, as the Istanbul convention was the only law that openly protects the rights of all genders. Its abolishment worsens the chances of justice for the growing number of violence cases. The festival was engaging and inspiring for understanding the importance of making a quilt on the topic of women's solidarity and protection, and to connect it to the broader intersectional topics such as precarity, minorities, ecological activism etc.

In contrast to the vibrant festival atmosphere in Istanbul, the online and UK element of this event was more quiet and introspective. We had three attendees join in-person and eight attendees online for the entire 2h event. After

Image: Hybrid WoW Festival participation

the introductions and tour of the space in Turkey, the room became very quiet. Participants were carefully picking out materials to work with, and some fiicked through pages of embroidery books we had brought along. Many sat quietly for a long time, before some of the participants started sharing very personal experiences of motherhood and violence. At the end of the session, each person showed us their piece and talked about what it meant to them – where many explained that this was the first time in a long time that they were able to do something 'for themselves' or sit 'in a quiet space' to relax.

methods to create a collaborative and generative environment. Participants were able to share their experiences and ideas in different topics and through different techniques like storytelling, creating experience maps, and producing action plans. Participants also crated some patchwork pieces.

The Futurewell team collated the outcomes of the event as a 28 pages report that was presented in the general assembly of the city council on 17.04. These and similar reports are used for the policy negotiations with the Istanbul Municipality.

> *"We collected patchwork pieces that convey messages, symbols from visitors, volunteers, and people working at the festival."*

Istanbul City Council Event

The workshop with Istanbul City Council took place on the 15h of March 2022, at one of the historical neighbourhoods in Istanbul, in Zeytinburnu. It lasted for 3 hours. There were 60 people actively participating in the workshop, including members of the leading NGOs around women's safety in Turkey. Independent women and LGBTQI+ activists, lawyers, as well as representatives of the city council also participated. The workshop created a common ground for women that work around different issues related to safety in various NGOs or working on initiatives, to come together and discuss their experiences.

The Turkish research team made a brief introduction on social design methods and the aim for this workshop. Five different themes werecovered in the workshop: (1) poverty and employment, (2) insecurity and discomfort; (3) solidarity; (4) violence, rights violations and discrimination ; and (5) health. We utilised adapted 'World Cafe' techniques to facilitate discussion and used social design visualisation

Design+ Event

The Design+exhibition was hosted at Northumbria University's School of Design to highlight some of the interdisciplinary work that is taking place in the school. On the 7th of April, we hosted an embroidery workshop. Six people participated in-person, and one participant joined briefiy online. The event was hosted in the exhibition space, with a large table in the middle. The event felt very casual and provided space for work colleagues and friends to talk with one another in a quiet, informal way. Participants used materials provided on a big table in the middle of the space, and could see some of the pieces made during the WoW festival as inspiration.

V

CONNECTING THE SISTER QUILTS

'...some of the ways in which we created hybrid, asynchronous, metaphoric, and augmented reality connections'

The two sister quilts are outcomes of collaboration at various stages, and with various people throughout the last 5 months, as well as many conversations between the co-PIs prior to the launch of the project. We worked collaboratively in-situ as well as in digitally-mediated spaces; sometimes we worked alone but together in our minds. We outline some of the ways in which we created hybrid, asynchronous, metaphoric, and augmented reality connections below.

for participants joining online. Similarly, meetings among the project team took place either fully virtually or in a hybrid fashion - sometimes the team in Turkey were able to meet up physically, joining the UK team online.

Asynchronous connections

On top of the hybrid connections among the project team, we also worked on this project through asynchronous connections. Often

Image: A hybrid meeting where UK team is on a big screen in Istanbul

Hybrid connections

We were able to build some cross-cultural connections through this project. This primarily took place between the research team, but to a degree also took place with some of the other makers and participants in this project. This happened in hybrid training sessions and making sessions, for example at the Istanbul Women of the World Festival in Istanbul. At this event we hosted two in-person events (one in Istanbul and one in the UK), which were connected through a video call. Due to the availability of an online option, we were also able to facilitate the session

individuals and teams worked independently on aspects of the project, building out from discussions we had in hybrid project meetings. This resulted in the hosting of events, making of the quilts, writing up of project outcomes, and so on. This asynchronous work was documented and shared via e-mail as well as post-it notes, photos, and text on our shared online whiteboard. This allowed us to stay in touch without meetings. On the whiteboard in particular, we were able to see what others were working on, and add comments and feedback to this work to give impromptu and informal feedback on each others' work.

Metaphoric connections

Metaphoric connections become visible when we look at the two quilts next to one another. The sister quilts are not intended to be twins, but rather to illustrate the similarities related to gender based violence while maintaining the unique elements that relate to Turkey and the UK, in our case. As such, the patterns are similar, as are some of the meanings behind our choice in motif, material, and so on. Perhaps one of the most obvious differences between the quilts (beyond the quilting motif) is the difference in 'finishing' of the quilt. We expand on some of this in the recipe booklet, but do want to point out here that the 'unfinished-ness' of the quilts is intentional – for example, in the UK, we believe there to be a lot of work left to be done on the conversations around violence. In the UK, we exist in a time where new bills and laws are being introduced that would arguably make many women and people with additional and other marginalised identities less safe, rather than safer.

Augmented Reality connections

Finally, we are also building connections through the digital augmentation of the sister quilts. Using cross-stitched augmented reality (AR) markers, we are able to add digital layers to the quilt. We can do this by adding information about the process, makers, and purpose of the project that can be accessed on a smart phone or tablet by scanning the AR markers via a website. With the use of this technology, we are able to build digital connections between the sister quilts through the sharing of photos and published reports from the City Council meeting in Istanbul, as well as photos of the finished sister quilts to make it possible for people to see both sisters even though they are geographically separated. The four AR markers lead onlookers to the following information: (1) photos of the work involved in making the quilts; (2) report from turkish city council meeting; (3) photos of the other quilts; (4) project website to be able to download the booklets

VI

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

"With preparation and the embedding of safety and inclusive values, craft workshops can become safe spaces for people to share, experience, or just be together."

To finish this exhibition booklet, we want to take a moment to reflect on our learning throughout the project. To do this, we have chosen to critically explore four topics related to our project: (1) Tensions between craft traditions and rupturing of traditions inherent in the project; (2) Differences in funding and imperfect division of labour in the team despite on-paper equity; (3) Creating safe spaces through embroidery; and (4) Same tools and keywords different depth and foci.

Tensions between craft traditions and rupturing of traditions inherent in the project

With this project, we hope to have used our learning about traditional crafts from the UK and Turkey in ways that are respectful, but also in ways that push the envelope slightly. In our project meetings and the maker sessions, we often had conversations about whether what we were doing was considered 'traditional' and whether some of the actions we were taking would be seen as using contemporary approaches to traditional methods, pushing beyond tradition, or in some cases might even be offensive. The element of our quilt where this perhaps became the most obvious was when we were discussing the 'finishing' of our quilt. While as the research team the reasoning we had for our aesthetic choice was strong, it was hard to explain this idea to craftspeople, particularly in Turkey. The trainers and makers did not easily take the idea of unfinishedness, breaking, or sewing as 'rupturing' as they saw the finishedness and high quality of crafts as their empowering language. Rupturing, breaking or setting a project aside usually meant other work taking over, or not having the means (e.g. economic) to finish the project.

Differences in funding and imperfect division of labour in the team despite on-paper equity

When we learnt about the Crafting Futures Digital Collaboration Grant by the British Council, both of the Co-PIs were very excited. While only a small pot of money and a UK funder, it provided a rare promise of equity in funding distribution between the UK and the partner country – the grant stipulated that there would be two co-PIs with the awarded budget being split 50-50 between the two partners. We re-purposed a previously unsuccessful funding application for a larger project, and started to work on our application together. It was a truly co-created funding proposal, building on months of prior conversation, co-reading, and co-learning. Once we received the news from the British Council, we were ecstatic to learn that we were successful with our project.

However, we quickly learnt that even though there was equity on paper, and a lot of effort from the British Council and ourselves to create an equitable distribution of power for this project, this was not always possible. While the budget remains split in half, due to administrative processes all the money was sent to the UK university, from which the Turkish university could then claim back any spent monies at the end of the project. This creates an imbalance of spending power, as the partner university is required to have the money to be spent, prior to receiving funds back from the English institution. This caused a higher administrative burden for both Co-PIs, but particularly the partner in Turkey. For example, the nature of some of the materials we were buying for the project and our hopes for embedding sustainability into the piece, also made it difficult to produce formal evidence that is required by these institutional administrative processes for our spending.

Furthermore, all monies were calculated in Great British Pounds, not taking into consideration the fluctuating exchange rates to the Turkish Lira. This is not something that a funder or an institution can really foresee, as it depends on fickle international markets, but this meant that the amount of money was worth less in Turkey than the UK. Counter to this though, labour, training, and material costs vary greatly between Turkey and the UK. For example, the glow in the dark thread was very affordable for us in the UK market, but we had to find other brands for Turkey as what was affordable in the UK was not in Turkey. Counter to this, we were able to afford to pay for the production of our quilt, while this would have been unachievable in the UK craft market. This cost also relates to research assistance, and the ways in which the two universities engage in PhD training and funding – PhD scholarships seem more malleable in Turkey than in the UK, and costs to 'top up' salaries are much lower in Turkey than they would be in the UK due to multiple bureaucracies.

Creating safe spaces through embroidery

With preparation and the embedding of safety and inclusive values, craft workshops can become safe spaces for people to share, experience, or just be together. In Turkey, for example, this resulted in nuanced conversations with craftspeople, which might have been difficult to have (for example, the conversations around 'pushing the envelope' of traditional crafts without being offensive, which we cited above). As such, talking to craftspeople and experts on women's safety with the honest knowledge that the research team has less knowledge on these topics created an openness between designers and craftspeople. The crafts team suggested design decisions based on their former experiences and existing community norms, which the research team took on as advice. Through this, the relationship changed from 'paying for training' or 'paying for a crafted art piece' to a more relational engagement where decisions were made on the go, and the replacements and procedural changes were adapted depending on the needs of all people involved in the project – where we saw and valued the expertise of local knowledge.

Looking towards the UK, these safe spaces came about differently. During the community workshops, where we invited local NGOs, activists, researchers, and others interested in topics of women's safety to come together, it was mentioned repeatedly how more spaces like this are needed. In the hybrid workshop at the Women of the World festival in particular, this was made clear. There was a long time where people, both those who joined virtually and those who were in the room, sat in silence, stitching. At first, Angelika, the facilitator of the session, felt uncomfortable – as if she had done something wrong in the facilitation process because nobody was talking about their experiences or the topic. Several minutes in, one participant broke the silence and shared a personal and emotional experience they had witnessed only a day prior; resulting in support, solidarity, and comfort from other participants. As we got towards the part of the session where we asked people to share their piece and tell us about its meaning, it became clear that people needed this quiet, calm space. And that the personal sharing from one of the participants was also deeply appreciated.

Same tools and keywords different depth and foci

During the project, some tools were used repeatedly, such as messaging apps, a shared online whiteboard, and virtual meeting tools. While the use of such tools was useful across the international research team, we quickly realised this would not be the same in our communications with other groups. For instance, in the first virtual NGO meeting, around half of the participants connected via a mobile device; some were in their car or in public transport, others were in remote locations where they had only mobile internet. In order to ensure peoples' words were documented on the shared whiteboard, the research team needed to add the information onto the shared whiteboard, rather than participants doing this themselves, as was the expectation. Similarly, during the making sessions in Turkey, it became impossible to use boards or video chat due to the unavailability of the internet. This resulted in one of the facilitators sending photos to participants via a messaging app rather than the whiteboard, and sharing thoughts among participants asynchronously. All these made us rethink our procedural needs and available tools, and how they fit into volunteer work or non-office standards.