

Ottawa, Canada

Marie Watt

WATT: Hi, I'm Marie Watt, I am in Ottawa as a participant in the Contemporary Conversations series that's being hosted by the US embassy and the National Gallery of Canada. I will be participating in a symposium at Carleton University with indigenous scholars and art historians and then I will also an open to the community sewing circle at the National Gallery of Canada.

When I host these sewing circles, I invite people to come and go at any point. No sewing experience is necessary, people as young as 3 and as young as 83 have stitched on pieces before. I will exchange a small silkscreen print with people who participate. One of the things that I love about the sewing circles is that it's an opportunity to share stories and I don't think there's any obligation to share stories but when your head is tucked down and you're working with something as humble and familiar as cloth, I think that stories just tend to flow. And I'm interested in how everybody's stitch is unique and kind of like a thumbprint or a signature and then I'm interested in how, when those stitches start to intersect, they are kind of a metaphor for how we're all connected and related.

I see the Contemporary Conversations series as a vehicle for talking about art and its relevance maybe not just in our immediate communities but in the world. As an indigenous person, I think it's really important to share that there is no word for art in our language, but it is an activity, the activity of being creative and inventive with my own work I'm interested in how communities can be part of this conversation. It's one of the reasons why I like to collaborate with people and it helps me learn more about other people's stories and other people's histories and I guess I consider that a vehicle for larger conversations in the world that aren't necessarily just specific to art but also relate to politics and literature and poetry and I think the connections are sort of endless.