

## BRAIDS & THREADS: CONNECTING LEGACIES

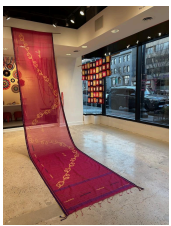
Every aspect of *Braids & Threads* was conceived and designed collaboratively by Monica Jahan Bose and Autumn Spears. Most of the objects were made specifically for this project, with much of the work completed in the gallery space. Below are details on the different sections of the installation. The installation will continue to evolve throughout the duration of the artists' residency.

Monica Jahan Bose & Autumn Spears  
*Hanging by a Thread*, 2025, 90 x 95 in



Recycled mattress pad, Bangladeshi cotton saris, African cotton wax cloth, synthetic hair, thread, embroidery floss, acrylic yarn, acrylic and colored pencil on wood panels, velvet, sheer nylon rainbow fabric, kantha from worn and used saris, woodblock printing ink, bamboo pole.

Bose and Spears created this work together over a period of several months, working in both of their studios and the WPA gallery space, with final assemblage done on site in the gallery space. The work features multiple techniques, including crochet, hair-braiding, embroidery, hand sewing, woodblock printing, painting, and drawing. The wooden circles feature self-portraits of the artists and portraits of Bose's grandmother and Spears' mother. The mattress pad was used by Bose's family members and later as a backing for collaborative woodblock sari printing.



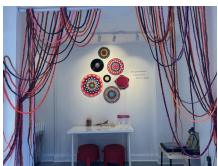
Monica Jahan Bose & Autumn Spears  
*Braids & Threads*, 2025, 48 x 210 in  
Bangladeshi cotton blend sari with hand woodblock printing.

Spears' braid designs, selected words from the artists' conversations, and the title of the show in Bangla, were transformed into woodblocks on mango wood by Bangladeshi artisans. Bose and Spears hand printed the sari together, linking their heritages.



Monica Jahan Bose & Autumn Spears  
*Acts of Resistance*, 2025, 48 x 210 in  
Bangladeshi cotton blend saris with hand woodblock printing.

Spears' braid designs and selected words from the artists' conversations were transformed into woodblocks on mango wood by Bangladeshi artisans.. Bose and Spears hand printed the sari together, linking their heritages.



Monica Jahan Bose & Autumn Spears  
*Intergenerational Listening and Memory Space*, 2025, dimensions variable  
Synthetic hair and acrylic yarn on tension rod, crocheted yarn circles, vinyl records, sari cloth with needle and thread in embroidery hoop, record player, handprinted and painted notebooks, art supplies, paper sign in plexiglass.

Spears assembled hand braided synthetic hair and yarn and to create a site-specific special corner for visitors to engage with the exhibition. The crocheted circles were created by Spears. The vinyl records are from the family collections of Bose and Spears. Bose plans to embroider the sari fabric on the embroidery hoop during the run of the exhibition.



Monica Jahan Bose

*From Darchira to Potomac Rivers: Wishing that our homelands will be free of flooding*, 2025, 41 x 44 in

Woodblock, embroidery, pen, pencil, fabric paint, and *tabij* amulet containing wishes written in Bangla on layered worn saris, with braided yarn by Autumn Spears added for this installation

Bose and Spears met in August 2024 during “crit club” at Gallery Y, where artists get feedback from each other on works in progress. At the time, Bose was working on this kantha piece, recycled from a sari created for the *WRAPture* public art project in Anacostia. Bose and Spears later visited each others’ studios, and Spears encouraged Bose to finish this piece, exhibited in May 2025 at Gallery Y.

**The artists decided to create wearable art for this project, to be used in a culminating performance in March 2026:**



Autumn Spears

*Untitled*, 2025 (work in progress), 52 x 71 in

Crocheted acrylic yarn, wooden panels, bamboo pole

Spears crocheted and joined wooden squares to create a large multicolored coat or cardigan. At the beginning of the exhibition the wooden squares are blank. Over the course of the installation Spears will embellish them with drawings and text inspired by her heritage and this project.



Monica Jahan Bose

*Sustain Sari Vests*, 1/12 & 2/12 var. ed. of 12, 2025 (works in progress), 38 x 38 in  
Recycled Bangladeshi saris from *Sustain* public art project, cotton fabric, thread, woodblock printing, embroidery floss, beads.

Bose worked with a tailor in Bangladesh to create 12 flowing vests from three previously used saris that were already covered with woodblock and poetry by Bose, women in Bangladesh, and residents of DC. Bose added new woodblock printing designed for *Braids & Threads*, plus embroidery and beadwork. Two vests were completed at the time of the exhibition opening; 10 more will be completed by March.

**Using quotes from their conversations exploring creative lineage and inherited knowledge, the artists created a text installation on the gallery’s tiered narrow windows and the edge of the dropped ceiling:**



Monica Jahan Bose & Autumn Spears

*Intergenerational Stories*, 2025

Vinyl text in multiple colors, hand cut and weeded on Silhouette cutting machine.

Bose and Spears engaged in a series of recorded and transcribed conversations. Together they selected sentences to share in the exhibition as vinyl text. The full conversations are available on Storycorps (use QR code at left) and as podcasts. The artists selected the colors, fonts, words, and locations for the vinyl text to highlight the architectural features of WPA’s new space. The layers of colors and words speak to the artists’ individual heritages and the importance of intergenerational collaboration and sharing.