

Text and photo montages by Diane Régimbald
English translation/revision by the FOFA Gallery team
Traces of daughter and mother, traces of children
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When I hear the deepest truths I speak coming out of my
mouth sounding like my mother's, even remembering
how I fought against her, I have to reassess both our
relationship as well as the sources of my knowing.
-Audre Lorde

You invite me to visit your exhibition at Concordia University's FOFA Gallery.

I walk around, reading/looking at each of your embroideries. There are 83 of various sizes. Six thematic series - 25-16-30-5-1-6 - make up your fresco of memoirs: *Solitudes, Enceinte avec la covid, Maternités, Femme en pleurs, Black Prelude, Histoires Fil'Tisses*. Everything is inscribed in the gestures you've drawn. Everything is colour, lines embroidered with distinct poses. A woman's body on each fabric and children's/girls' bodies. A woman's body in perpetual movement, weeping, curling up, cradling, meditating, dreaming, becoming pregnant, giving birth, losing what you call "sad blood," starting again, experiencing another loss, then another little one will come along. I stop in front of each of your images along the gallery corridor.

Your womanly body draws me in.

Your solitudes
draw a horizon like a suspended screen.
A withdrawal into oneself.
An expectation, a hope
to love better with the child
because the child consoles
brings forth a new vitality
because you carry the child with the grace of love.

Giving birth
can unravel the pain, because the cracks you experience
are transformed and thickened.
You seek to mend the past – to remove the holes
bring them to nought.
Your children's present, updated in the ardour
of memory rises towards the future.
Thus, you offer a collection of thoughts to your daughters
the memory of a foundation
linked to the fissures in your life.

Writing mother, writing child
elsewhere in the body.

A necessary journey from elsewhere

for filiation.
Father gone
mother sacrificed
and distraught
benevolence.

Your textiles remind me of works
by Afro-American artist Faith Ringgold.
You embroider your body, the bodies of your children
develop the scenario of the living within you.
You embroider the repairs of absence
of your solitude – the passing days.
A large space isolates your being
in the postures of everyday life.

On the fabric
bodies, mother and children.
You embroider them
give them the contours that protect them
from the lack of themselves. And you embrace
their little beings.

The distance between you and your native land
hollows out the space
and the mother you become – she is present
in African fabrics – you join her.
Your story builds your narrative
roots for them.

Traces of daughter and mother, traces of children

The pregnant body becomes full
worries about who's waiting
it will be daughter for mother
twice girl for mother's body
alone
nothing will say the other
than the quest for origin.

Kesso you return to your mother
to the fabrics she sends you.
You create a story of mending
of composed daughters and mothers
the sadness of her absence.

Fetal loss every time
the blood spurts
gives sorrow pain
irreparable affliction.

You won't know how to come back
from the loss.

Another child will be born
another daughter
to reassure you of being a daughter
mother forever to last.

You'll tell your mother
that her tissues enter into the matter of bodies
reveal them.
You will tell your mothers here and abroad
the time it takes to understand
the serenity of being.

You return to your daughter's body
the body of your deepest solitude
then you care for your inner child
cuddle her, take care of her
you feel she's saving you from your loss.
Will this child do it?

You embroider every contour
as you engrave the images of your distresses
of your tears, caresses and joys
of your love for them, your daughters.

But this solitude of a mother's daughter
tirelessly reaches out to your African mother
the one who sends you indigo fabrics
which you use
as anchors for the threads you weave
and weave endlessly, these threads that pierce the fabrics.
Your infinite quilt
is your life
hers
your daughters' lives.
In love with all the threads of color
that cross the rainbows of women's lives.

1. **Solitudes**, 2023 25 broderies 21 cm X 21 cm

A horizon is emerging
despite the inward-looking attitude.
An expectation, a hope
to love better with the child
because the child in and of itself consoles.
Meditation during pregnancy elevates us to the primordial.



2. *Enceinte avec la covid*, 2023, 16 broderies 17,5 X 24,5 cm

Redraw the solitude the promise to rock again but the disarray nourishes.
Cradling the child pulls you towards the essential. Even if you're carrying another,
you can't let her go.



3. *Maternités*, 2023 30 broderies 18 X 25cm

A grace, you might say.

Still, loneliness. You have to keep rocking, carry this second child, feed them both.

Embroidery is an act of reparation. What's motherhood all about?

Loneliness clings to the body, but the child insists and the one growing inside will be born.

Pregnancy transforms the body anew and gives it joy.



4. **Femme en pleurs**, 2022 6 broderies 30 X 42,5 cm

And the body cries inwards, the tears never cease to swallow it, to tie a knot into itself. And what weaves through it never ceases to draw it out of its isolation.



5. **Black Prelude**, 49,5 X 1,89 cm 1 broderie

On the black screen of the fabric, a round of the daily routine from getting up to going to bed, through the tears of loss, the round of play, care, rocking, drowning in tears, in the blood of loss.



6. **Histoires Fil'Tisses**, 2021, 5 broderies 17 X 28cm

It's a reminder of the little one's history.

A nostalgia for the one who was able to take care of her in turn. Covered in fabric, sheets, dress, she alone, every figure of silence after the gift, the recollection.

It's the child just born, embroidered on the indigo fabric from Labé, the Guinean town where Kesso was born.



About the author:

Diane Régimbald has published more than a dozen books, including seven collections of poetry with *Noroît*, *Au plus clair de la lumière*, *Sur le rêve noir*, *L'insensée rayonne* co-published with L'Arbre à paroles, finalist for the Governor General's Award for Poetry, *Pas*, mention d'excellence, Prix des écrivains francophones d'Amérique, *Des cendres des corps*, *Pierres de passage*, *La seconde venue*. In France, she has published *Échographies : intérieurs du vivant*, *Cœur d'orange* with L'Atelier des Noyers; *Toi au soleil pâle ou brûlant*, *De mère encore* with Éditions du Petit Flou. She has participated in several collective projects, anthologies and literary events in Quebec, Canada and abroad. Some of her texts have been translated into English, Catalan and Spanish. She is a member of the Comité Femmes of the Centre québécois du P.E.N. international, the Parlement des écrivaines francophones and the Académie des lettres du Québec.