

MICHELLE HAMER

SLIP OWT TAW ENO





Borderline
mixed yarn on perforated plastic, 52.5 x 34cm

cover
One Wall Two Jails
barrier tape on debris mesh, 113 x 247cm

ONE WALL TWO JAILS

It is hard to imagine how hand stitching can be seen as a medium to capture the nuances of words in different parts of the world. I have looked at these beautiful pieces, wanted to touch and feel them, and wondered at the immersion of hours of cross stitching that capture ambiguity in four challenging country relationships – Israel and Palestine and Mexico and the US. The theme of Hamer’s work is around walls, and containments and how different signage and symbols creates an ambiguity for those who view it, but also for those who live it.

Let me first think about walls – do they protect us or keep us apart? The symbol of a wall is of itself ambiguity – then place it between the US and Mexico or Israel and Palestine, and this ambiguity is heightened. That is what is captured in these incredible tapestries of cross stitching – both real and digital.

In the last 27 years, the number of walls or fortified barriers that have been built around the world has dramatically increased. Australia is the only continent that does not have a fortified wall. Yet we know that in our practice, we have a symbolic wall that is operating at our sovereign borders, and keeping people out. This work makes us think about walls – and the human rights that these challenge.

The work also captures the power of words.

“Watch your thoughts,
they become your words

Watch your words,
they become your actions

Watch your actions,
they become your habits

Watch your habits,
they become your character

Watch your character,
it becomes your destiny.”

– Anonymous

Words are power and words capture so much – but irrespective of the language, the context of words is what is important. Michelle Hamer has captured this – and particularly the mirror image of the mesh banners – demonstrates context and challenges us to think about the impact on people that words touch. Symbols are also powerful – hearts and crosses to recognise women whose life is cut short. We are in a time of history where the word is available and immediate, where news is current and expansive and where predictability is no longer something we rely or expect. These beautiful images give us a glimpse into different parts of the world where the only predictable thing is that the walls constrain people and that words give a message that is not clear or universally understood.

Think about the patience of the stitching, the symbols of the tapes and the mesh, the power of the words and images, and reflect on our world now and how we can do better.

Dr Helen Szoke is Chief Executive of Oxfam Australia. She has previously held positions as Australia’s Race Discrimination Commissioner, Victoria’s Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner.



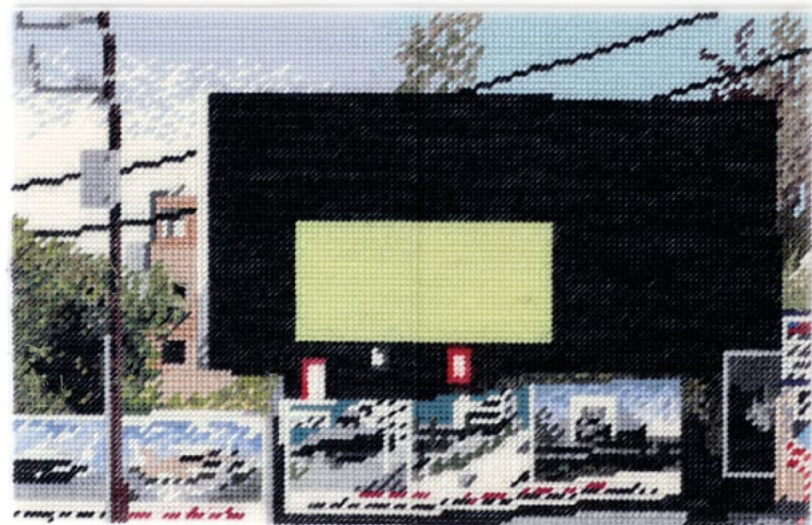
On the Road to Nowhere
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 67.5 x 104cm



Where the Truth Lies
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 33.5 x 51cm



Hearts & Minds
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 52.5 x 67cm



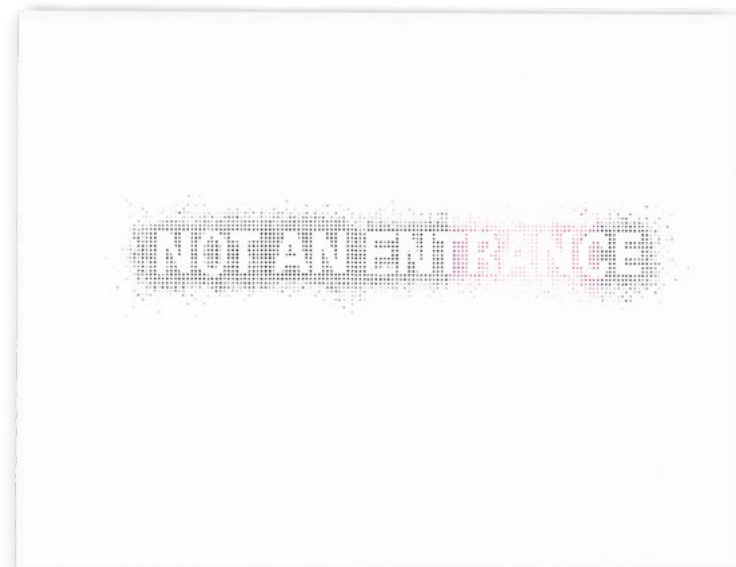
Enjoy your Problems
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 34 x 52.5cm



Don't Steal our Breath
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 34 x 52.5cm



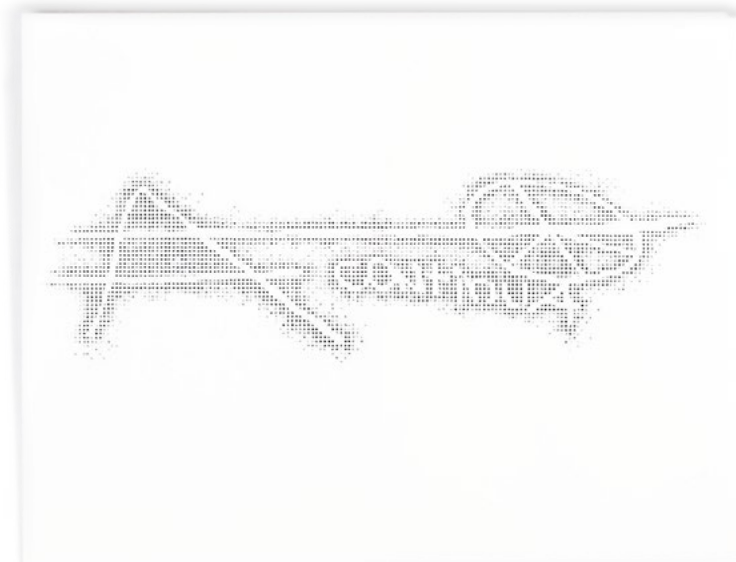
One Wall Two Jails
barrier tape on debris mesh,
115 x 250cm



No Entrance
ink on paper, 50 x 65cm

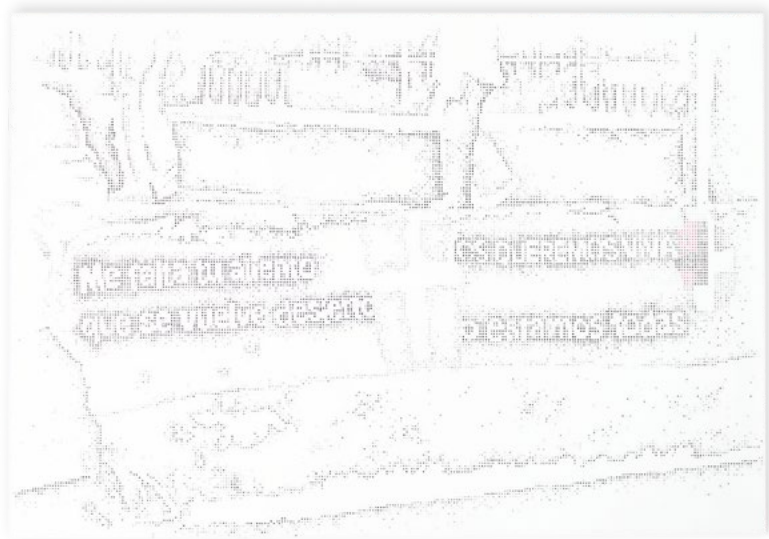


In Hell Diving for Pearls
ink on paper, 50 x 65cm

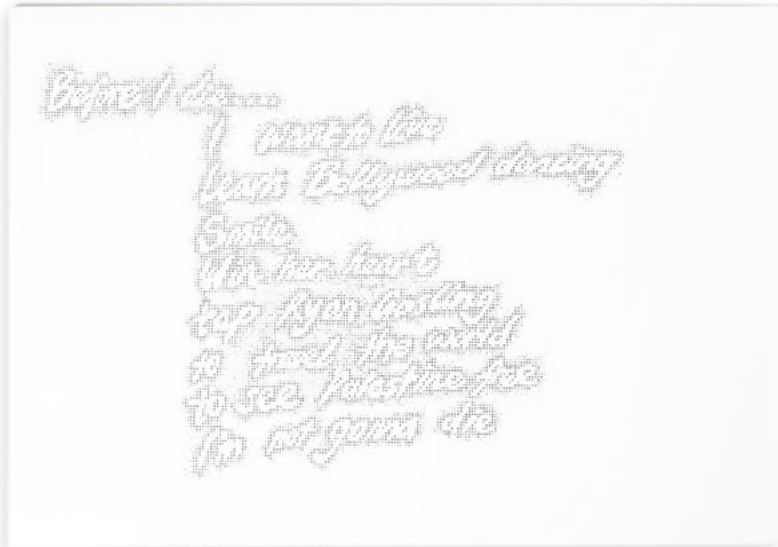


Keep Going
ink on paper, 50 x 65cm

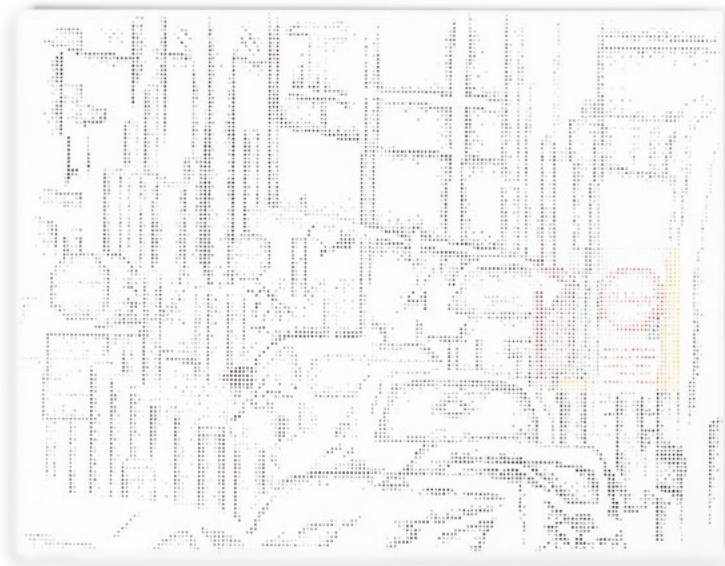




*Vivas nos queremos
(We Want Ourselves Alive)*
ink on paper, 70 x 100cm



I'm not Gonna Die
ink on paper, 70 x 100cm



Hopes and Delusions
ink on paper, 50 x 65cm

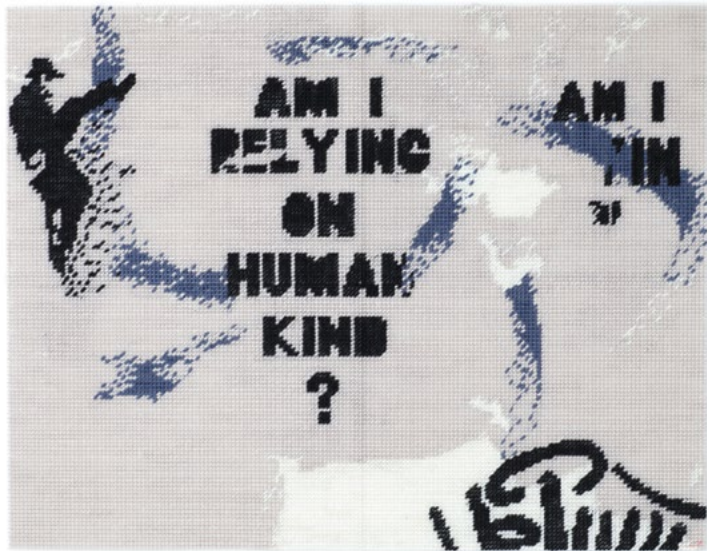


Nothing is Promised
barrier tape on debris mesh, 115 x 300cm

previous page
Know Hope
barrier tape on debris mesh, 115 x 227cm



When War is Over
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 52.5 x 67cm



Am I relying on Human Kind
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 52.5 x 67cm



Full. Stop.
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 52.5 x 67cm



Imploding Explosions
mixed yarn on perforated
plastic, 66 x 101.5cm

Michelle Hamer holds a Bachelor of Architecture with first class honours from RMIT University and has been an exhibiting artist since 2005.

One Wall Two Jails, Hamer's 20th solo show, focuses on language around border zones at the US-Mexican and Israeli-Palestinian borders. Her work maps contemporary social beliefs, fears and aspirations through 'everyday' language and place. The boundaries and barriers that she explores oscillate between fast and slow; past and present; personal and political and become markers of rarely captured but revealing moments in time. Her hand-stitched and drawn works occupy a space between 2D and 3D and are based on 'found' text and her own photographs. Hamer continues to be interested in being present in the complexity of in-between moments and the uncertainty of unresolved circumstances.

Hamer has been awarded six grants from the Australia Council for the arts, one from Arts Victoria and two from City of Melbourne. Placing as a finalist in numerous Australian and international awards she was joint winner of the 2015 inaugural Australian Tapestry Workshop's 'Architecture in Tapestry Prize' with KGA Architects and a Toyota Community Spirit Prize winner in 2008.

Her work is included in permanent collections at the National Gallery of Victoria, City of Melbourne, Ararat Regional Gallery and Artbank, as well as in private collections across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Oslo, Berlin and Auckland. Her first survey show will be held at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery in 2018.

www.michellehamer.com

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Chapter, 'Tusculum', 3 Manning Street,
Potts Point, NSW
1-29 September, 2017



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NICHOLAS PROJECTS

de este lado tambien hay sueños:
On this side there are dreams too
Hand stitched tapestry
on perforated plastic
104 x 67.5cm



ONE WATL TWO YALIS **ЯЕМАН ЕЛЕНЦИМ**