

AT THE ROOT: MATERIALS AND POWER



October 24 – December 9, 2023

**Alice R Rogers and Target Galleries
Saint John's Art Center**

Used textiles are potent materials with which to scrutinize the relationship between the labor conditions under which our clothes are made and the overconsumption of clothing. But they can also ignite realizations that things could be different. Through acts of sewing and dismantling, Rachel Breen will create a space for cultivating deep reflection of labor rights, solidarity, and the power of the materials we wear.



This show qualifies as an Artistic Engagement event! Scan the QR code for instructions on how to earn your credit.

CONNECT

TOPICS AND THEMES THIS EXHIBITION ENGAGES WITH:

- Social Change
- Fast Fashion
- Labor Rights
- Overconsumption
- Re-purpose
- Climate Change
- Installation Art
- Protest

ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://rachelbreenart.com/>

<https://stopwastecolonialism.org/>

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/>

<http://materiallibraryofindia.com/>

<https://theor.org/>

<https://www.thefashionact.org/>

ENGAGE

For the last 10 years, Rachel Breen's work has examined the labor rights of garment workers. Her interest in labor rights stems from the history of Jewish activism in the garment industry and her own family's history as immigrants and activists. The collapse of the Rana Plaza Factories in Bangladesh in 2013 was the catalyst for Rachel to look at the labor rights globally.

- What does it mean to be in solidarity with people who live on the other side of the planet?
- Who made the clothes you are wearing today?
- If you could speak to the people who made your clothes, what would you ask them? What do you think their lives are like?
- What does the sewing machine symbolize to you?

Critiques of the global garment industry and its harmful impacts on workers and the climate have been a major focus of Rachel's work. However, it left little room for envisioning alternatives and advocating for change. Building upon her Fulbright research in India, where she examined fair trade initiatives, re-use strategies and sustainable fabric printing and dyeing traditions, Rachel's work has begun to shift into imagining solutions and protesting.

- How can art create social change?
- What kind of meaning does Rachel convey by incorporating used clothing in her work?
- As a consumer, what can you do to slow the amount of waste being produced by the garment industry? Why do you think this is important?