

Wellcome Collection

Wellcome Collection is a free museum and library in London which explores health and human experience. Through exhibitions, collections, live programming, digital and publishing we create opportunities for people to think deeply about the connections between science, medicine, life and art.

Every year we curate a diverse and vibrant temporary exhibitions programme and a selection of these

exhibitions tour to venues in the UK and worldwide. Wellcome Collection is part of Wellcome, a global charitable foundation, which supports science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. Wellcome supports discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, and is taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, infectious disease and climate.

wellcomecollection.org

**A free museum and library exploring
health and human experience**

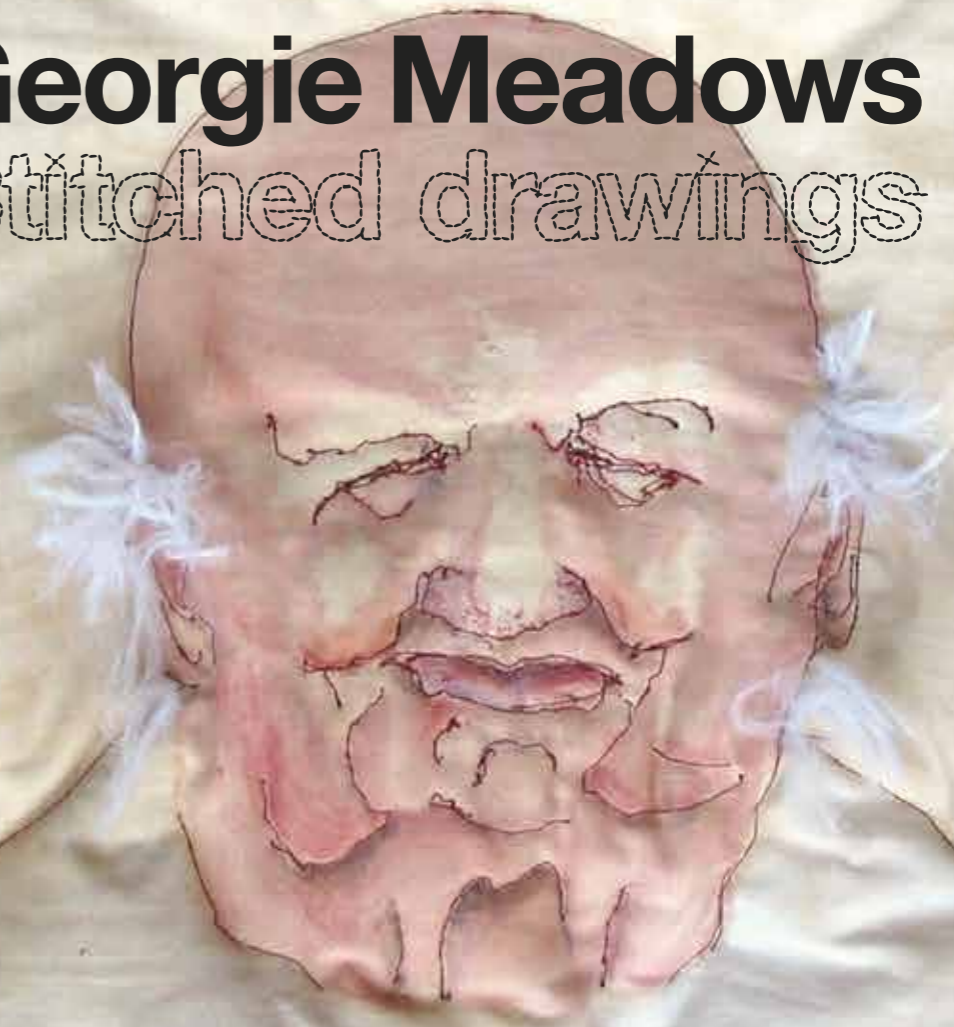
wellcomecollection.org
Euston NW1 2BE

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Georgie Meadows

Stitched drawings



Georgie Meadows: Stitched drawings

Georgie Meadows qualified as an occupational therapist in 1973. She specialised in mental health, working extensively with elderly people.

She spent her spare time making and drawing and in 2003 she took time off work to study at Herefordshire College of Art and Design. Here, she began to translate her pencil drawings of people she worked with into machine-stitched portraits on fabric.

In 2006 she retired from her job to concentrate on her art practice. The body of work shown here has evolved since that time – a collection of stitched drawings inspired by the people with whom Meadows has worked. Immediate and affecting, these works also fulfil a practical purpose – functioning as teaching aids, helping others to understand some of the concerns that need to be addressed when working with elderly people.



Georgie Meadows: Stitched drawings

Having spent many years working with elderly people coping with mental and physical difficulties as well as a diminished role in our society, I now make images inspired by them.

To offer good and compassionate care we need to be able to see each person as a unique individual. This is often made difficult by their inability to make logical verbal communication. But so much communication is visual rather than verbal. Sight is a powerful sense: we spend so much time making fast decisions based on what we see. Looking and seeing can make us more informed and more creative in what we do, but it can also mislead – especially when loss of identity and control are involved.

I have always felt that the importance of the imagination – how we interpret what we see when caring or just being with people – is neglected. I try to use my images to practise

‘looking’ in a more reflective way, to try to avoid hasty assumptions or categorising. I have also found them to be useful aids to teaching occupational therapy students and those working in the caring professions. I hope to encourage empathy and inclusion as well as to celebrate the courage of those older people who find life a struggle.

To create these images I begin by making a drawing. Then, placing it beside my domestic sewing machine and referring to it constantly, I copy it in free machine stitch. I use two layers of fabric with wadding in between. I often use old fabrics with thread, sometimes paint, and anything else that I feel helps produce results which reflect the difficulties, emotions and practical experiences of my subjects.

None of my images is intended as a portrait of a specific individual.

Georgie Meadows, October 2012

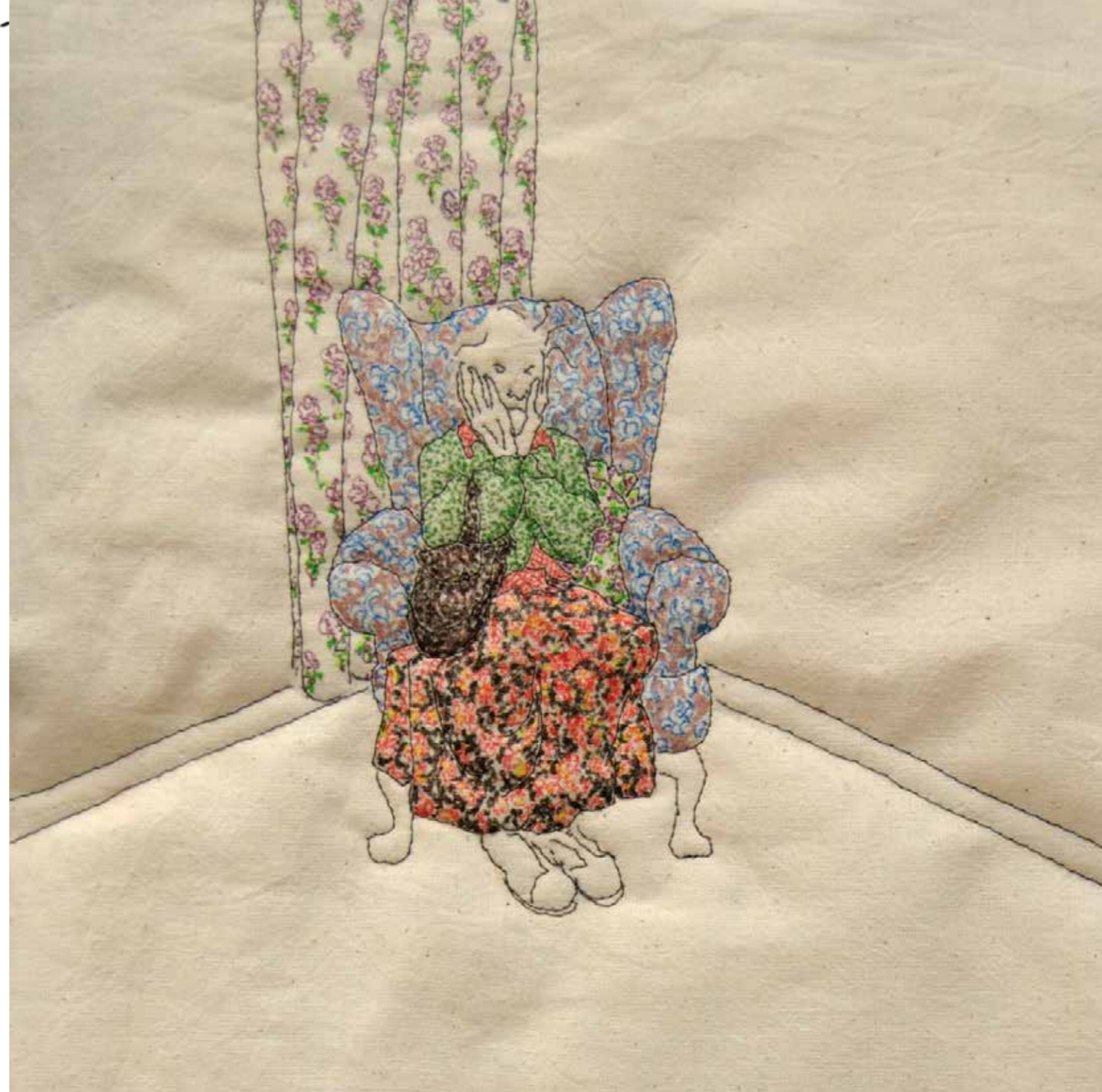


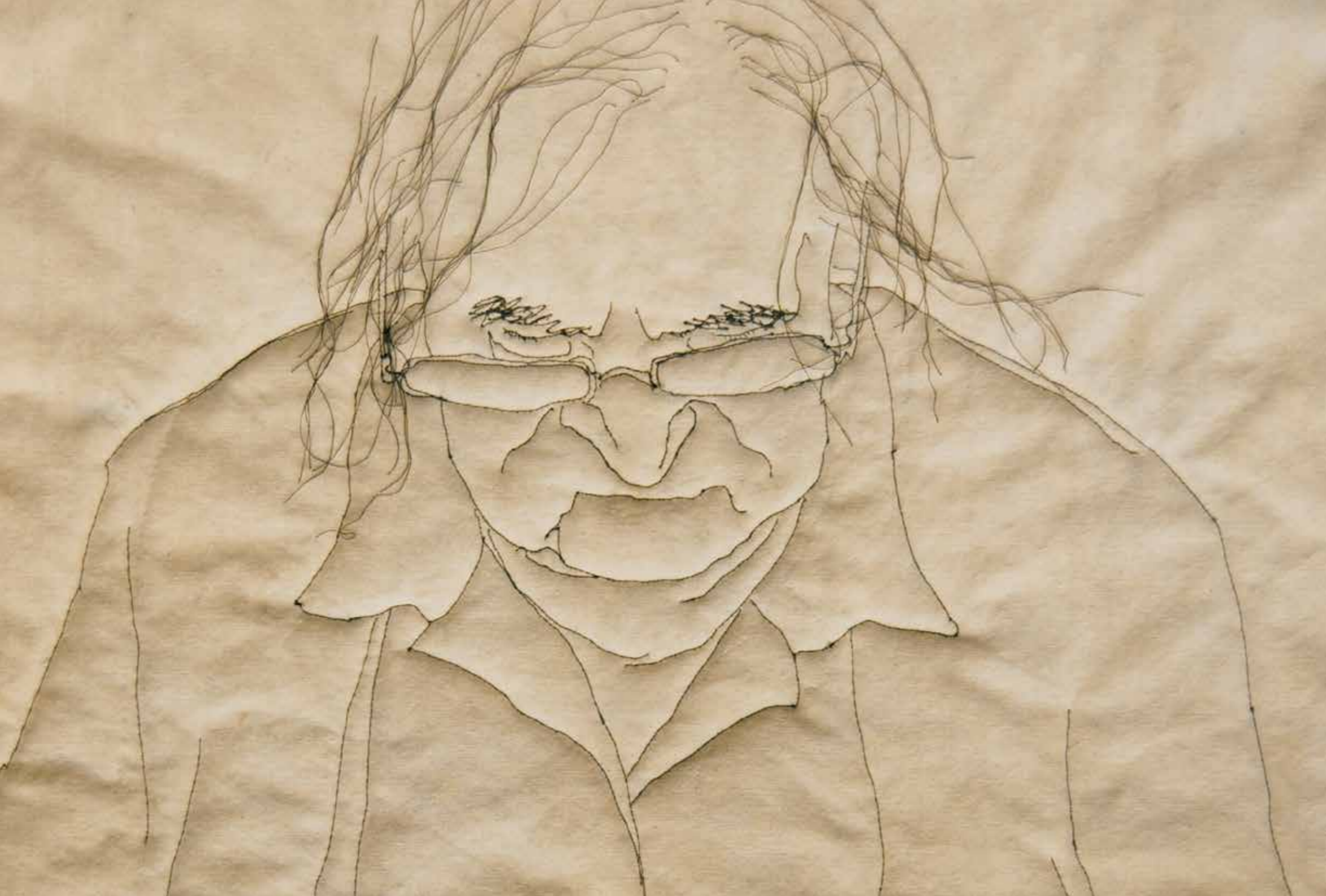


Helping to get off the commode? Waltzing?

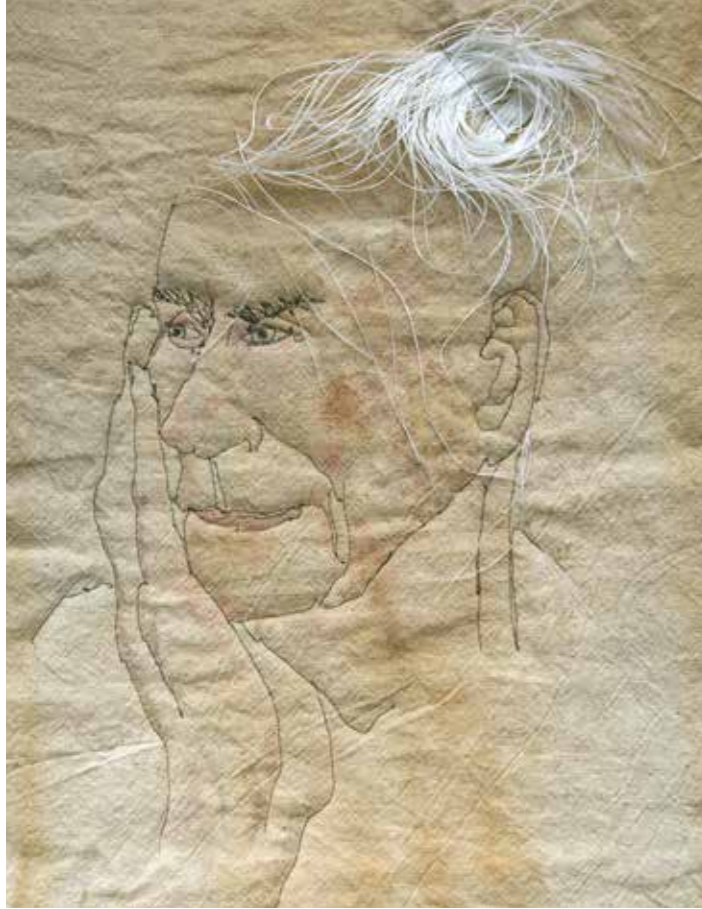


Mrs Jones has dressed smartly all her life. This is her most useful hat now that she is going through chemotherapy.





Up until a few weeks ago Mary was a very capable farmer's wife with a part-time job and several grandchildren whom she would look after. She has become very depressed. The best she can do is sit on the side of her bed and stare at the floor. She will get better.

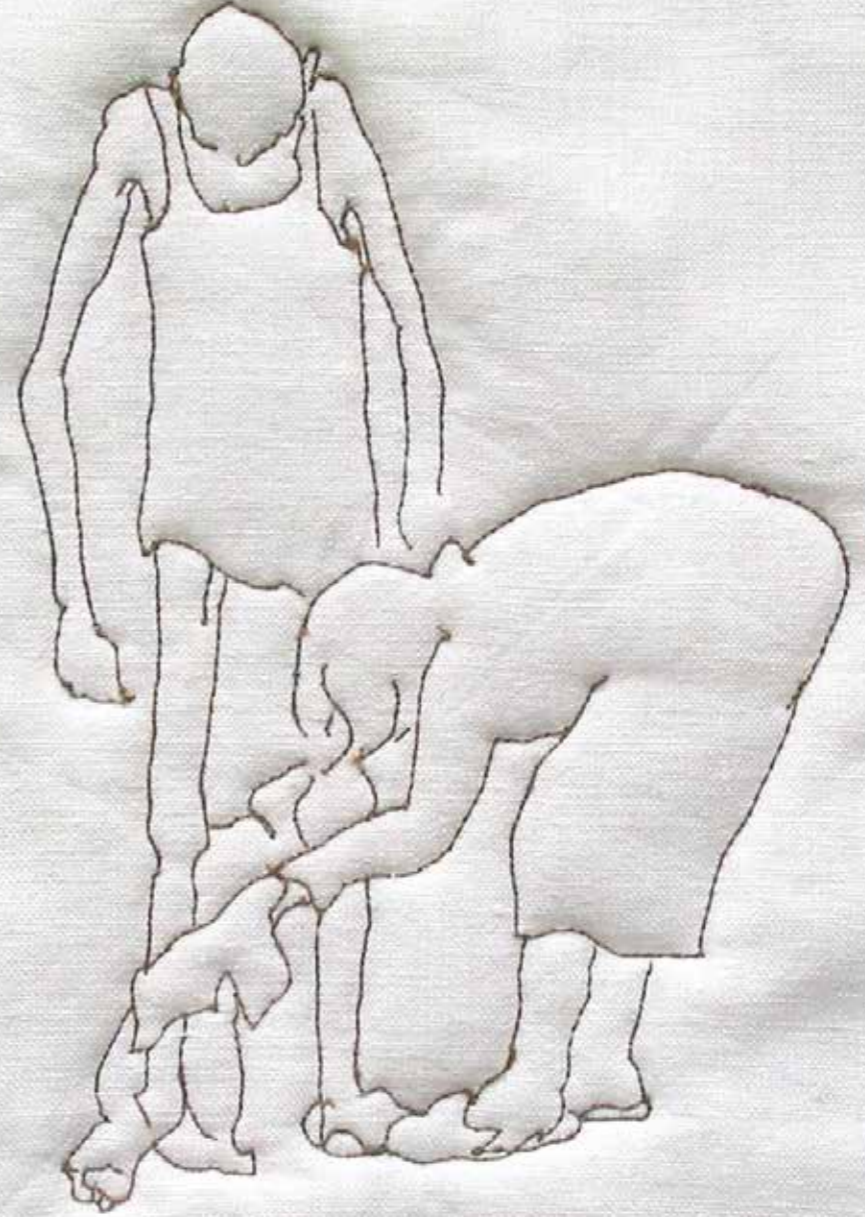


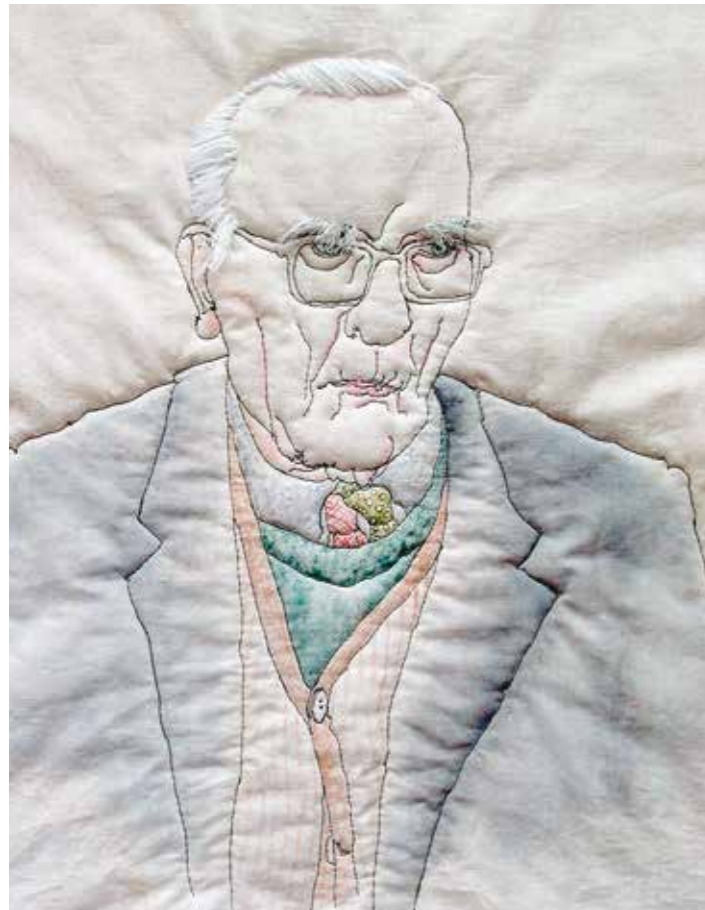
For almost all her life Fara had to live through terrible depressions and mania.



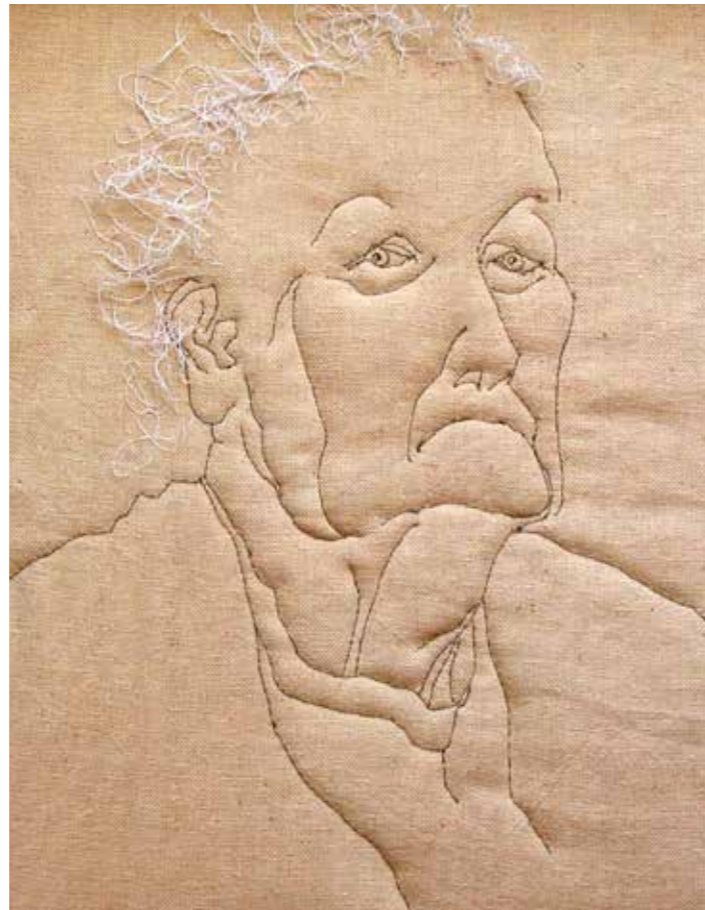
Reverse side

This woman is trying to dress her confused husband. Her back is aching. They have been trying to get ready for half an hour already.



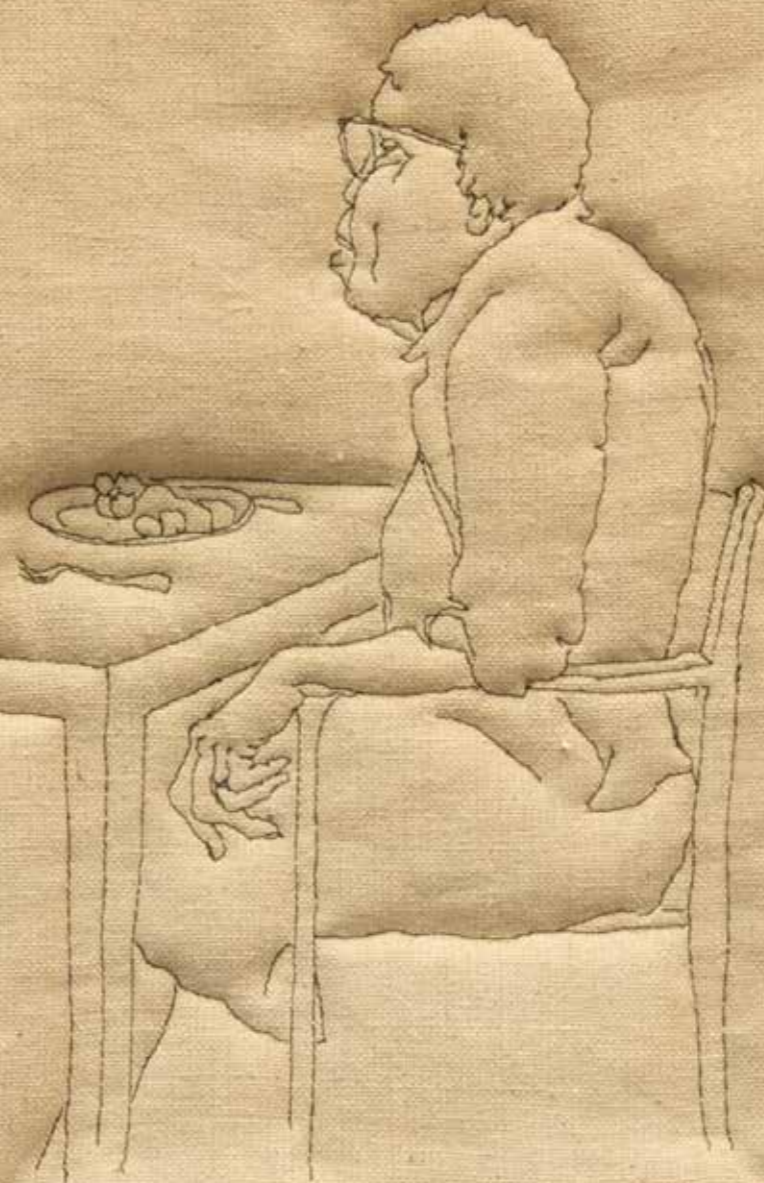


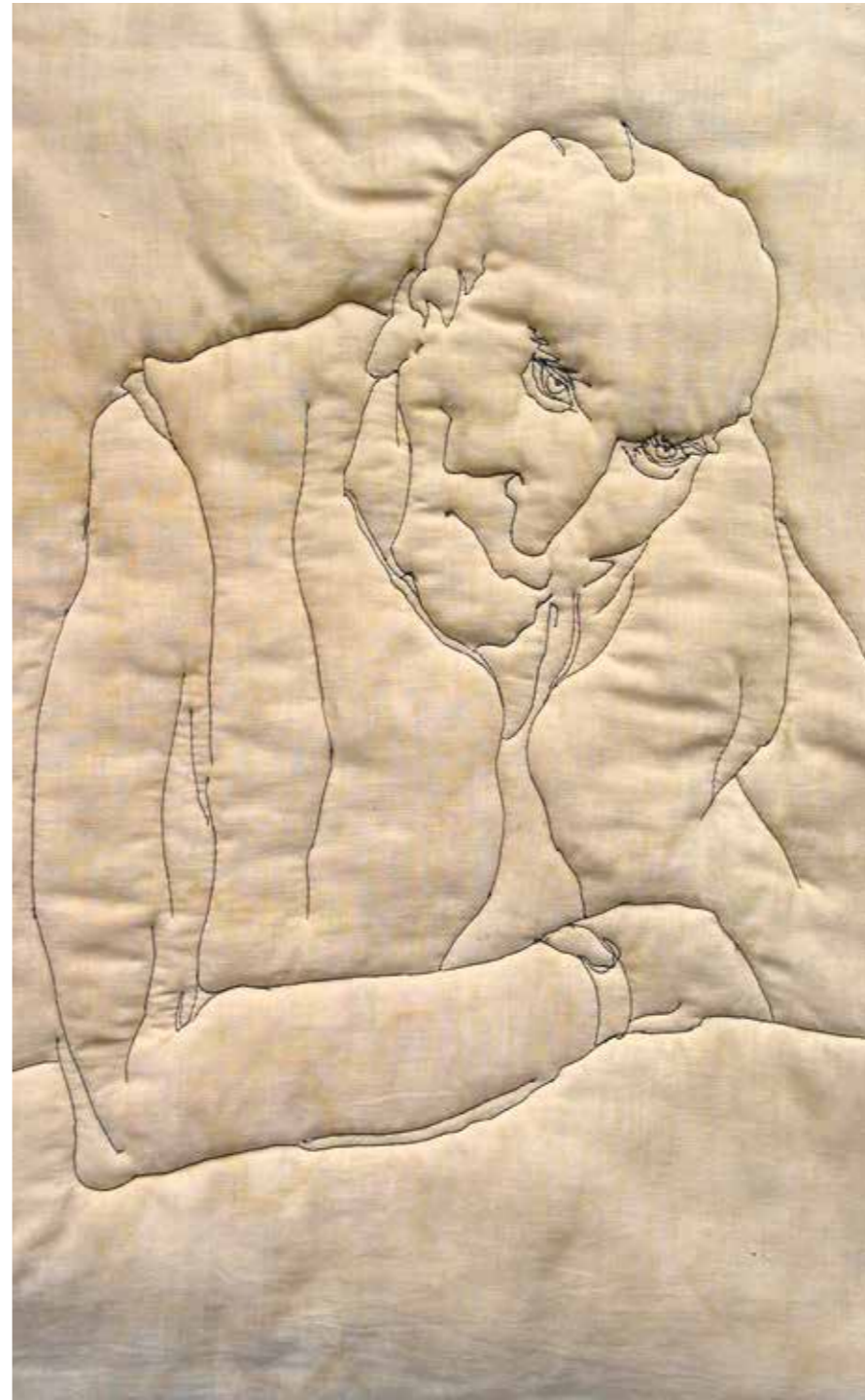
This man was running a successful business two years ago. His wife is so pleased that today he managed to dress himself.



Since this woman has got older and lost her teeth her face has changed. People think she is a grumpy person and are not very friendly towards her.

Mrs Shaw is hungry but the part of her brain that should tell her how to eat this meal is not working.





This man had many adventures travelling the world as a sailor. He had been big and strong. Now he has difficulty even breathing and has to lean on a table to support himself.

Photography: Daniel Meadows.