

AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION FOR SANDRA SAWATZKY

The Black Gold Tapestry, 2008–2017

Hi. I am Sandra Sawatzky, and this is a bit of a background on the Black Gold Tapestry. It has its origin from my chance visit to a show of women's hand embroidery at a museum in my hometown of Calgary. At the time, I was a filmmaker with no thoughts of becoming an embroiderer. But that afternoon in the museum's craft room, for the first time, I tried my hand at an outline satin, cross, and chain stitch, making a small embroidered teapot. Well, that was the beginning of what became a nine-year odyssey of utilizing hand embroidery to create an illustrated history of oil, its impact on climate change that has resulted in the current transition to renewables.

It seemed fitting to tell a story of invention using one of the most ancient tools, a needle and miles and miles of thread. The work takes inspiration from the Bayeux Tapestry, a 220-foot-long hand-embroidered work of art that currently resides in its own museum in Bayeux, France. It's nearly a thousand years old, and the tapestry

relays the Norman Conquest of England that culminated in the Battle of Hastings and the outcome of that battle. And the changes that took place after the conquest still reverberate today. The Black Gold Tapestry bears my idiosyncratic interests in history of costume, color, art, mythology, dinosaurs, invention, and design. And researching the story was a deep dive into the changes that have come about in 220,000 years of world history, all through the lens of the impact of oil, coal, and gas.

I describe the work as a film on cloth because it's a narrative that unravels through time. And my hope is that spectators can walk its considerable length, which is 220 feet, to see for themselves the transformation that has been empowered by oil and reckon upon its ramifications on life here on our beautiful, embattled planet earth.

Music credit: Martijn de Boer (NiGiD)