

Pocket Pattern Book

Pinking of the Sheets: Lessons on how not to
“turn so fool.”

An artwork by Maya Cochrane

The 'pinking of the sheets' Cayman tradition. Lost as a result of the conveniences the world offered to Cayman.

My reflection around Cecily McTaggart's interview
review.

Produced for the Cayman Islands National Gallery,
Island of Women Exhibition 2020

© 2020 Maya Cochrane

All rights reserved. No part of this book may
be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or
transmitted in any form mechanical, recording,
[electronic], printed, photocopying or otherwise
without explicit written permission of Maya
Cochrane.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge
correct copyright of images [and oral histories]
where applicable. Any errors or omissions are
unintentional and should be notified to Maya
Cochrane.

Contents

Excerpts from the Oral History Archive on
'Pinking of the Sheets'

In the tradition: By Hand

In the tradition: By Machine

Site installation photos

Immersive Installation

Shape cutting diagrams: A how to guide

Artist Statement

About the Artist

References

The oral history archive pertaining to the subject of 'the pinking of the sheets' contains a series of nondescript language and a lack of visual representation.

A lack of description in how it is made and lack of knowledge passed down through the generations. In addition something is lost in the verbal translation of a tactile, hand-crafted work that is now being described by spectators.

Current generations do not even get the privilege to be spectators, but now perhaps to read about it in books such as this one.

A culture
expressed
through its
customs
and
traditions.

Definition: Pinking of the sheets

Pinking of the Sheets Definition

‘Pinking’- the art of creating a border of cut-work on a table cloth or sheet, which was simply folded and cut with scissors in much the same way paper dolls are made. This was always done on burial sheets which were used to line the coffin and wrap the body of the deceased.

Cayman Islands National Archive (CINA), Working Glossary, 27 February 2013, page 37.

Question: Have you heard of or participated in the custom known as ‘the pinking of the sheets?’”

M. Cochrane

Response:

Blank look.

(Head shake)

I don't know.

I don't know. Age 72

Hum, I've never heard of that. Did they do that on the Brac? Age 69

I've never heard about that. Age 55

Oh is that on the wedding night where they dyed the sheets pink? (Age ?)

MC: No



culture

culture noun: the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time:

culture noun (ARTS): the arts of describing, showing, or performing that represent the traditions or the way of life of a particular people or group; literature, art, music, dance, theater, etc.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture>

“It was
pretty.”

Helse Presley.

HMc: And
was it any
special
pattern?

HP: “It was
so pretty.”

I wonder where the custom came from?

Pg 35: LW: ...no one did it professionally, it was just people who were willing to do it.

HMCL: Any idea where the custom came from.

CP: No, I can't tell you that. I don't know where it came from.

CP: That was before my time.

Cecily Pierso.

HMCL: Have you any idea where that custom came from? It seems to have been practiced in all districts, including Cayman Brac.

PWS: Yes. I don't know where it comes from.

Phoebe Walter Spence.

HMCL: I wonder where the custom came from?

TW: I don't know... pink sheets. You had a few people use to do it.

HMCL: And they would do it together, would they, as an activity.

TW: (Yes), one get tired, the other one pick it up

TW: same design

TW: mostly like petals... just cut 'em out like petals.

Theoline Wellington.

TW: But all those days, sheets were pinked, you never... well, these days, they have caskets now with everything, but they use to sit down and... anybody die-

Theoline Wellington.

HMcL: You didn't learn to do it?

SW: No

HMcL: They don't do that anymore, do they?

SW: No, they don't do that, no, because the caskets provide all that.

Stella Louise Welcome.

Customs versus convenience

Traditions lost as a result of the conveniences the world offered to Cayman.

Reflections around Cecily McTaggart's interview review.

Memory time-line

Exploring the transition of participating in a tradition to the loss of this tradition.

1888

Great Grand mother

1901

Helse Prisley born 1901

1908

1908 -Bertha Marion born and participated in pinking of the sheets

1930

Marrion Bodden born 21 February 1922

Grandmother

1960

Mother

1982

Me

1990

Range that the selection of oral histories are taken in.

2005

2017

Daughter

2019

Participant

Witness

In a difference of 20 years we go from one person observing the tradition to another not witnessing it at all.

Overheard

No memory

No context

No stories

What then gets passed onto the next generation?

Unseen
Buried
covered
Invisible
below

enveloping

mourned

resourcefulness
resilience

local

tradition
remember
sharp
clear

Seen
overhead
uncovered
visible
above

unwrapping

celebrated

dependent
spiritless

global

modernisation
forget
vague
blurry

HMcL: I wonder
where the custom
came from?

TW: I don't know....

Theoline Wellington.

...pink sheets.

C McT: I never did anything like it, but I know about it. I know people that had done it, but don't do all that, now you can go to... anywhere-

HMCL: don't do that anymore

C McT: -and get, you can go, as long as you got the money, you can get anything you want?

HMCL: Yes

CMcT: And that's why Cayman turn... turn so fool.

And that's
why Cayman
turn...

turn so fool.

West Bay:

Edith Ebanks (Nee Orrett): Hell Road, West Bay, Grand Cayman.

Bertha Marion (Marrie) Parsons: Elizabeth Street, West Bay

Phylis Ebanks, Town Hall Road, West Bay, Grand Cayman

George Town:

Heather McLaughlin: Eden Road Georgetown

Cecily McTaggart: North Church Street, Georgetown

Marrion Bodden: Glen Eden Road, Georgetown, Grand Cayman

Theophilus (Captin Theo) Bodden: South Church Street

Theoline Wellington: Georgetown, Grand Cayman

Gwen Da Costa: Melmac Avenue, Georgetown, Grand Cayman



19 Single Member Electoral Dis

You can also contact the following Registering Officers:

- Deborah Powers-Ebanks, 516-4422, West Bay
- Kathryn Hyde, 516-2117, George Town
- Kerry Webb, 516-4478, Middle Town
- Lenox Williams, 516-6647, East End
- Patricia Edwards, 516-4345, North Side
- Ellen Lockett, 516-5307, Cayman Brac & Little Cayman



Savannah:

Cicely Watler: Savannah

Prospect:

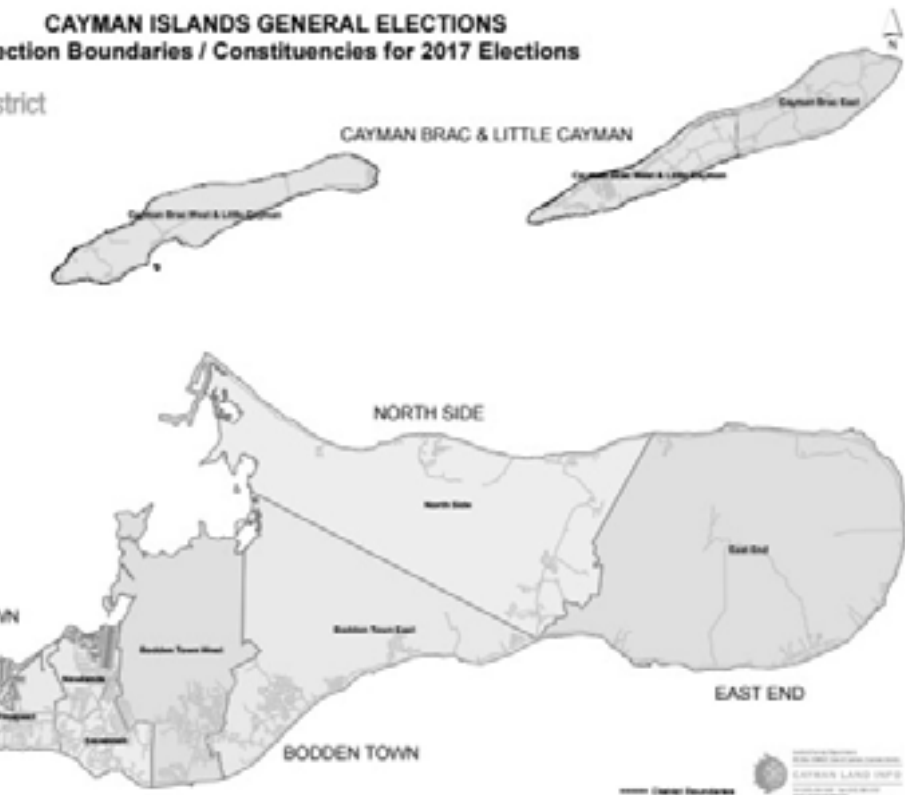
Armenthea Watler:
Mangrove avenue,
Prospect, Grand
Cayman

North Side:

Stella (Nell) Smith:
Northside, Grand Cayman

CAYMAN ISLANDS GENERAL ELECTIONS
Constituency Boundaries / Constituencies for 2017 Elections

istrict



East End:

Stella Louise Welcome: East End,
Grand Cayman

Lauren Watler: Northward,
Grand Cayman

Cecily Pierson: her home in
East End and Savannah Primary
School

Phoebe Walter Spence, Gun Bay,
Grand Cayman

Cayman Brac:

Marjorie Brock:
The Creek,
Cayman Brac
Helse Prisley Ann
Foster: The Rock,
Cayman Brac

Victoria Scott:
Spot Bay, Cayman
Brac

Total of 20 oral histories extracted:



Nora Johnson and
Annie Dixon: French
Harbour, Rotan Bay
Islands, Honduras



Map of Central America

A total of 20 oral histories pieced together to create a picture of the ‘Pinking of the sheets’ and allow me to begin a process of visualising the process, ceremony, tools and skills required, number of people, location within the home, time frame, time line.

What we can piece together from these oral histories:

>2- 3 women

>cotton sheet fabric

>special pinking scissors may have been used

>They worked through the evening

>The cut work was done in the 'hall' of the home

>Not a profession, anyone could do it

>Folding and cutting techniques

>Hearts, Diamonds, Flowers as individual shapes

>Scalloped edges

>Lining coffin

>Women's work while men built coffin

>Coffin boards were kept in the house between the beams

>The pieces cut out were collected in a pillow to be placed under the head

>A tradition done throughout Cayman

>Limited visual evidence of its use and pattern making process

What questions remain:

- >Where does this tradition come from?
- >What inspired the patterns?
- >What pattern combinations were created?
- >What did it look like?
- >When did the tradition disappear?

HMCL: they use to save the clippings to make a pillow or something. Did that happen?

CW: I don't Know.
Cicely Watler, 32.

In the
tradition:
By Hand







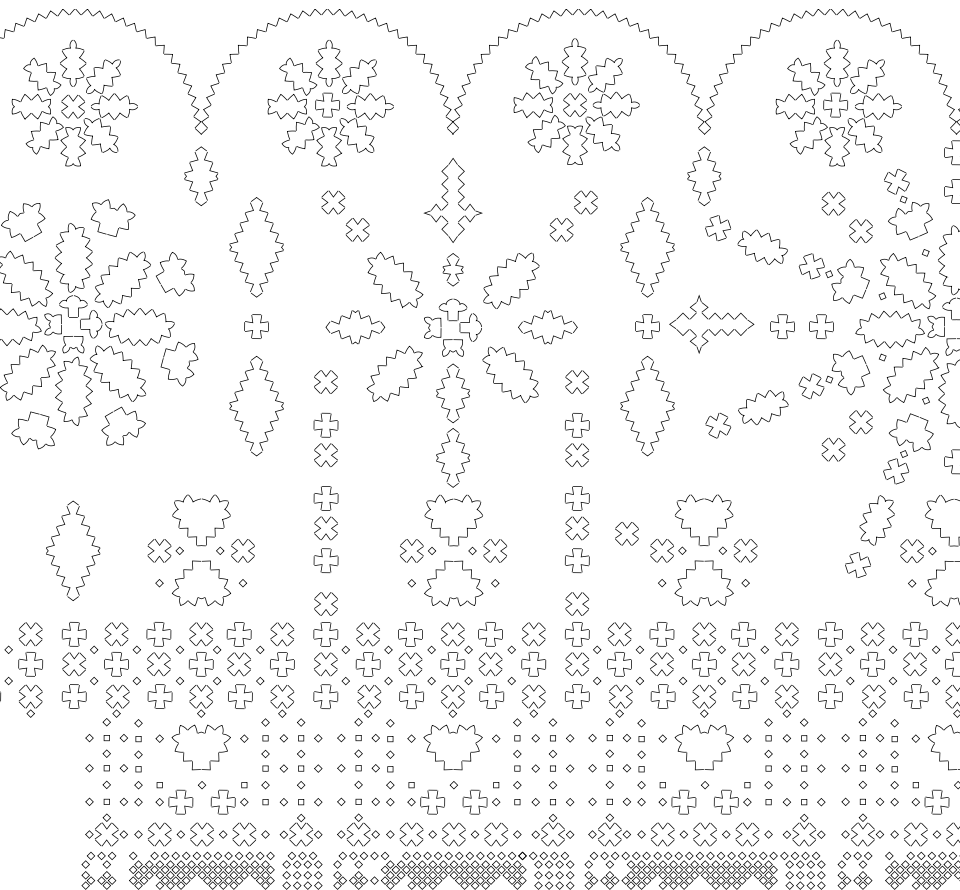


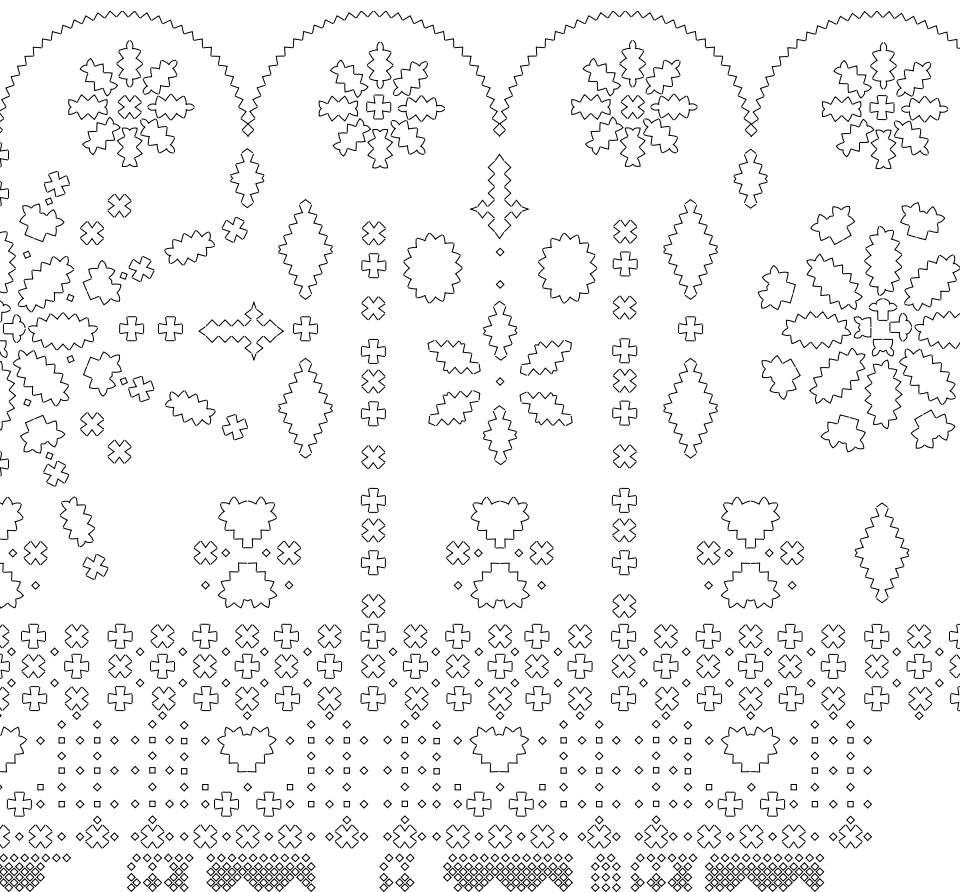


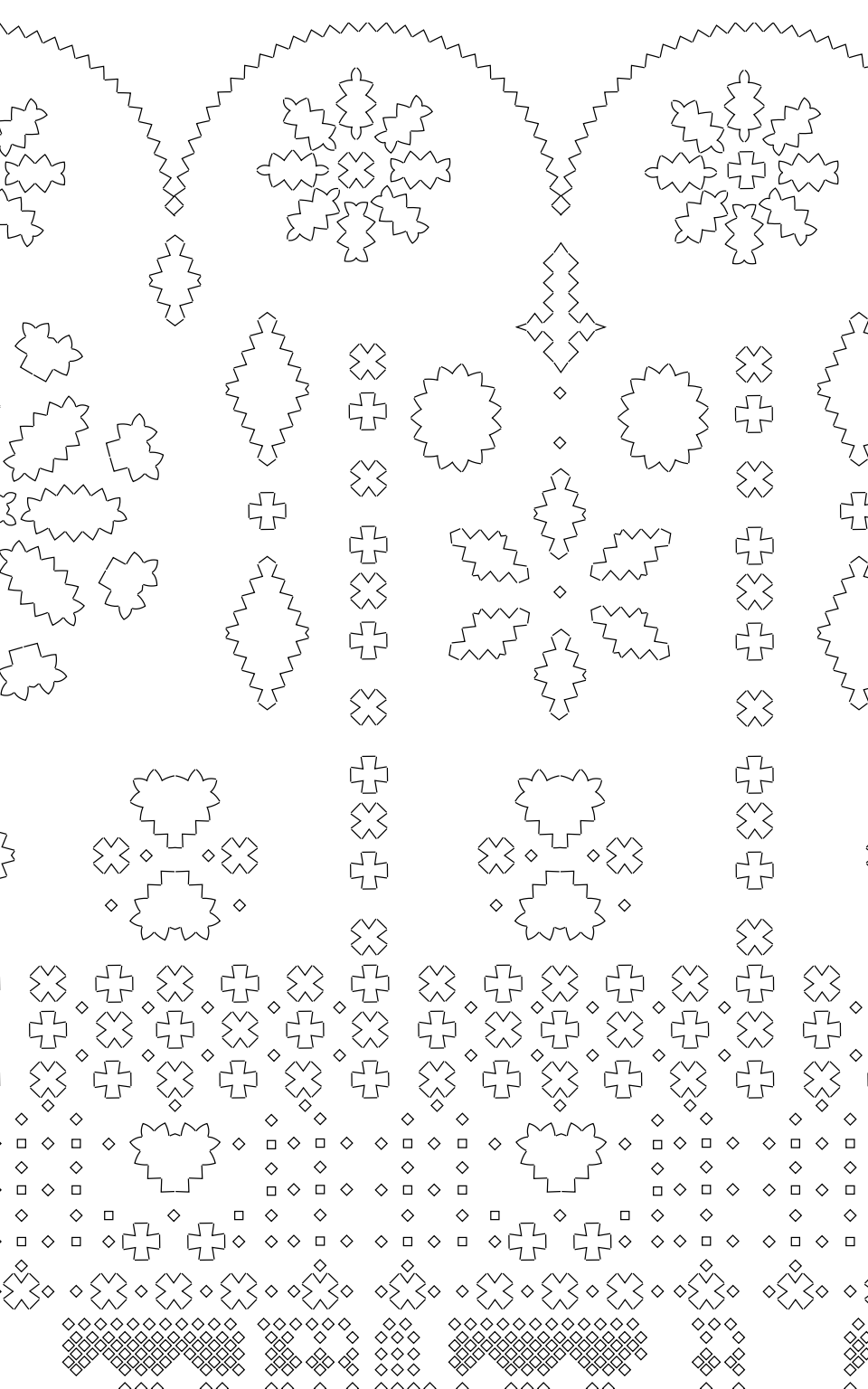


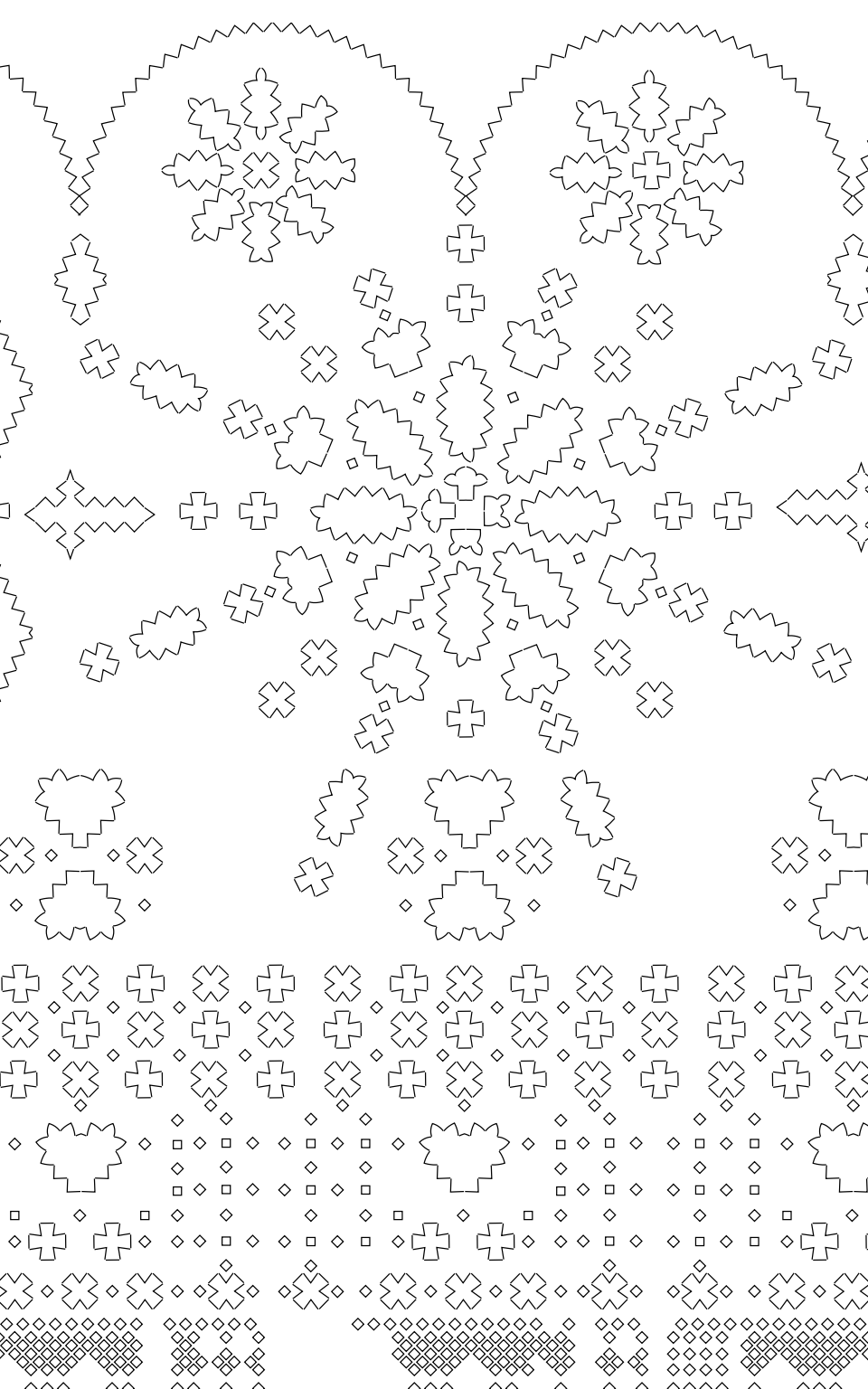
In the
tradition:
By Machine

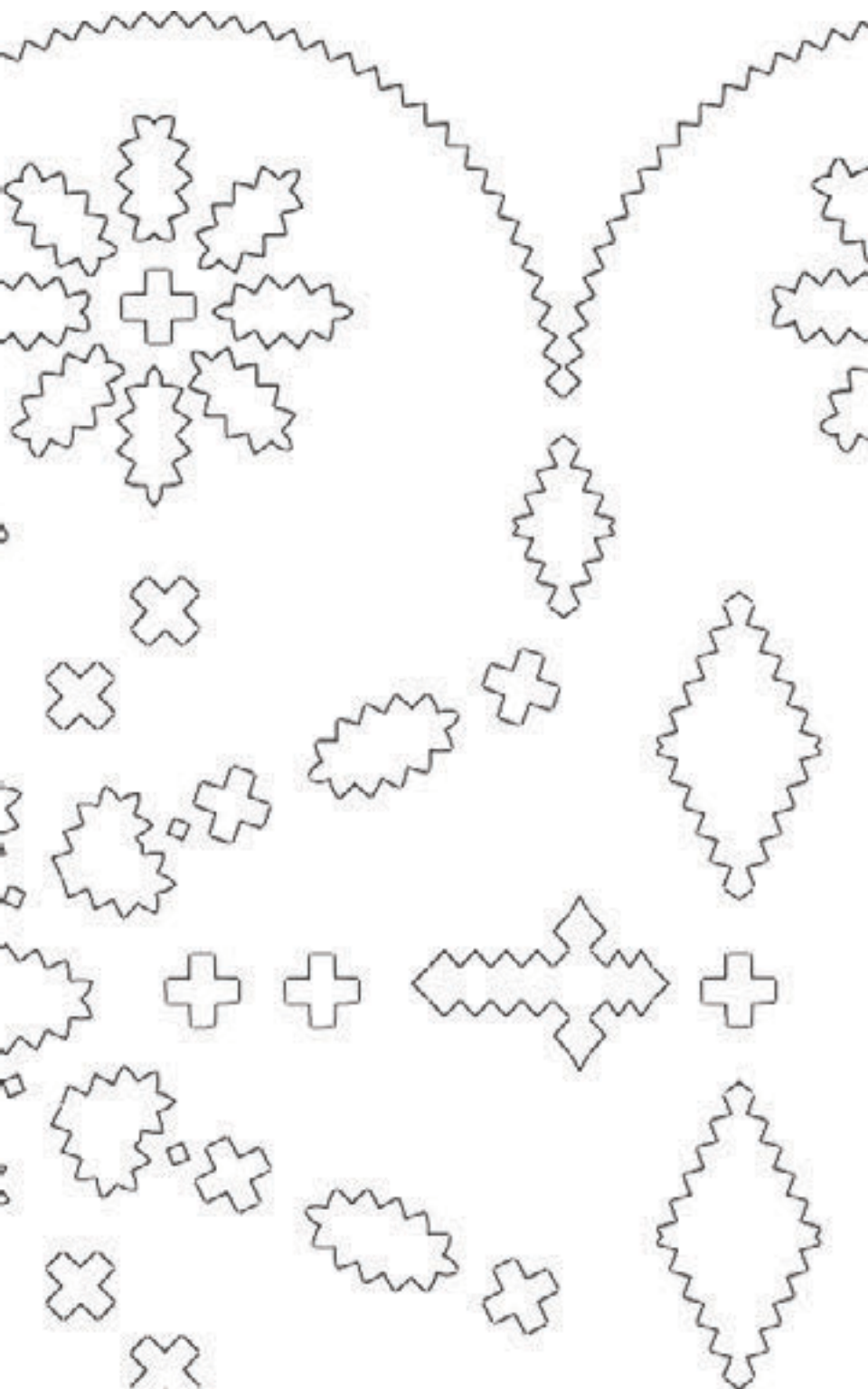
Digital pattern

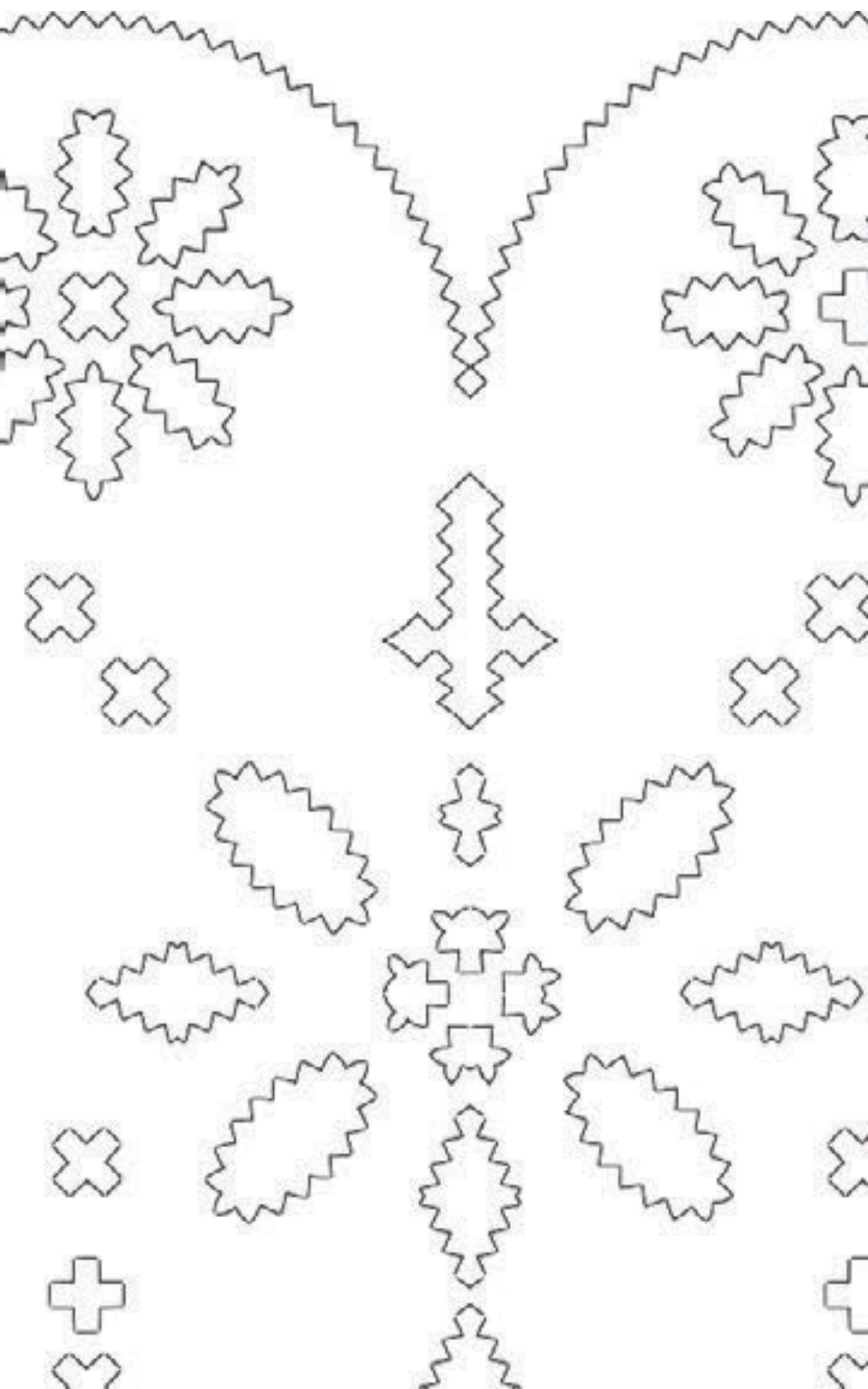


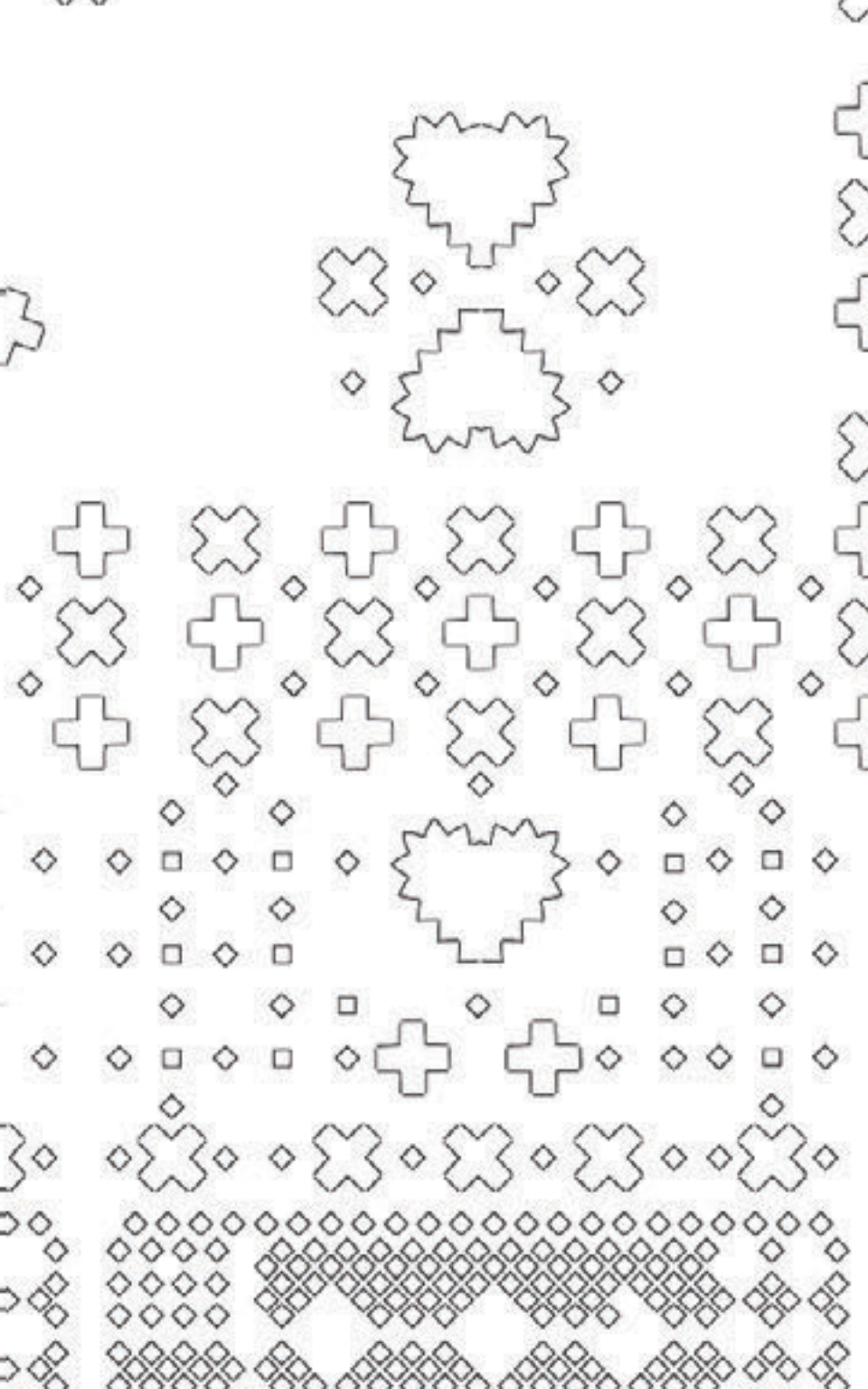


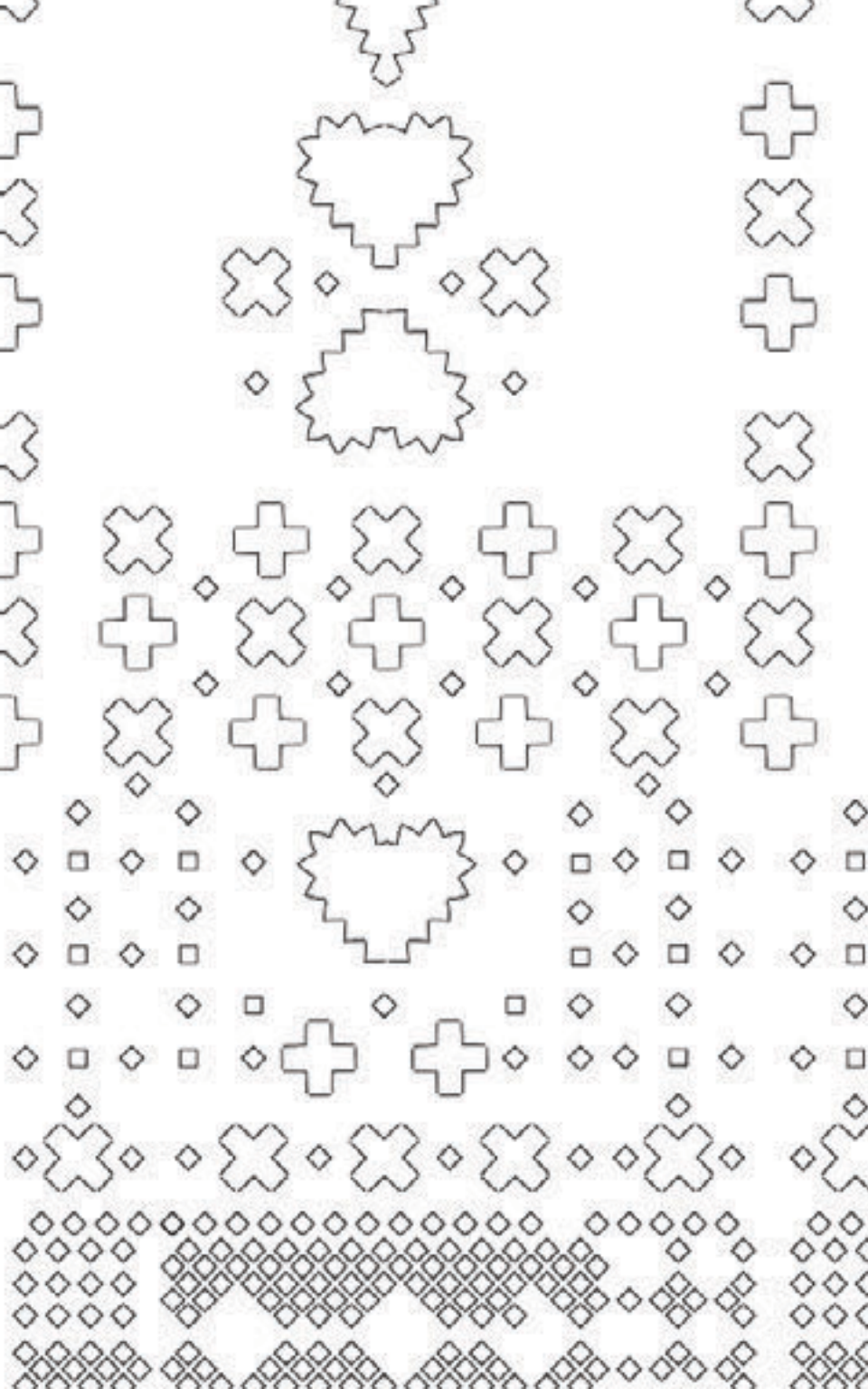




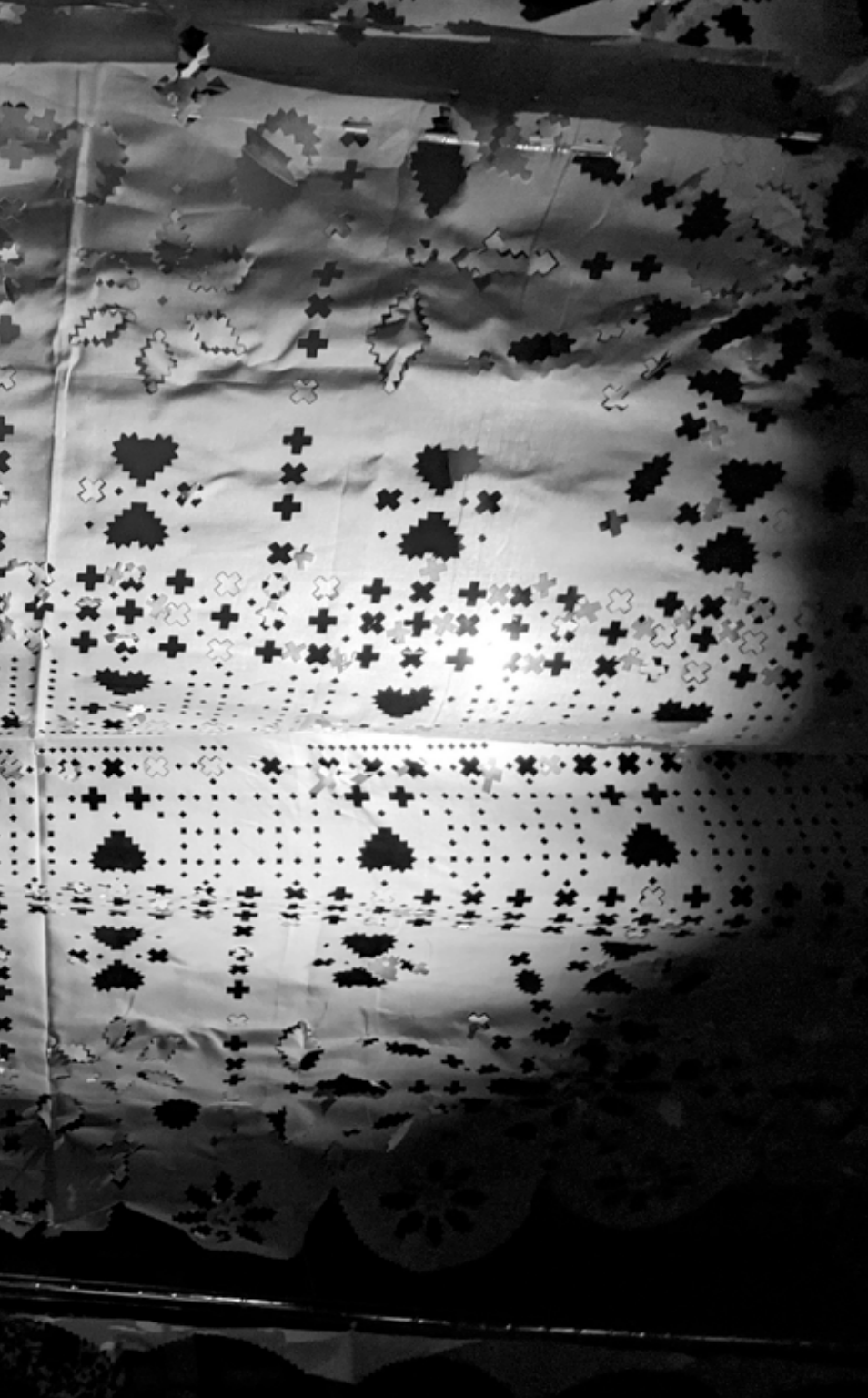
















Site

installation

photos

Home, West Bay, Grand Cayman



Fish Market, George Town, Grand Cayman



Spotts, Prospect, Grand Cayman



Pedro St James, Savannah, Grand Cayman



Casino
Savannah

Casino
Savannah

Beach, Bodden Town, Grand Cayman



Over the Edge, North Side, Grand Cayman

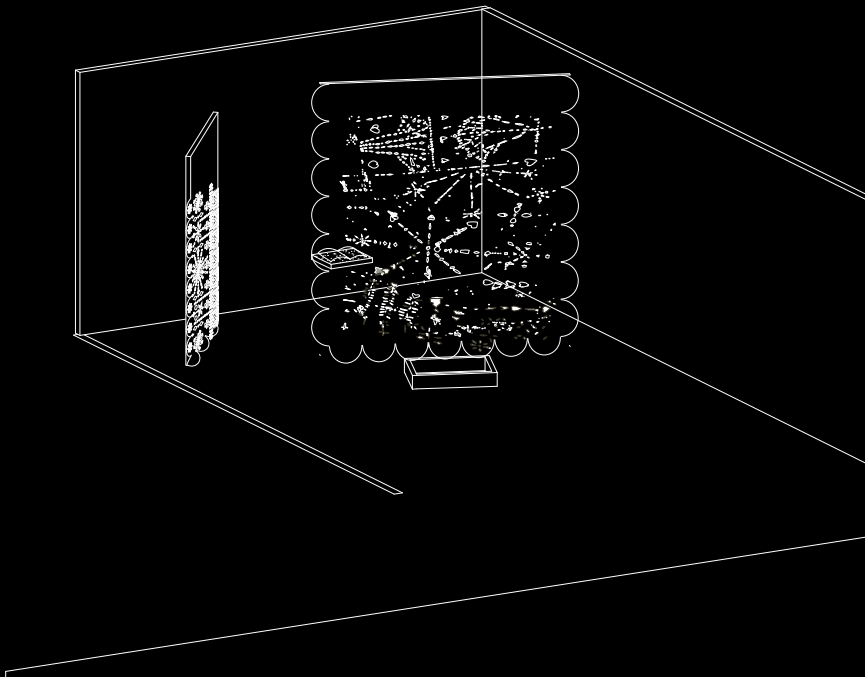


Gun Bay Dock, Gun Bay, Grand Cayman



X, X, Cayman Brac

X, X, Little Cayman



Immersive Installation















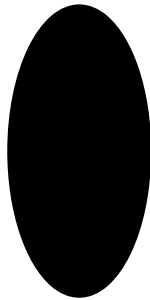
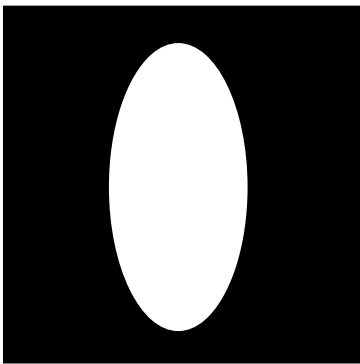
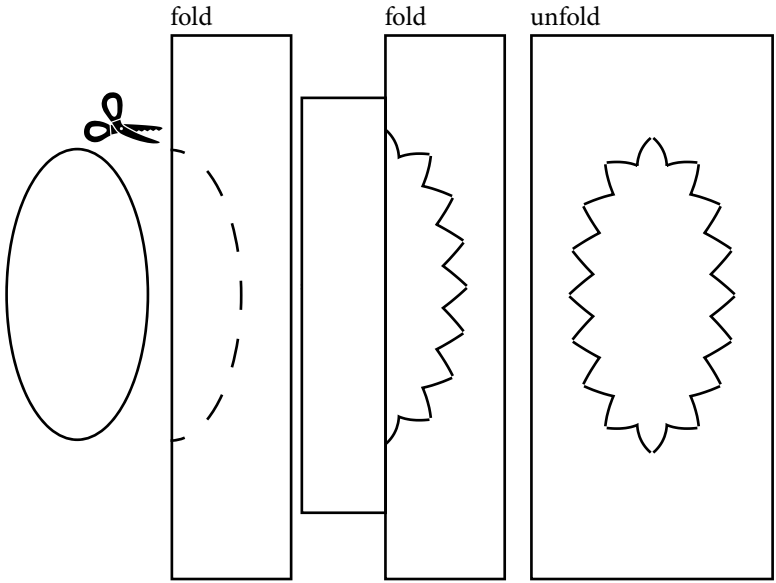






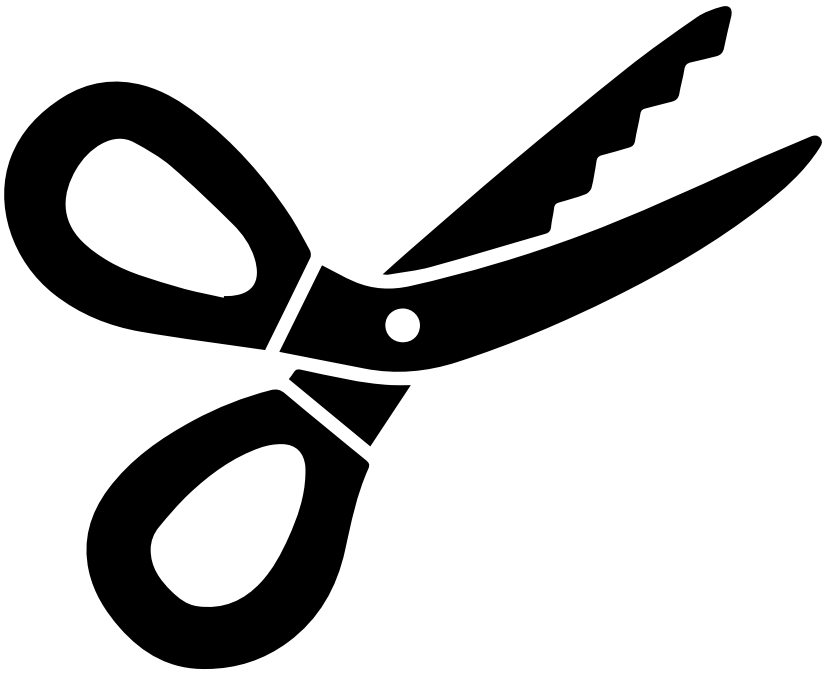


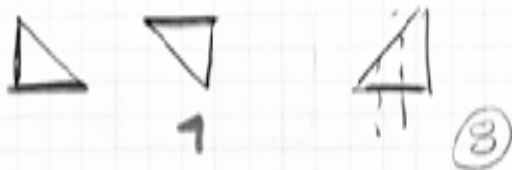
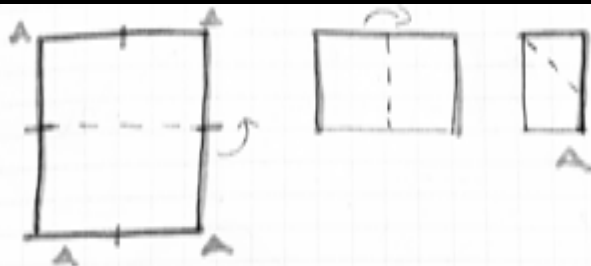
Shape
cutting
diagrams:
A how to
guide



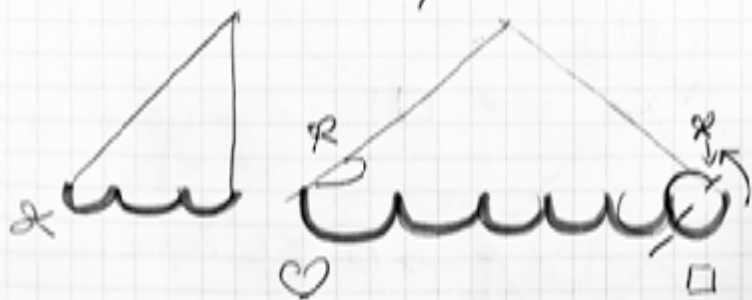


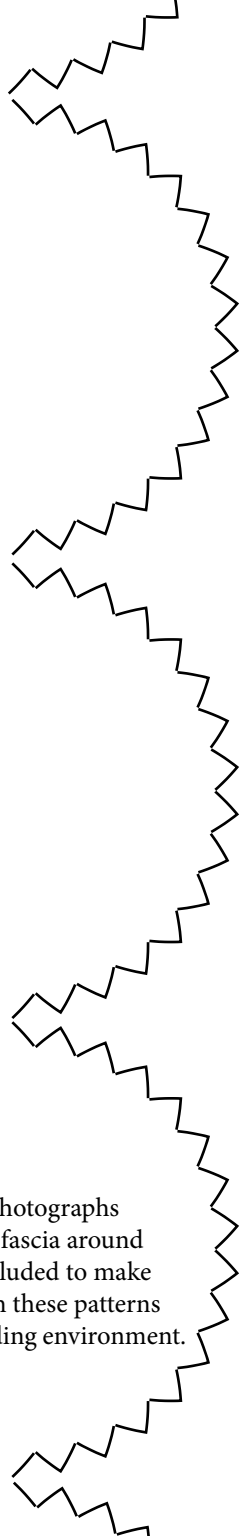
Overall height: 1/16"
45 degree angle
length of segment 1/8"



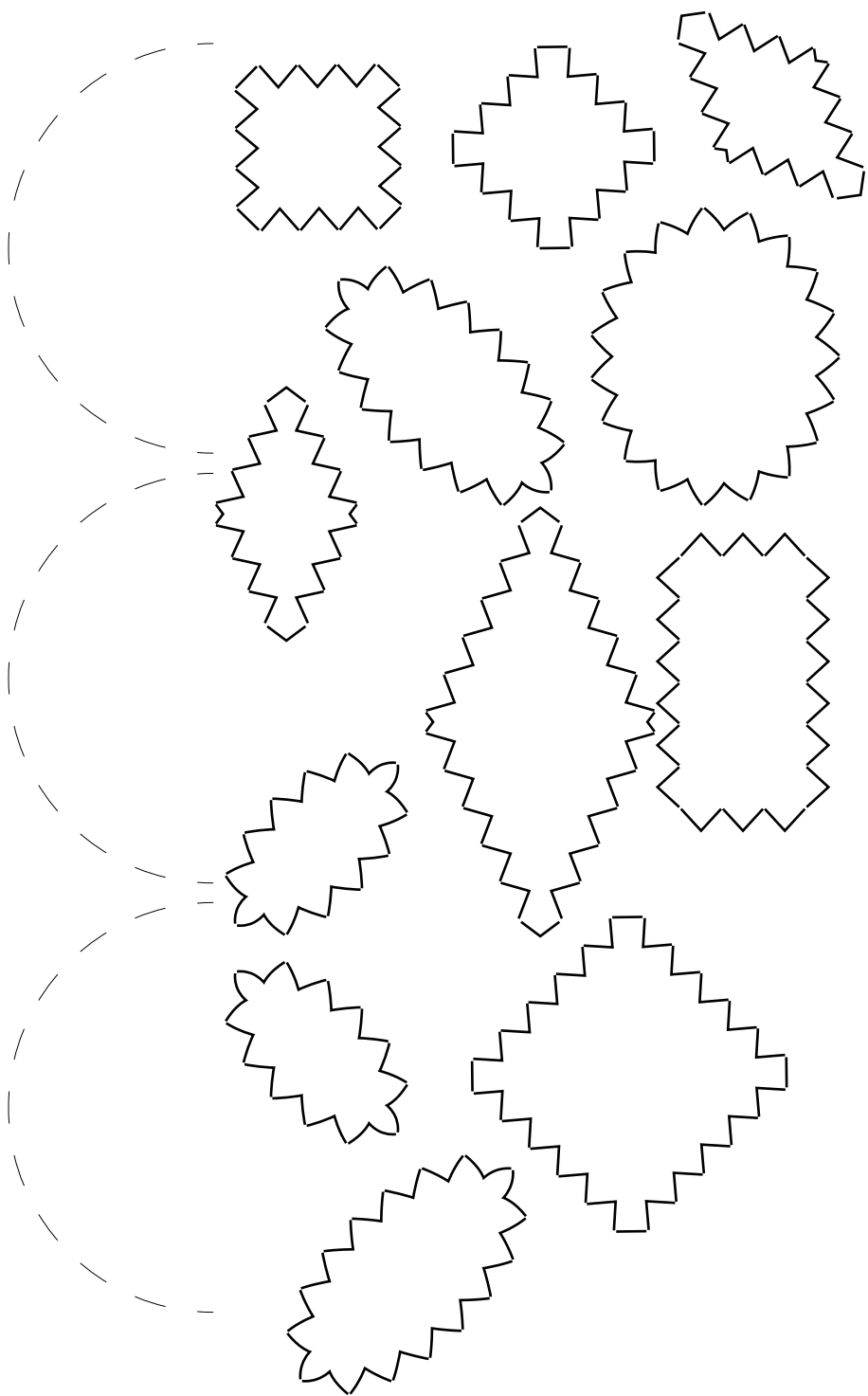


3 sheets, as most
 difficult to cut through
 at a time
 cut now & then use
 as a template



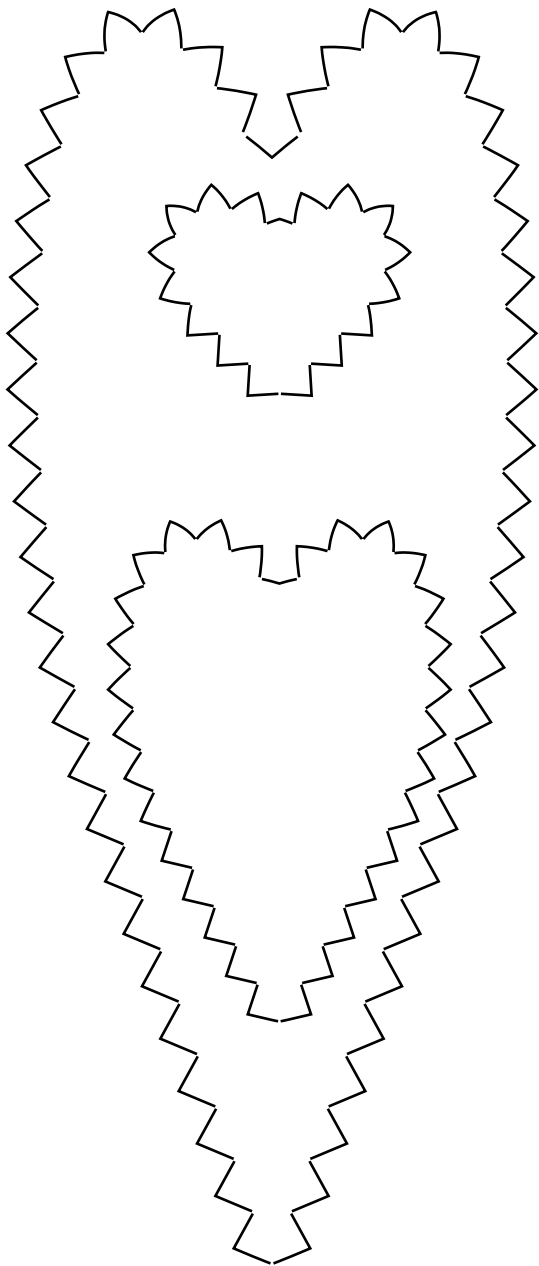


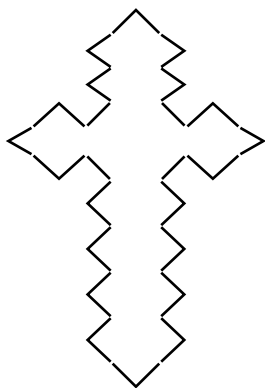
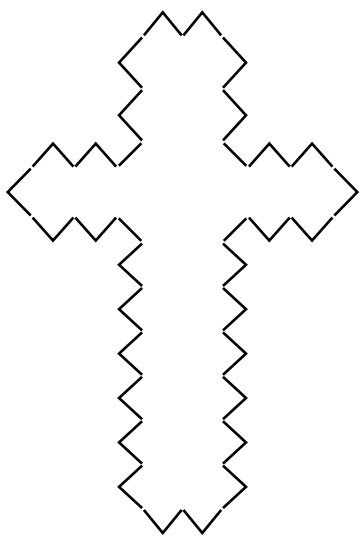
The following photographs
of architectural fascia around
Cayman are included to make
connection with these patterns
in our surrounding environment.





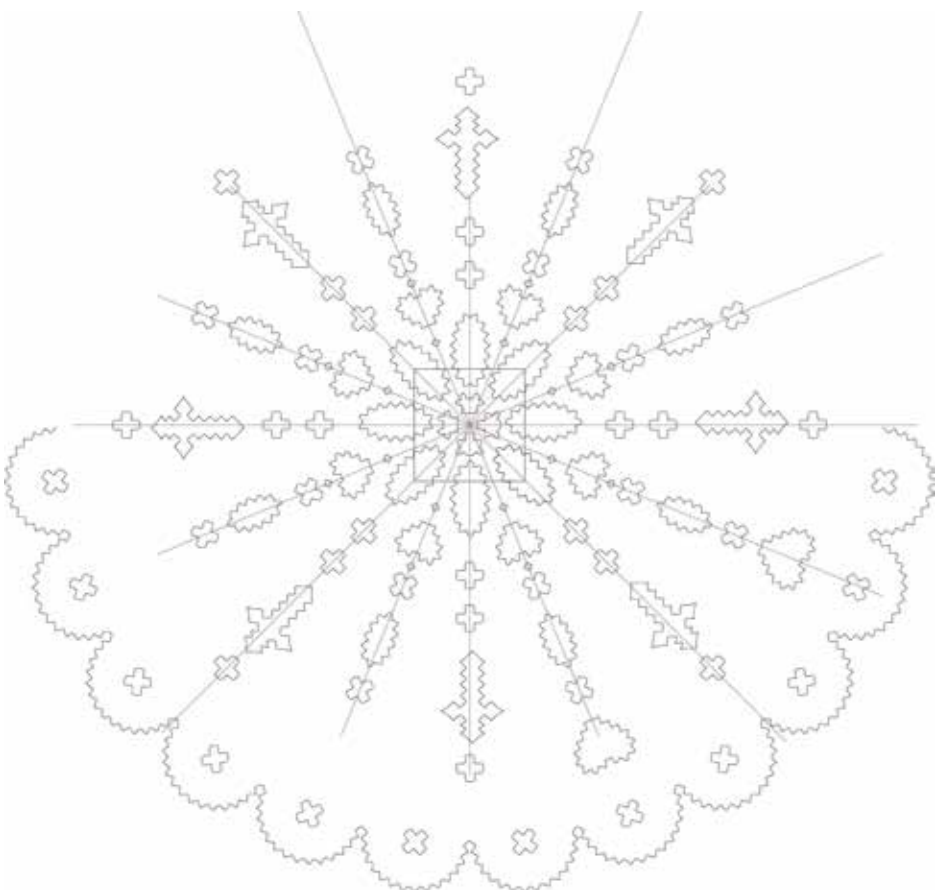
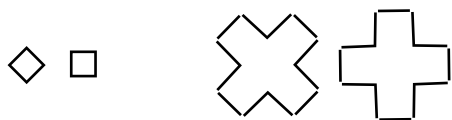








Difficult shapes to complete accurately with scissors by hand, but easy to create through computer generated images.



SOUVENIRS
SHIRTS
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Artist

Statement

&

About the

Artist

‘Pinking’- the art of creating a border of cut-work on a table cloth or sheet, which was simply folded and cut with scissors in much the same way paper dolls are made. This was always done to create burial sheets, which were used to line the coffin and wrap the body of the deceased.”

(Glossary of Cayman Islands Archive)

This art installation visualises the unseen stories of female pattern makers in the tradition ‘Pinking of the Sheets.’ By allowing the ‘seen by few’ (private) to become visible to many (public), we celebrate cultural memory and the ingenuity of women.

The artwork consists of choreographed pieces: ‘So Pretty’ (Hand cut sheet 1), ‘Turn so...Fool’ (Laser cut sheet 2), Pattern Handbook, ‘Picking up the pieces’ (Pillow substitute), and ‘The conveniences the world offers Cayman’ (a modern interpretation of the wooden coffin). The patterns are transformed spatially through an installation using ephemeral qualities of light and shadow often used when evoking passing, transition or change.

‘So Pretty’ is created through a series of conversations and cutting practices between Maya Cochrane and women who live in the Cayman Islands.

‘Turn so...Fool’ is a laser cut work created by Maya using basic cutting principles, architectural precision and explores shapes in relation to the scale of the scissors while going beyond that which could be created by hand. What is achieved by machine lacks the soul of the creator(s) that the hand-cut piece evokes. It draws attention to the importance

of participating as a group in creating and ensuring that history is passed on through the generations in order to make it relevant to the current generation.

This corresponding Pattern Handbook sets the parameters for a contemporary, cross generational, memorable, relevant artwork.

‘Picking up the pieces’ is a transparent cushion with the remains of the cut-out pieces representing a pillow placed under the head.

‘The conveniences the world offers Cayman’ is a wine crate which will hold the folded works created in a pattern generating workshop to be run during the exhibition. This references the impact of global imports on the discontinuation of the pinking tradition.

In tribute to the districts where the oral histories were taken, a lantern installation which combines modern methods of laser-cutting with traditional folding techniques is photographed at night. The site-specific installations of intricate contemporary patterns in intended to create an experience that responds to the environment, engages Caymanian’s and acts as a keeper of the Caymanian tradition of ‘Pinking of the Sheets’.



Maya Cochrane is a qualified British Architect and Art Professional working on the threshold between art, architecture and textile design. Maya challenges the constraints of architecture through developing drawing methodologies that assist in exploring life's everyday rituals. Maya is interested in spatial exploration of cultural rituals, feminising construction processes and elevating the role of women as makers and preservers of history and culture. Maya has exhibited and published in Europe and North America, been an invited artist for an ephemeral workshop, and involved in teaching and critiquing architecture and interior architecture. After 17 years of living in London, UK, Maya has relocated to the Cayman Islands from where she continues her explorations into pattern and colour in order to delight in art, architecture and textile design.

References

Interview with Grace Anderson on 26th February 1992 recorded at Watering Place, Cayman Brac. Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 47-48. (Grace Anderson Born 1913)

Personal viewing of Pinking sample created by Mrs. Lilah Ebanks of West Bay in 1991, object number 91.11.02 , Cayman Islands National Museum, Archivist: Deborah Barnes-Tabora, viewed on 7th January 2020.

Interview with Theophilus (Captin Theo) Bodden (6) on 7 August 1990 recorded at South Church Street, Interviewed by Mary Elizabeth EBanks, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 7-8. (Captin Theo Bodden born 11 September 1909).

Interview with Marrion Bodden (2) on 14 May 1991 recorded at Glen Eden Road, Georgetown, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 28. (Marrion Bodden born 21 February 1922)

Interview with Marjorie Brock on 14th March 1996 recorded at The Creek, Cayman Brac. Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 12-13.

Interview with Gwen Da Costa (2) on 8 November 1990 recorded at Melmac Avenue, George Town, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 11.

Interview with Edith Ebanks (Nee Orrett) (1) on 19 March 2003 recorded at Hell Road, West Bay, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Tricia Bodden, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 18.

Interview with Nora Johnson and Annie Dixon on 12 August 1994 recorded at French Harbour, Rotan Bay Islands, Honduras, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 46-48.

Interview with Bertha Marion (Marrie) Parsons on 21st October 1992 recorded at Elizabeth Street, West Bay, Interviewer: Gloria McField, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 31-33. (Bertha Marion (Marrie) Parsons born 3 November 1908)

Interview with Cecily McTaggart on 20th February 1991 recorded at North Church Street, George Town, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp.49-50. (Cecily McTaggart born 9 April 1894).

Interview with Phylis E.Banks (1) on 30 September 1995 recorded at Town Hall Road, West Bay, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Liz Scholfield, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 30-31. (Phylis E.Banks born 15 May 1920).

Heather McLaughlin, Personal Interview on Friday 8th November 2019 at her home Eden Road George Town, Grand Cayman.

Interview with Cecily Pierson on 22 February 1991 recorded at her home in East End and Savannah Primary School, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 28-36.

Interview with Helse Prisley Ann Foster on 26 October 1990 recorded at The Rock, Cayman Brac, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp 37-39. (Helse Prisley born 1901).

Interview with Louise Scott, Funeral Customs, Cayman Islands Memory Bank, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 38, 29 June 2004, page 38.

Interview with Victoria Scott (2) on 12 August 1991 recorded at Spot Bay, Cayman Brac, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 21.

Interview with Stella (Nell) Smith on 3 October 1990 recorded at Northside, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Jeanne Masters, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 25-27. (Stella (Nell) Smith born 23 April 1923).

Interview with Armenthea Watler on 21 August 1991 recorded at Mangrove avenue, Prospect, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Mary Elizabeth E.Banks, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 12-14.

Interview with Cicely Watler on 4th June 1991 recorded at Savannah, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp.32-33. (Born ?)

Interview with Lauren Watler on 20 November 2001 recorded at Northward, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp.34-35. (Lauren Watler born 27 February 1924)

Interview with Phoebe Walter Spence (1) on 21 November 1990 recorded at Gun Bay, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 30-31.

Interview with Stella Louise Welcome on 15 January 1991 recorded at East End, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp.8-9. (Born ?)

Interview with Theoline Wellington on 10 February 2000 recorded at George Town, Grand Cayman, Interviewer: Heather McLaughlin, Oral History collection at the Cayman Islands National Archive, pp. 7-8.

Photos on pages 32-37 courtesy of Brandee Romanica on 6 January 2020 at Pinking workshop hosted by Maya Cochrane held at the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands.

Photos on page 91, courtesy the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, taken February 2020.

Photos on pages 64/65, courtesy of Jim Gates at Blue Dot Studios and the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, taken February 2020.

All other images in the book are composed or are photos taken by Maya Cochrane.

“fool.”

“turn so,