My maternal grandparents immigrated to Australia at the turn of the 20th century. Whilst my paternal grandparents and father arrived in Australia in the 1920s. I grew up on a continent far from where they had immigrated—Sicily. My upbringing was a rich experience living between two very different cultures. At four I was bilingual speaking Italian and English. It must have been difficult for my grandparents to comprehend the political incarnations of their new land. Much of their understanding would have come from their children. We lived in tropical far north Queensland until I was 13 when my family moved to Brisbane which is ironically in the same location as Delaware is on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.

I have recently immigrated to the USA and am reflecting on my experience of being an immigrant from a country thousands of miles away. I am married to a US citizen who was born and raised in Wilmington Delaware and so I have some understanding of the country I am now living in. During my childhood I watched copious television series from America and these created an image of a country similar to Australia. But the reality is very different. Nothing really prepares you for a new life in a completely different land. Subtleties become exaggerated, loss of self becomes exacerbated with no immediate family or lifelong friends to support and nurture you.

Blankets have been part of my artistic lexicon since 1996 where I used electric blankets splayed on the wall of the gallery. In 2002 I wove blankets from Mountain Ash bark in Victoria whilst on a residency in Warrandyte with Parks Victoria. Metaphorically blankets reference nurturing, protection, comfort and security. I have used US Government military blankets as the ground for quilts I am creating.

Quilt making’s origins lie in Europe but the English and Dutch settlers who migrated to North America brought the tradition with them and quilting took on a new life here in all stratum of society and flourished.

The quilt, as we know it in America, was originally a strictly utilitarian article, born of the necessity of providing warm covers for beds. The earliest American quilts, were intimately connected to everyday life of the early colonists. Those early settlers could not afford to simply discard things when they wore out; necessity required they carefully use their resources.
Therefore, when blankets became worn, they were patched, combined with other fabrics, or used as filler between other blankets. These were not carefully constructed heirlooms, rather they were functional items for the sole purpose of keeping people warm. Now, in another century, quilt making in the early 2000s is still practiced as it always was, though now more for relaxation and artistic merit than out of necessity. ‘Quilts represent American possibilities and opportunities of freedom, democracy, equality, home, community, and individual expression.’ ¹

Money is the binding agent that enables me to survive in the US and appears to be revered differently here than in Australia. Greenbacks can buy almost anything. They illustrate historical elements that have helped solidify this globally influential nation. These notes are the most used in international transactions and is the world’s primary reserve currency. I have stitched these meticulously engraved images found on the reverse side of US dollar bills onto US military blankets of various ranks.

The images on the reverse side of many of the US notes feature significant American buildings. On the $5 note is the Lincoln Memorial. Abraham Lincoln was renowned for saving the nation and the emancipation of slavery in the USA. The White House (the peoples house) is the official residence and workplace of the President of the United States and appears on the $20 note.

The United States Capitol, often called The Capitol, is the home of the United States Congress, and the seat of the legislative branch of the U.S. federal government. The Capitol appears on the $50 bill. The US Treasury, established by an Act of Congress in 1789 is featured on the $10 note. The $100 bill highlights Independence Hall where both the United States Declaration of independence and the United States Constitution were created, debated and adopted. On the $1 note the Great Seal of the United States is highlighted and the reverse of the seal on the left includes a barren landscape dominated by an unfinished pyramid of 13 steps, topped by the Eye of Providence within a triangle. All bills contain the statement ‘In God We Trust’.

There are 6 different quilts in the series each representing the current notes in circulation.

Reference
$1
(from GREENBACK series)
2019
US military blankets, cotton thread
214 x 158 cm
$5
(from GREENBACK series)
2018-19
US military blankets, cotton thread
197 x 160 cm
$10
(from GREENBACK series)
2018-19
US military blankets, cotton thread
215 x 153 cm
$20
(from GREENBACK series)
2018-19
US military blankets, cotton thread
208 x 156 cm
$50
(from GREENBACK series)
2018-19
US military blankets, cotton thread
163 x 210 cm
$100
(from GREENBACK series)
2018-19
US military blankets, cotton thread
204 x 158 cm
CV

PLACE OF BIRTH
Innisfail, Queensland, AUSTRALIA

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS
2014-2015  Doctor of Philosophy, Griffith University
1993-1996  Master of Arts (Visual Arts), Monash University
1987   Bachelor of Arts, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2019  Greenback, MARS Gallery, Melbourne
      Greenback, Onespace Gallery, Brisbane
2014  Surf ’n’ Turf, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Gold Coast
2010  Scuta, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2009  Footnotes of a verdurous tale, Sebastian Di Mauro 1987-2009,
      QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
      Scuta, Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney
2008  Evergreen, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2007  Lasciare, Victorian Tapestry Workshop Gallery, Melbourne
2006  Float, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2005  Suburban Abstractions 2, Bundaberg Arts Centre, Bundaberg
2004  Suburban Abstractions: Floats Project, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
      Suburban Abstractions: Roots, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
2003  Surf Sweet, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
      Pivot, Umbrella Studios, Townsville, Queensland
2002  over and over, gallery 482, Brisbane
2000  floccus, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane
1999  Respirare, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1998  Pane e Zucchero, Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns
      Manifestations, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
      SKiN, Ipswich Regional Art Gallery, Ipswich
1995  Pagine Dal Libro Muto, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
1994  Underlay, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
1993  Praeparatio Physica, Omniscient Gallery, Brisbane
      evanescence, Space Plentitude, Brisbane
1990  being-BECOMING, Roz MacAllan Gallery, Brisbane
1989  Passage, Roz MacAllan Gallery, Brisbane Gallery, Brisbane

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2015  Garden, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
      Y Fibre, Ewart Gallery, Willoughby, New South Wales
2014  Deakin University Contemporary Small Sculpture Award, Deakin University
      Art Gallery, Melbourne
2012  A Verdant Heart, King Street Gallery, Sydney
2011, 12 Wspolna Wizja: Shared Vision, Touring Poland
      A Verdant Heart, Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales
2011  Australia Felix, Crane Arts, Philadelphia, USA
2010  Your Move: Australian Artists Play Chess, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, 2011 UQ Art Museum,
      Queensland University, St Lucia, Queensland, 2011, McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Vic; and
      Samstag Museum, SA.
2008  Bias Bound 3 venues: Victorian Tapestry Workshop Gallery
      The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award 08, Werribee Park, Victoria
2007  Woollahra Sculpture Prize and Exhibition, Woollahra Municipal Council
      15 years of Urban Art Projects, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
      Group Show 07, Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art, Paddington, Sydney
2006  If you were to collect... Elements of abstraction, Deloitte Office, Melbourne
      Unbound: artists’ books from the collection, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane
2005  Enigmatic, Shandong Arts College, Shandong, China
      The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Werribee Park, Victoria
2004  Matter of Time, Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial, Tamworth
      Melt, British School at Rome Gallery, Italy
      Temperature: Contemporary Queensland Sculpture, Museum of Brisbane.
2003  The McClelland Survey and Award 2003, McClelland Gallery, Langwarrin, Victoria
      The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Werribee Park, Victoria
      Montalto Sculpture Prize, Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove, Red Hill South, Victoria
2002  Sculpture by the Sea, Mark’s Park Bondi, Sydney
      Robert Jacks Drawing Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo
      The Shape of Air, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart
      Transit/Narratives, Centro per la Cultura e le Arti Visive, Villa Letizia, Treviso, Italy
2001  National Sculpture Prize & Exhibition 2001, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

2000  Against the Grain, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane

1998  Enjoin, Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns

1996  Diverse Alliances, Ecole D’Art, Noumea

The Toowomba Biennial Acquisitive Fine Art Award and Exhibition, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery

Queensland Artists Books, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane

1994  Brisbane/Hanoi Exchange Project, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane & Hanoi University, Hanoi, Vietnam

FOI - Festival of Installation, Noosa Regional Gallery, Tewantin

Reference Points, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

The River Styx (Sticks), An Australian-New Zealand Artist's Book Project., National Library of Australia, Canberra

1990  Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair, Roz MacAllan Gallery Melbourne

COLLECTIONS
Queensland Art Gallery; James Hardy Collection, State Library of Queensland; Bendigo Art Gallery; Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery; Woollahra Municipal Council, Sydney; Prostitution Licensing Authority, QLD; Art Space Mackay; Artbank; Museum of Brisbane; Attorney General's Department, Queensland; Downlands College, Toowoomba; Australian Construction Services; Gippsland Art Gallery; Ipswich Art Gallery; Griffith Art Works, Queensland; Corrigan Collection; Woollahra Sculpture Prize, Sydney; Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove, Red Hill, Victoria

AWARDS
2013  Winner, Clayton Utz Art Award, Clayton Utz Riparian Plaza, Brisbane

2009  Recipient – Australia Council Residency Barcelona Studio, Spain

2005  Finalist, The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Werribee Park, Victoria

2004  Recipient – Australia Council Residency British School at Rome, Italy

2003  Finalist, The McClelland Survey and Award 2003, McClelland Gallery, Langwarrin, Victoria

2001  Winner, Woollahra Sculpture Prize, Sydney

1999  New Work, project grant, Australia Council

1997  Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery Acquisitive Award

1996  Project Grant, Arts Office, Queensland

1991  Selected, Aberdere Art Prize, Ipswich Regional Gallery, Ipswich

SELECTED COMMISSIONS
2016  Seeding, Redbank Plains Shopping Centre, Ipswich, Queensland

2014  Rise, Lake Street, Cairns, Queensland

2013  Confluenza, Italian Memorial, Roma Street Parkland, Brisbane

2012  Bloom and Scatter, Swire Properties, 28 Hennessey Road, Hong Kong

2011  Drifter, Ningbo City East New Town Development and Investment Company Limited, Ningbo China

2008  Blind spot, Crime and Misconduct Commission, Brisbane, Queensland

2007  Huddle series, Orion Springfield, public artwork, Mirvac, Queensland

2006  Decoy, private commission, Taylor, Cullity, Lethlean Landscape Architects, Adelaide

2004,05  Undulant, Logan Community Health Centre, Queesnland Government, Public Artwork-collaboration with Alice Hampson

2004  Blur Between, Brisbane Magistrates Court, Public Artwork

2002-04  Drift, 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane, Major Public Artwork, Queensland Government

2001  Chat, 175 Eagle Street, Brisbane, Major Public Artwork for entrance