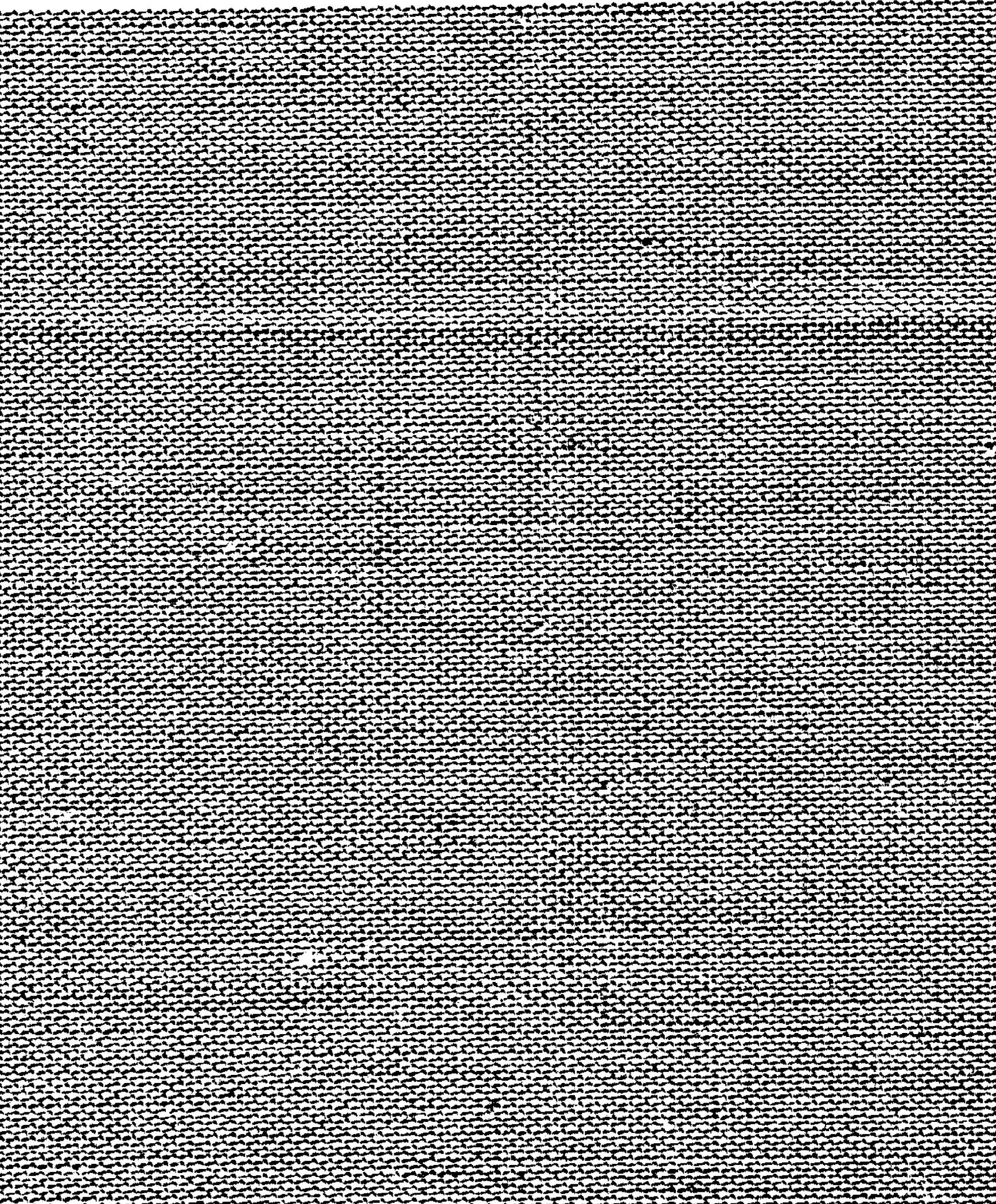


**Big Screen**

**Alma Alloro**





# Big Screen

*Big Screen* (2015–2017) is a series of large-scale patchwork quilts carefully crafted to generate animated abstract films. *Big Screen* moves between the traditional craft of quilting, typically associated with feminine labor, and the world of animation and motion graphics. It recasts the attempts made by early modernist artists to create a formal visual language for an experimental film aesthetic. The anecdotal reference to the 4:3 aspect ratio in each of the patches, along with the transition from black and white to color, analog to digital, and frame-by-frame animation hint at further connections to the many tropes and conventions of the history of screen based media.

*Big Screen* was debuted as a solo exhibition in TRANSFER, NYC in 2017  
[transfergallery.com](http://transfergallery.com)

*"I am interested in moments in the history of media where a medium is still new and unexplored. The decision to connect quilting and animation comes from a desire to create a unique framework. I restricted my environment by combining these two worlds and experimenting within the constraints embedded in these formats. This provided me with a strict set of rules and by choosing these formats I was obliged to follow the rules. Starting with the patchworks I used solid colors, avoiding printed fabrics and letting the patterns created by the tiled shapes form the basis of the visual language, similar to the limitations that were enforced in early attempts to make visual work with any new media."*

Alma Alloro

**BLACK AND WHITE NOISE**, 2016–2017  
Hand-sewn quilt, 100% cotton fabric  
204 X 104 cm



**WHITE ON WHITEWORK**, 2016–2017  
Hand-sewn quilt, 100% cotton fabric  
204 X 104 cm



**INTO THE BLACKSTAR** . 2017  
Hand-sewn quilt, 100% cotton fabric  
204 x 104 cm



**WRITTEN BY  
PIL AND GALIA KOLLECTIV**

In an early manifesto from 1922, Dziga Vertov makes this astonishing statement:

***Our path leads through the poetry of machines, from the bungling citizen to the perfect electric man. In revealing the machine's soul, in causing the worker to love his workbench, the peasant his tractor, the engineer his engine – we introduce creative joy into all mechanical labor, we bring people into closer kinship with machines, we foster new people. The new man, free of unwieldiness and clumsiness, will have the light, precise movements of machines, and he will be the gratifying subject of our films.***<sup>1</sup>

The poetry of machines has already given birth to a new human in the 20th century in Marinetti's Futurist manifesto, but Vertov's man, an older sibling, experienced a haphazard and dangerous delivery. Marinetti pierced his baby's heart with the white-hot iron joy of the car crash, the random encounter with malfunctioning technology. Vertov went a step beyond that. The romantic machismo of the Futurists, who adored cars, airplanes and bombs in the name of "the love of danger, the habit of energy and rashness" was in fact an expression of the bohemian-bourgeois desire for liberation from the mundane world of work where men and women are actually bound by the machine and by its ruthless pace, scale and indefatigability. A dangerous, alien and unpredictable technoscape already existed in the factories and mines of industrial Europe when Marinetti declared in 1909 that it was to be the future. But Vertov is not interested in the bohemian artist. He is asking for much more than that: for the machine to be loved by all and mostly by the workers who toil under its gigantic shadow. Vertov calls for a new psychology befitting the age of the machine to emerge not through an escape from work but through a perverse identification with it.

At first glance Alma Alloro's series of hand-sewn quilts might seem to share

the language and concerns of contemporary artists working under the 'post-internet art' banner. These artists are engaged in thinking about the mediation, circulation and valorization of images and other coded signs that flow between physical and virtual spaces, social media platforms and traditional art markets. In some way, many post-internet artists continue the Futurist line of thought where technology is encountered through velocity (here algorithmic), the accidental (glitch) and is set against newly emerging Fascist political discourses (4chan pol). And like much Futurist art, post-internet art too often relies on conventional modes of exhibition, despite its interest in new technological platforms.

But Alloro's work, as the title *Big Screen* suggests, is clearly more invested in the aesthetics of modernism's prime cultural mode of production, the cinema. Instead of Photoshop swatches, clip art or pop-up windows, film strips, fuzzy signals and analog color test patterns populate Alloro's hand-sewn quilts. The image is produced, like cinema, in a particular direction: line by line, frame by frame, from the top left corner to the bottom. And because of this, it asks modern questions not about circulation or exchange value but about production and labor value, about how to resist technological alienation and allow the machine to become an extension of the eye and the hand.

This does not mean that Alloro's work is irrelevant. On the contrary: when these questions are transposed to the present they reveal serious tensions at the heart of artistic (and non-artistic) labor. What does it mean to "love the workbench" under post-Fordist conditions of production, where labor is not mechanical anymore and where, at the end of the workday, the laborer has produced mainly herself as human capital rather than an object that is external to her?

Writing about the Bauhaus textiles workshop, T'ai Smith describes the way in which weaving was configured as a feminine labor contrasted with the worthier medium of painting: "The particular relation between the weaver's body, the loom apparatus, and the physical labor of the process, threatens the 'transcendental' or spiritual position of art that the early Bauhaus painters sought."<sup>2</sup> Smith goes on to cite Weber describing weaving as a

prime exemplar of alienated labor, relying on a separation between the worker's body and her means of production. At the same time, this work is classified as part of that realm of maintenance to which household chores belong, a work without the kind of ends or goals that give meaning to those toils gendered as masculine.

In an age where these separations—means and ends, body and machine, work and worker—are everywhere threatened by an economy premised on the self as product, such practices can no longer be understood in the same way. Choosing the laborious procedure of quilting as a process, rather than as a hardship borne of necessity, begins to expose these shifts in the meaning of work today and the contemporary hierarchies created under the aegis of this new age. Of course working as an artist after the internet, one knows one's work is always doomed to collapse into the digital, inevitably seen 'in the flesh.' But Alloro's insistence on returning the GIF to the materiality of the handcrafted thwarts this neat elision of labor within the production of the seemingly weightless contemporary image.

**PIL AND GALIA KOLLECTIV** are artists, writers and curators working in collaboration. Their work addresses the legacy of modernism and the relationship between art and politics. Their band **WE** extends their interrogation of the construction of individuality and collectivity. They are the directors of artist-run project space **xero, kline & coma** and work as lecturers in fine art at the University of Reading, the Royal College of Art and the CASS School of Art.

<sup>1</sup> Vertov, Dziga, "WE: VARIANT OF A MANIFESTO," in: *Kino Eye: The Writing of Dziga Vertov* [Annette Michelson -ed.], Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984, p. 8.

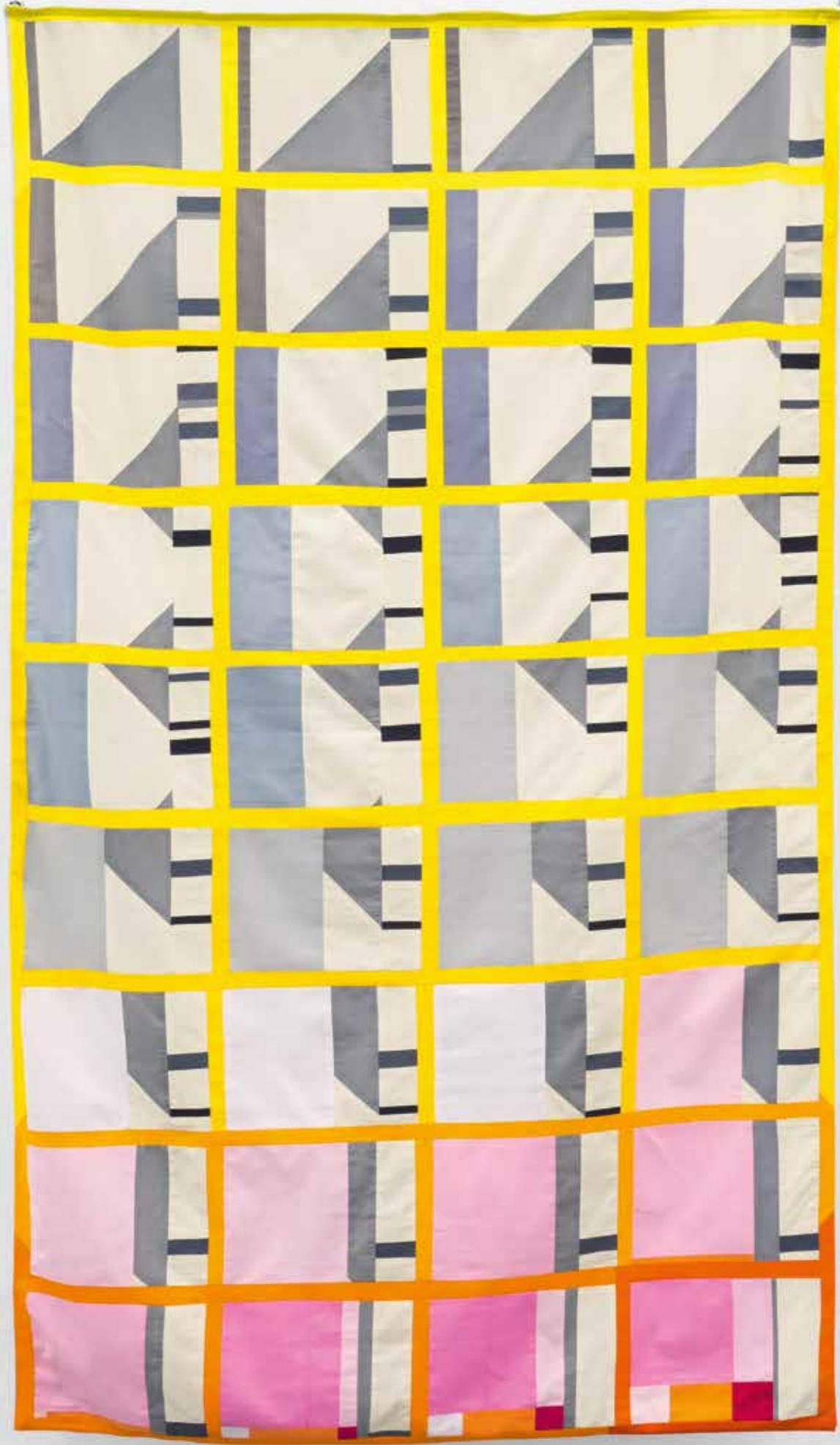
<sup>2</sup> Smith, T'ai, "'Pictures Made of Wool': The Gender of Labor at the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop (1919–23)," in: *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, Issue 4, 2002, available at: <https://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/pictures-made-of-wool-the-gender-of-labor-at-the-bauhaus-weaving-workshop-1919-23/> [accessed 26.5.18]







**CENTURY OF PROGRESS**, 2015–2016  
Hand-sewn quilt, 100% cotton fabric  
204 X 104 cm







1



## THE ANIMATION

*Big Screen* consists of two series of three quilts. One series is in black and white, while the other is in full color. Each of the six quilts consists of 36 patches. Every patch is a composition with a 4:3 aspect ratio that is scanned to create one frame of animation. The series in *Big Screen* form two video loops, *Unidentified Flying Object* and *Stuntwoman*.

<sup>1</sup> A scanned image of a patch from **ELECTRIC GARDEN**, 2016, 18 x 24 cm

<sup>2</sup> **STUNTWOMAN**, 2016  
HD Video, 1440 x 1080p, 108 frames, single channel



1



2

## REMIXING BIG SCREEN

*Remixing Big Screen* (2018) reinterprets a selection of patches that were excluded from *Big Screen*. The act of using leftover material to create a new work is inspired by the parallels between digital remix culture and the craft of quilting, both of which traditionally involve collaborative practices as well as found materials.

<sup>1</sup> **REMIXING BIG SCREEN**, 2018  
Hand-sewn quilt, 100% cotton fabric, 100 x 118 cm

<sup>2</sup> Installation view, alpha nova & galerie futura, Berlin, 2018



**ALMA ALLORO** (b. 1982, Tel Aviv) is a visual artist based in Berlin. She studied at the Midrasha School of Art in Beit-Berl, Israel and received an MFA in the Public Art and New Artistic Strategy program from the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany. Alloro has shown works in solo exhibitions at TRANSFER, New York City (2014, 2017); The Store, Dresden (2015) and at alpha nova & galerie futura, Berlin (2018). Her works were also shown in group exhibition and festivals such as in Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Athens Digital Arts Festival; Western Front, Vancouver; Musrara Mix Festival, Jerusalem; Furtherfield Gallery, London; Neues Museum, Weimar; Sommer Gallery, Tel Aviv among others.

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Big Screen

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**BIG SCREEN** (video), 2016 – 2018  
3-channel video installation, cardboard, duct tape, vinyl sticker,  
4:3 Flat screens, HD screen, 123 x 60 x 45 cm

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