



“Caldwell participates in the human compulsion to mark the land itself, as in the centuries-old petroglyphs near where she lives, and the rows of trees that delineate property lines. The recurring elliptical forms are examples of Caldwell's allusive formal vocabulary: the ellipses suggest both land formations and geometrically precise and spatially complex abstract elements; they also mimic the uneven, circular patched areas in a threadbare utility blanket. But the centre of Caldwell's studio practice is poetic invention: she draws out innate qualities from her subject matter and her materials rather than depicting or fixing an image.”^[2]

In connection with fellow Canadian artist Skye Morrison, Caldwell has used her growing knowledge and connections to bring the Sujuni and Khatwa work from Bihar India to a larger international audience and market. Being introduced to Sujuni work in 1996 while in Patna, India on a research trip, the two friends were soon in the village where it was being produced, and thinking about a way to bring it to Canada. Sujuni can be described as Stitched Drawing, while Khatwa is filled /appliquéd drawing on cloth. This work is produced by women's collectives in rural areas of the Bihar region as a way of generating income. The organizations behind these collectives have reinvigorated traditional textile practices and brought employment to regions stifled by perpetual cycles of poverty. In September 1999 “Stitching Women's Lives” was presented at the Textile Museum of Canada. Caldwell and Morrison's commitment to these women continues to the present day.

In 2006 Dorothy Caldwell became a Fellow of the International Centre for Quilt Study in Lincoln Nebraska which has reconnected her with the 1971 exhibition “Abstract Design in American Quilts” at the Whitney Museum. This collection is now part of the Jonathan Holstein Quilt collection housed at the ICQS.

This year she has been included in the new Telos book “Art Textiles of the World: Canada along with 22 other Canadian Textile artists representing a cross section of methods and approaches being practiced in Canada. Embellisher, dyer, printer, quilter, embroiderer

or just maker of textile art, she once said “a single stitch can tell the whole story.” As an artist, a craftsperson, a researcher, teacher and textile believer, Dorothy Caldwell work is an ongoing and important contribution to the history and future of textiles. □

[1] Surveying the land: Dorothy Caldwell's field notes by Caroline Langill; Dorothy Caldwell: Field notes, 1996, Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Art Gallery of Peterborough, October 30, 1996-January 5 1997, ISBN 1-896809-02-2

[2] Dorothy Caldwell: In Good Repair: By Sarah Quinton, 2003. http://www.textilemuseum.ca/apps/index.cfm?page=exhibition_detail&exHd=62 (Textile Museum of Canada website)

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Top of page, WALKING THE LAND (2008) 177cm x 281cm. Below, detail of MAP OF TENDERNESS (2007), 155cm x 155cm.

