

Press Release

The exhibition *25 Million Stitches: One Stitch, One Refugee* opens at Mingei International Museum on March 25, 2023

Exhibition Dates: March 25, 2023 - October 15, 2023

Overview: Guest curated by Sacramento-based, Korean-American fiber artist Jennifer Kim Sohn, *25 Million Stitches: One Stitch, One Refugee* raises awareness of the unfathomable number of refugees displaced around the world by counting and acknowledging each displaced person with a hand-sewn stitch.

Exhibition Images: <https://airtable.com/shrbRnKMcJKB9of71>

January 18, 2023–San Diego, CA–Mingei International Museum will open [*25 Million Stitches: One Stitch, One Refugee*](#) on March 25, 2023. Guest curated by Sacramento-based, Korean-American fiber artist Jennifer Kim Sohn, the exhibition is a community project shedding light on the approximate number of refugees estimated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees when the project first started. Kim Sohn makes audiences aware of the world's refugee problem by visually revealing their number on embroidered muslin panels. In the show, over 2,000 panels are combined vertically to create 408 floor-to-ceiling flags. These flags will be suspended from the ceiling, allowing visitors to walk through and around the installation, being both an immersive and emotional experience.

“The aim of this community project and exhibition is to help people see refugees as our neighbors and fellow humans rather than a threat to our limited resources,” says guest curator Jennifer Kim Sohn.

Initially, Kim Sohn planned to do all the stitching herself but then decided to open the project up to the international community, making the project not only more feasible but also more compelling. Kim Sohn and her passionate team of volunteers crowd-sourced 2,300 stitchers from all 50 states and 37 countries worldwide. Each panel is unique, featuring different stitching techniques and creative expressions. Some document personal narratives of migration and others show solidarity with refugees. Those who contributed hand-stitched panels included relatively nearby victims of the Paradise fire in California, refugees on the other side of the globe, five-year-old students, retirees and everything in between.

“Not only will *25 Million Stitches* be a visually stunning and socially resonant exhibition, but it shows the power of craft to bring people together and address what has historically been a divisive issue,” says Mingei Senior Curator Barbara Hanson Forsyth. “In selecting stitching, a traditionally feminine craft, as the medium, Kim Sohn makes the enormity of the refugee crisis relatable and accessible to all audiences. It's different from previous Mingei exhibitions, but it could not be more relevant to our mission.”

Whether participants were new to stitching or experienced fiber artists, the end result is anything but simple—it exemplifies the power of craft to persuade in a disarming way. The panels, suspended from the ceiling, envelop viewers, creating both a sense of grandeur when taken in together and empathy with viewing each individually stitched panel. The overwhelming message of solidarity and hope invokes a sense of unity achieved through collaboration.

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Mingei International Museum

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[ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM](#)

Located in San Diego's Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves and exhibits folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Within a newly reopened facility that includes an education center, theater, shop, restaurant and plenty of free, accessible public space, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. As the presenter of [San Diego Design Week](#) and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

[ABOUT THE 25 MILLION STITCHES PROJECT](#)

Organized by artist and activist Jennifer Kim Sohn, the 25 Million Stitches Projects provides a beautifully resonant expression of art-activism raising awareness of the immense number of people forcibly displaced from their homelands by violence and natural disasters. Choosing basic hand stitching as the means to tally the number of people displaced, enabled people from around the world to participate in a transformational act of collective mending. The culmination of this community effort is a grand exhibition showcasing the collection of diverse tapestries comprised of each participant's unique expression of solidarity with the world's refugees.

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