

9. Al Young: I sit with you, you sit with me

I sit with you, you sit with me is a sculptural installation by Al Young created in 2025. The installation consists of a woven rug and a mended antique chair.

A thick, woven rug rests on the gallery floor just in front of an antique armchair, as if the chair is casting a shadow in textile form. The rug is made of fabric strips in pastel pinks, teals, blues, and purples. It's a kind of bumpy shape almost like a cloud. It's symmetrical with two curving, rectangular shapes at its top, two on either side and another two at its bottom edge, these ones longer and skinnier. The rug's weave makes a pattern of geometric squares that are interrupted by the words "you sit with me," which are stitched into the centre of the rug in a grey-blue fabric.

Behind the rug is an armchair with warm wooden arms and legs that are delicately curved. The chair's backrest is shaped like a fan or scallop shell, its smaller edge disappearing behind a thick, three-inch seat cushion. The backrest and cushion are upholstered in a soft velvety fabric in a faded, light blue colour. Layered on top of the chair's upholstery is a patchwork landscape of fabric pieces in pastel colours and patterned textiles alongside decorative embroidery stitching and ink drawings. Some of the patches are printed photo negatives of the artist's family, portraits of people outlined in ghostly blue ink. In other areas, there are mismatched buttons, ribbons of white floral lace, and the words, "I love you, I love you, I love you." Long braided sections of light pink fabric adhered to the backrest of the chair reads, "I sit with you."

The back of the chair features one large blue ink cyanotype patch with applied buttons, lace, and floral textiles. They frame an area of light pink text, and it reads, "I promise to love myself and to accept my madness as a part of who I am. I promise to hold my mother and my friends close especially when it isn't easy. I promise to extend the understanding that wasn't afforded to my great grandmother. I promise to exist in spite of the systems that convinced me it would be easier if I disappeared. BECAUSE OUR WORTH AS A HUMAN IS NOT MEASURABLE, IT EXISTS BECAUSE WE DO."

About the artwork and artist:

I sit with you, you sit with me is a sculptural installation consisting of a rug woven from the artist's childhood shirts and a mended antique chair covered in patches and decorative stitching. The rug was created from strips of fabric that the artist had initially prepared to make a quilt for their mother. Instead, they are woven together to form a patchwork rug that traces the shape of her wheelchair's shadow.

The rug's woven text of "you sit with me" is paralleled through text adhered to the chair, reading, "I sit with you." Taken together, the two statements are both a promise and a place setting that invites the artist's care relationship with their mother into the gallery space. Other promises that the artist strives to keep are detailed on the back of the chair, grounding their caregiving relationship in the needs of their own body and community: for care, accommodation, and a comfortable seat at the table.

Al Young is a multimedia artist. Their work is informed by their experiences with queerness, disability, and community organizing. Their practice encourages audiences to question social conventions of the body and imagine new ways of caring for each other.

The next artwork in the exhibition is on the wall adjacent to this one, to your right.