

## Miyuki Akai Cook

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The theme of my artwork is "balance in life" and I use textile techniques such as, weaving, knitting, and crochet. I use these repetitive, labor intensive, techniques as metaphor for our daily lives and connections between our shared histories. I am excited by the process of transforming familiar materials into meaningful objects and am enthused watching this dynamic transformation in my hands.

I was born and raised in Japan and moved by myself to the U. S. in my mid twenties. Having lived in the United States for the last 9 years, and being away from my culture, today I feeling like I am floating between two cultures. I struggle to find a comfortable and efficient compromise in each new circumstance. These compromises are not only cultural and social differences, but also the source of my necessity to find balance in today's changing environment through my art.

My biggest concern is our children's future. □ I was born into a spoiled generation. In my life, I have had no hardships compared to my ancestors. □ I lived for years with my grandparents during my youth, which changed my appreciation of what I have. My grandmother especially had a hard life, yet she was humble and graceful and she always said, "mottainai" □ □

Mottainai is the thoughtful Japanese word with love and compassion to think of the gift from the nature or someone who made the product. The word closest to Mottainai in English is "What a waste!", "Do not waste!" or the situation a thing is being wasted or being used without good care and consideration.

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From <http://www.mottainai.com/> □ □

According to my grandmother, we are given things, and we do not own them. When she was a young girl, she worked at a silk factory. There she had respect for silk worms for giving up their lives for humans. There was respect and honor even in something as unassuming as a silk worm.

Today, I feel, we act like we have power over everything. As a society I believe that we use technology to solve problems, and money to buy those solutions. I wonder how our children learn value and appreciation in their lives because I do not feel like today's children understand challenge and struggle the same way as past generations had. □ In my artwork I express our coexistence and dilemma caught between human society and nature's gift of life, as I work to find and visualize cohesiveness between them.