
After 60


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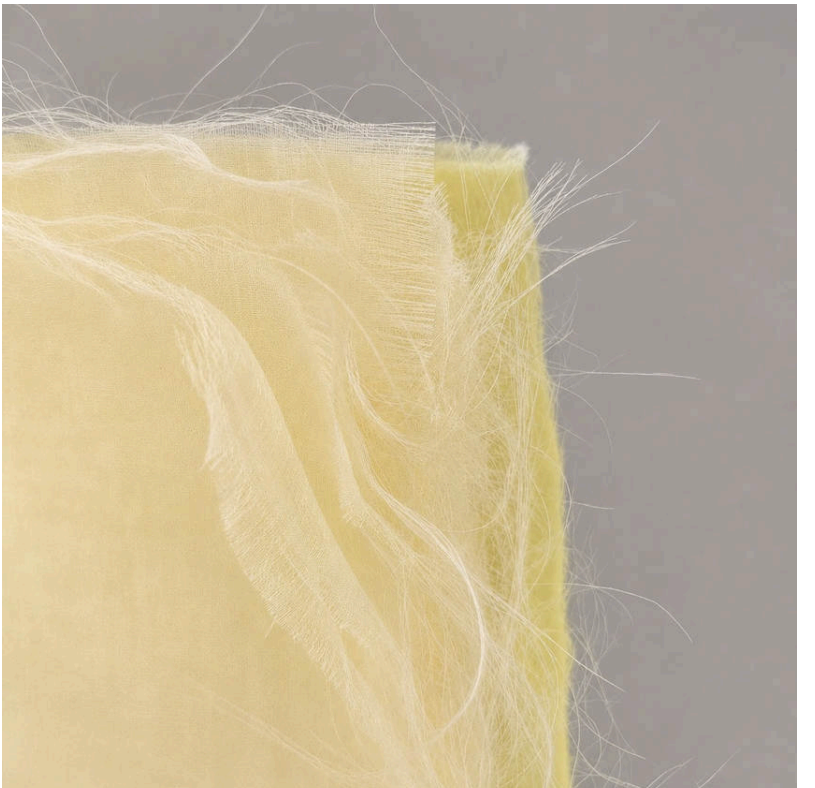
In January 2026, I invited those aged over 60 in my wider network to respond, in one handwritten sentence, to a simple question: what gives meaning or will give meaning to your life now?

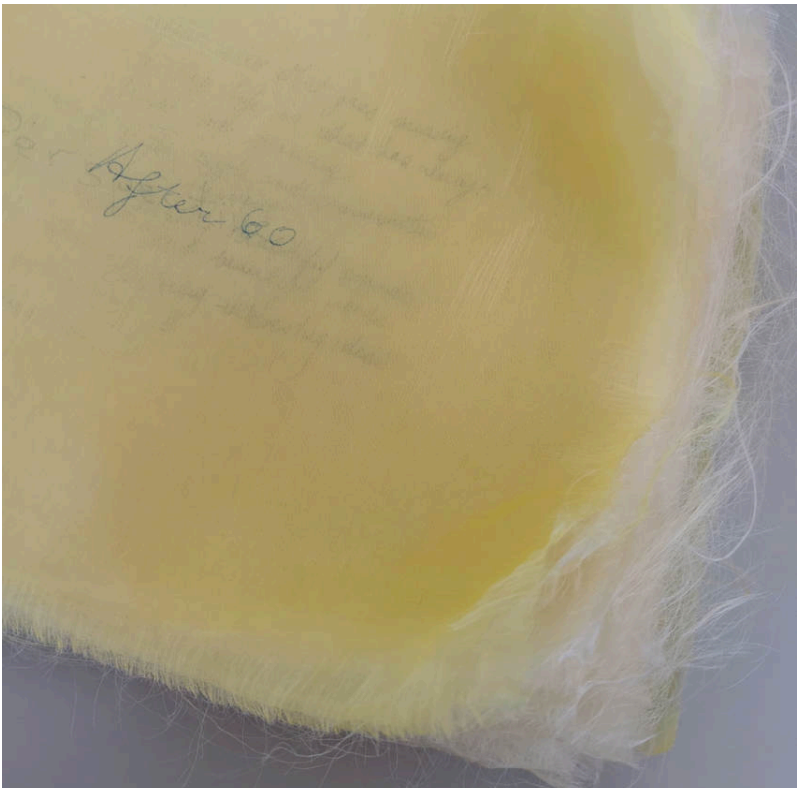
The 39 participants answered in ways that were direct, reflective, humorous or unexpected. I traced their handwritten statements onto silk organza, which I then bound into an artist's book. The fabric's translucency allows the voices to overlap and reveals the delicate, imperfect fraying. Turning the pages requires a slow touch, inviting the reader into an act of shared care.

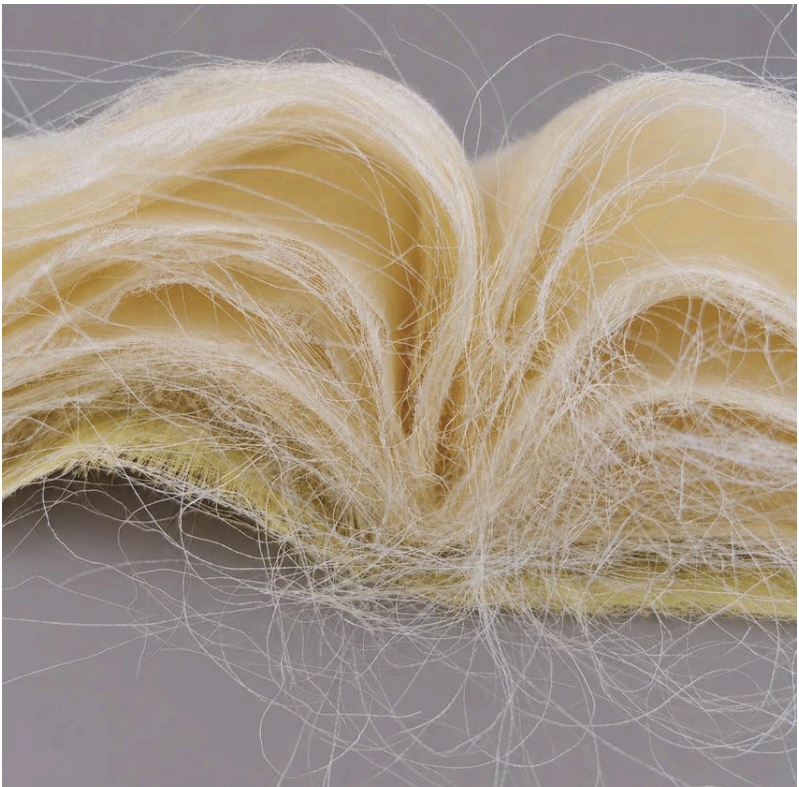
My thanks to each participant for your generosity.

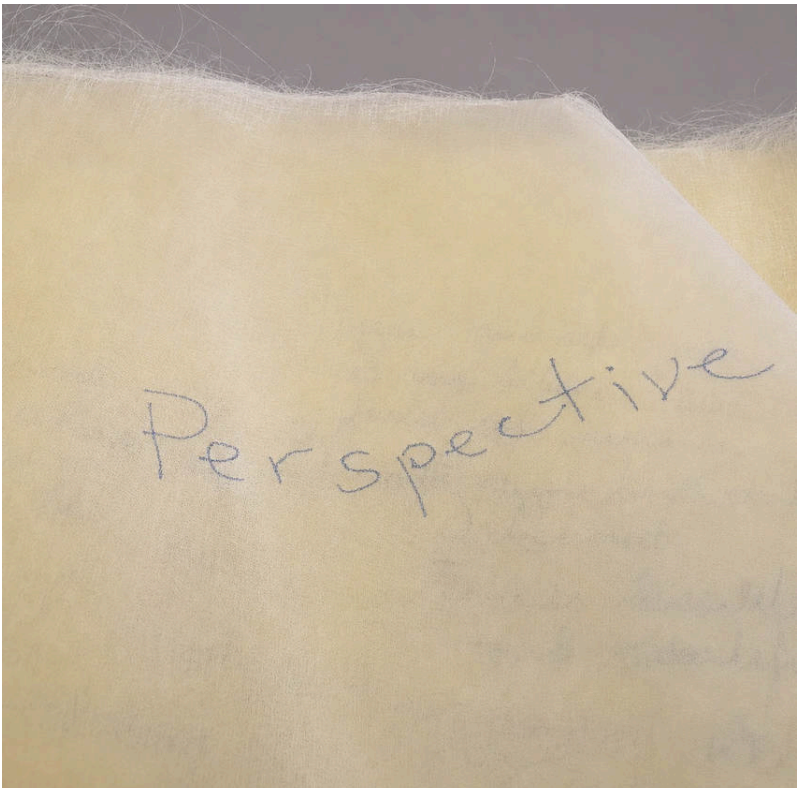
Bernard Appassamy
Sydney
November 2026

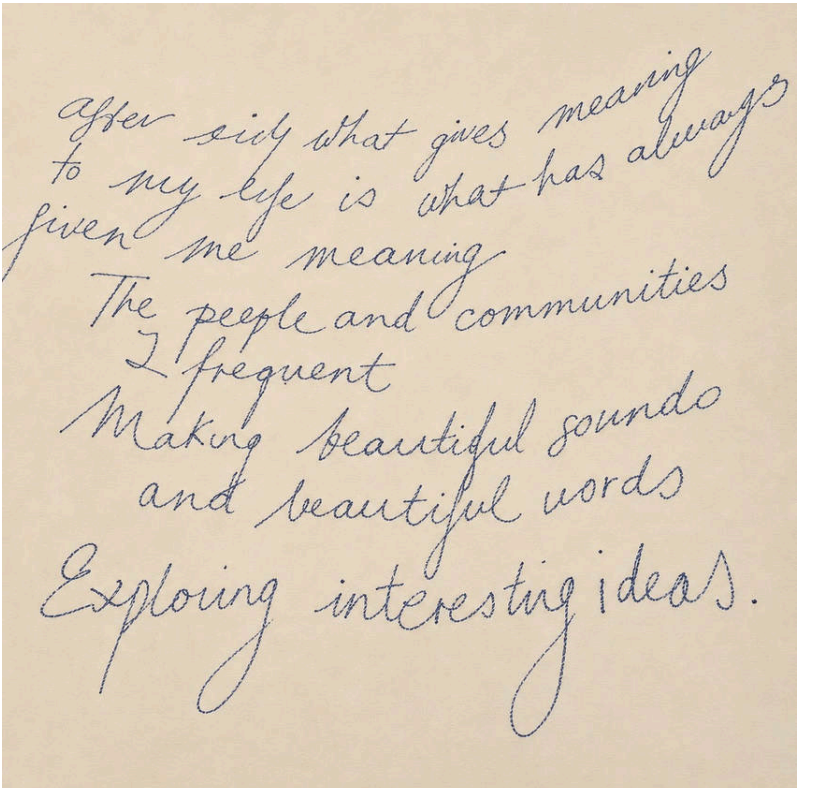


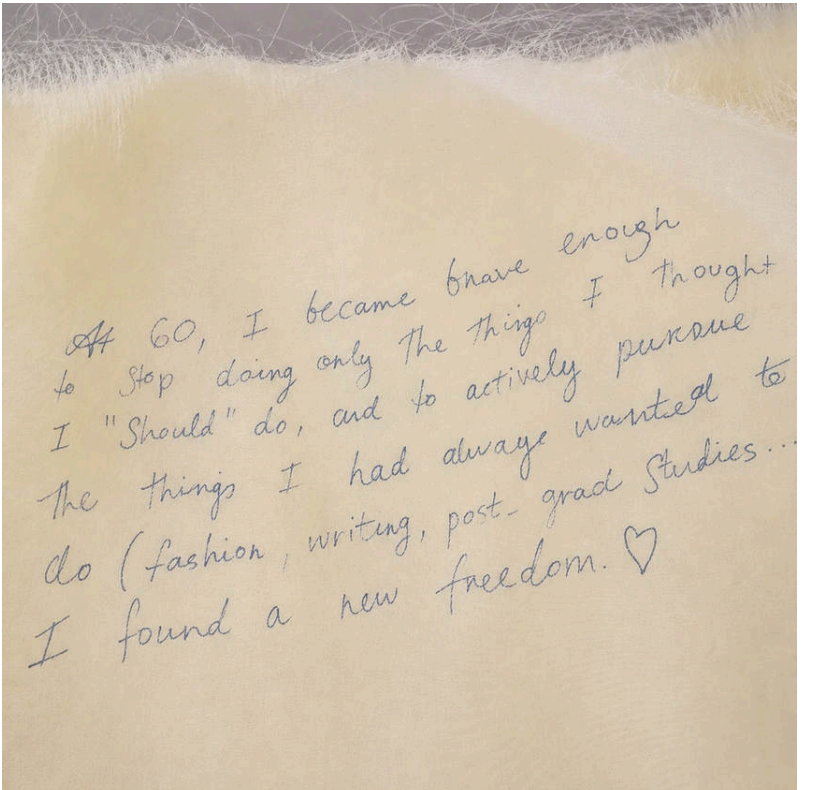


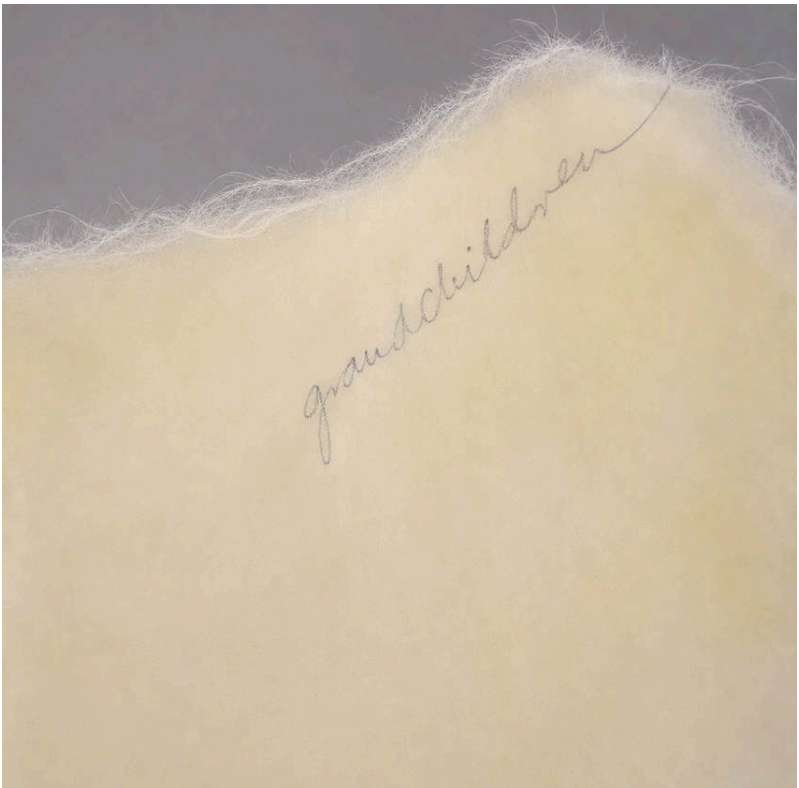

After 60

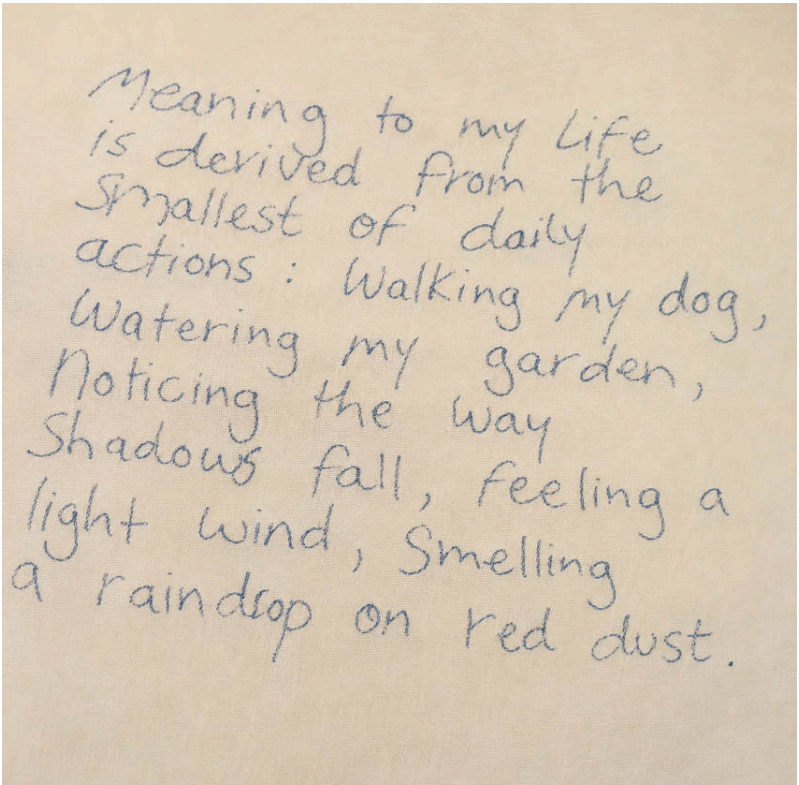


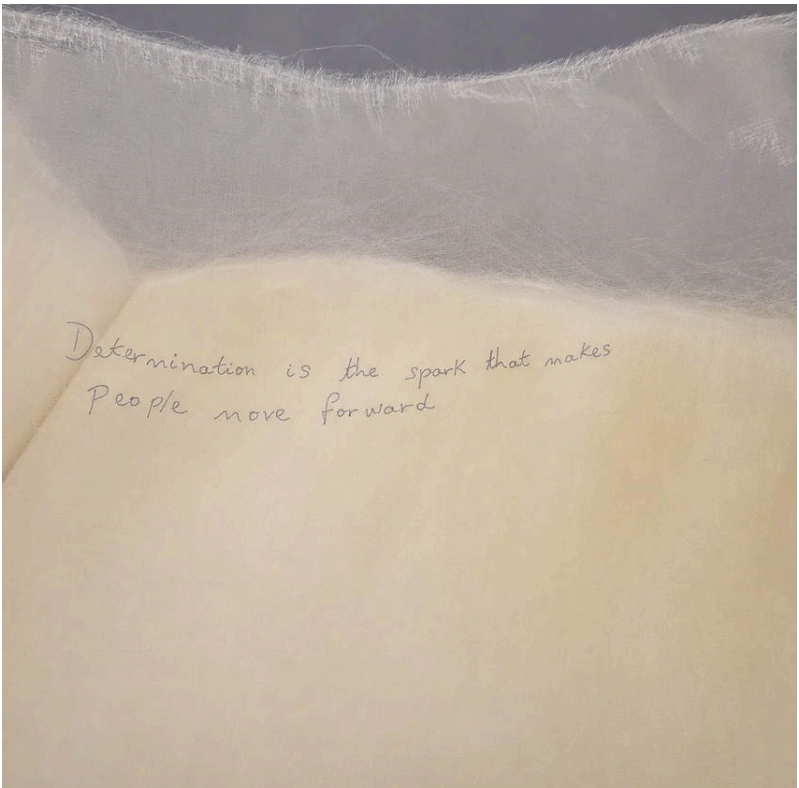

Perspective

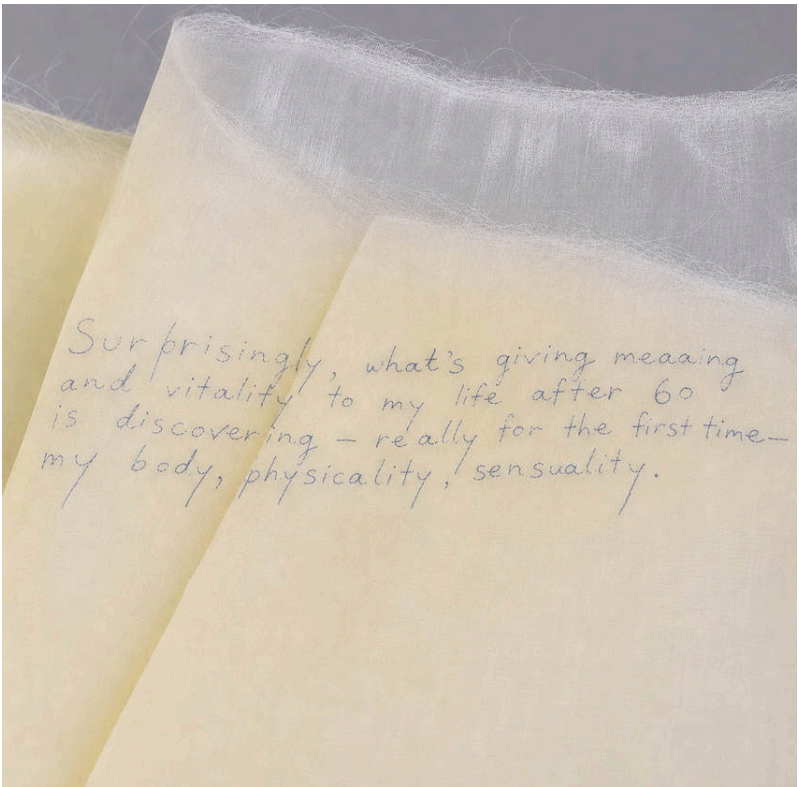

After sitting what gives meaning
to my life is what has always
given me meaning
The people and communities
I frequent
Making beautiful sounds
and beautiful words
Exploring interesting ideas.

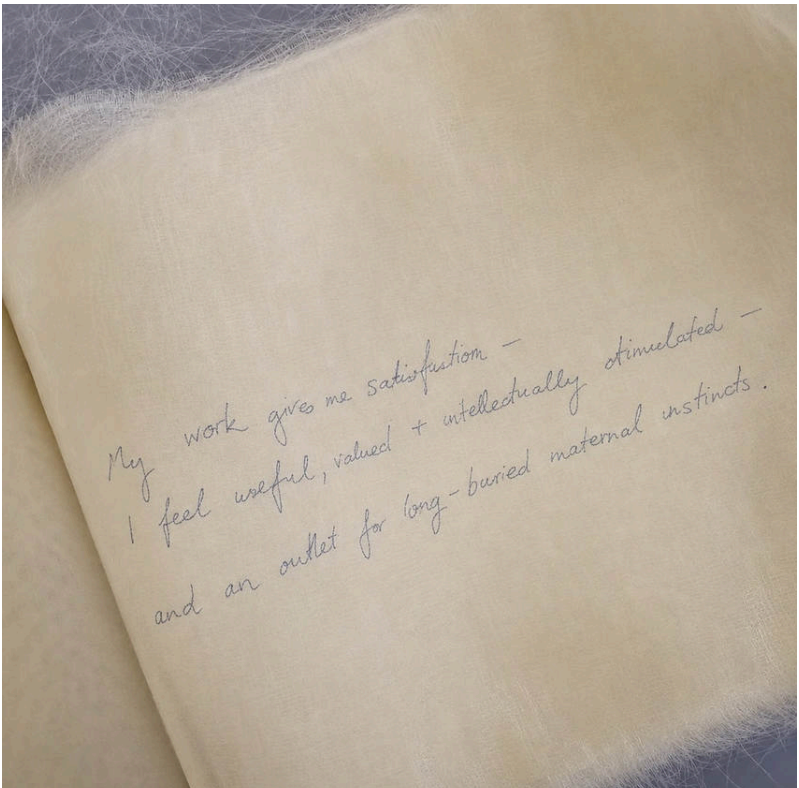

At 60, I became brave enough
to stop doing only the things I thought
I "Should" do, and to actively pursue
the things I had always wanted to
do (fashion, writing, post-grad studies...
I found a new freedom. ♡

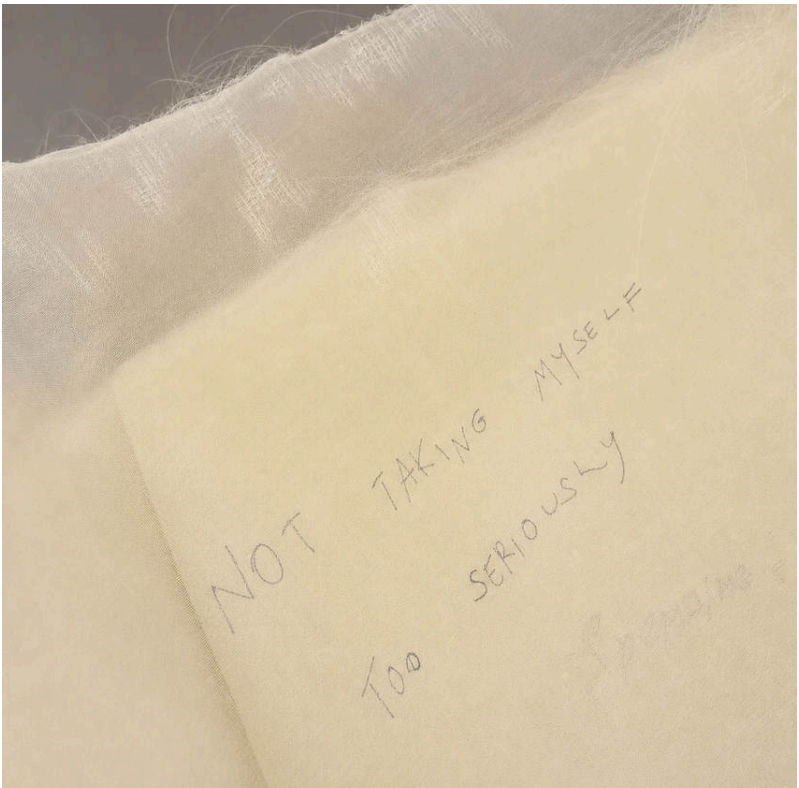

grandchildren

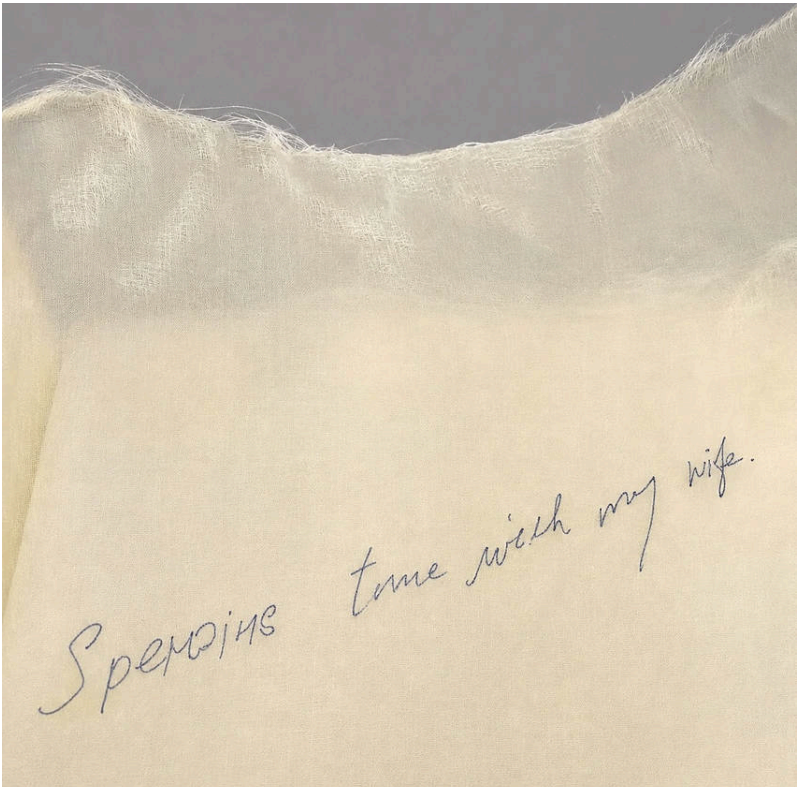

Meaning to my Life
is derived from the
Smallest of daily
actions: Walking my dog,
Watering my garden,
Noticing the way
Shadows fall, feeling a
light wind, Smelling
a raindrop on red dust.

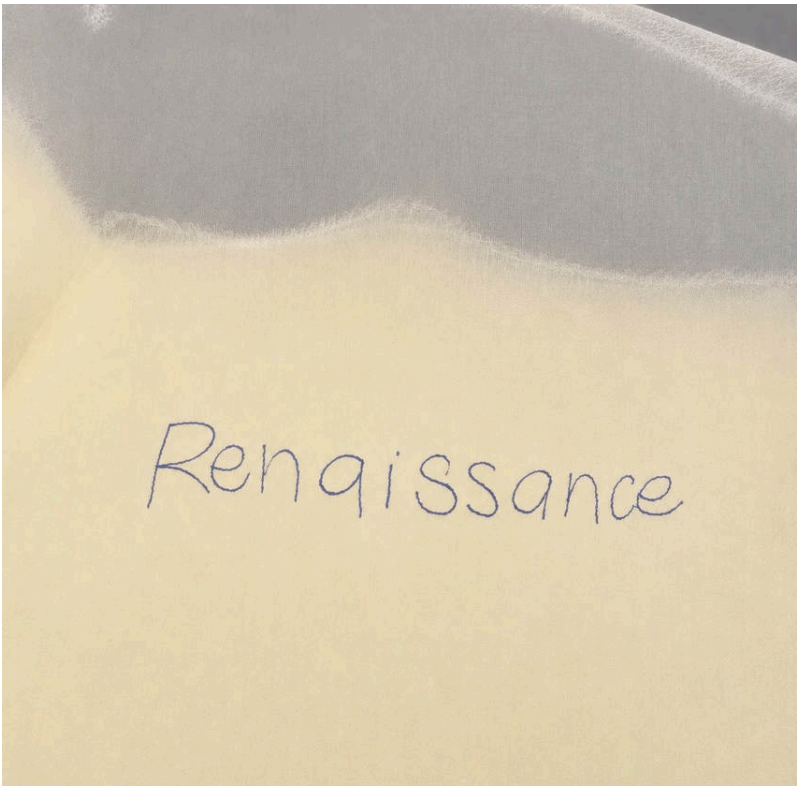

Determination is the spark that makes
People move forward

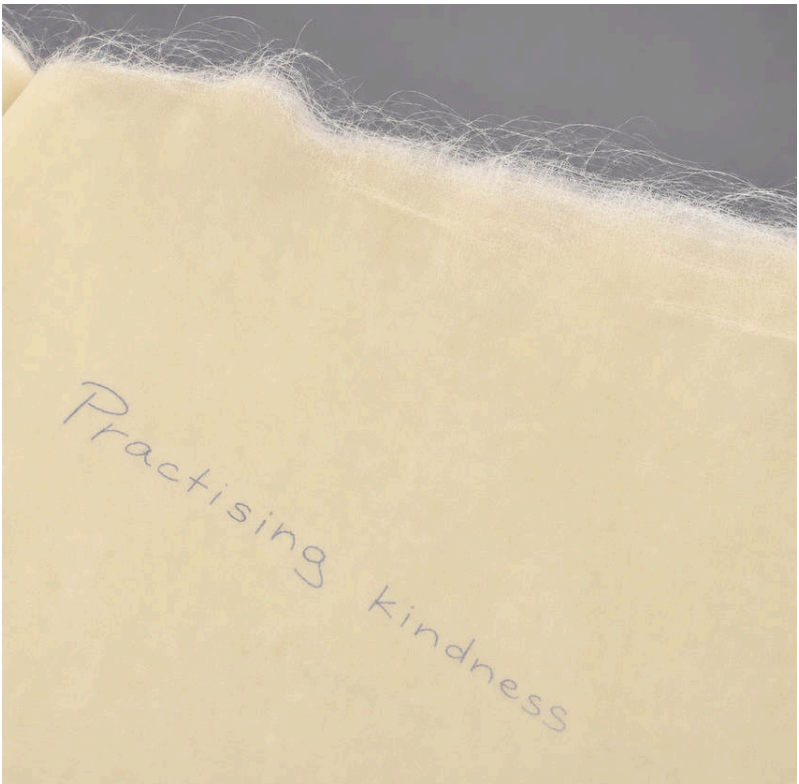

Surprisingly, what's giving meaaing
and vitality to my life after 60
is discovering – really for the first time–
my body, physicality, sensuality.

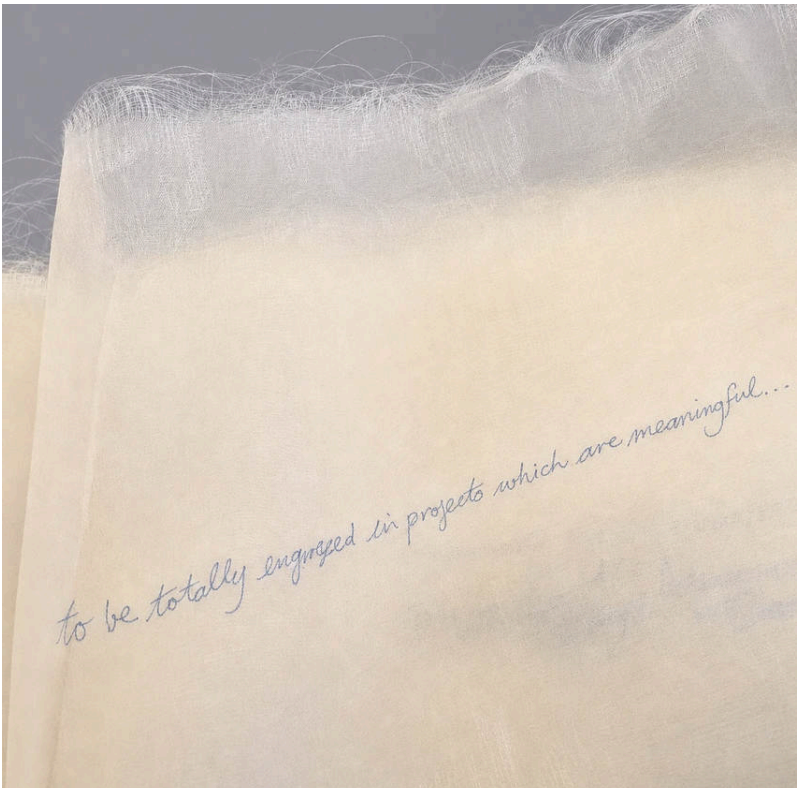

My work gives me satisfaction —
I feel useful, valued + intellectually stimulated —
and an outlet for long-buried maternal instincts.

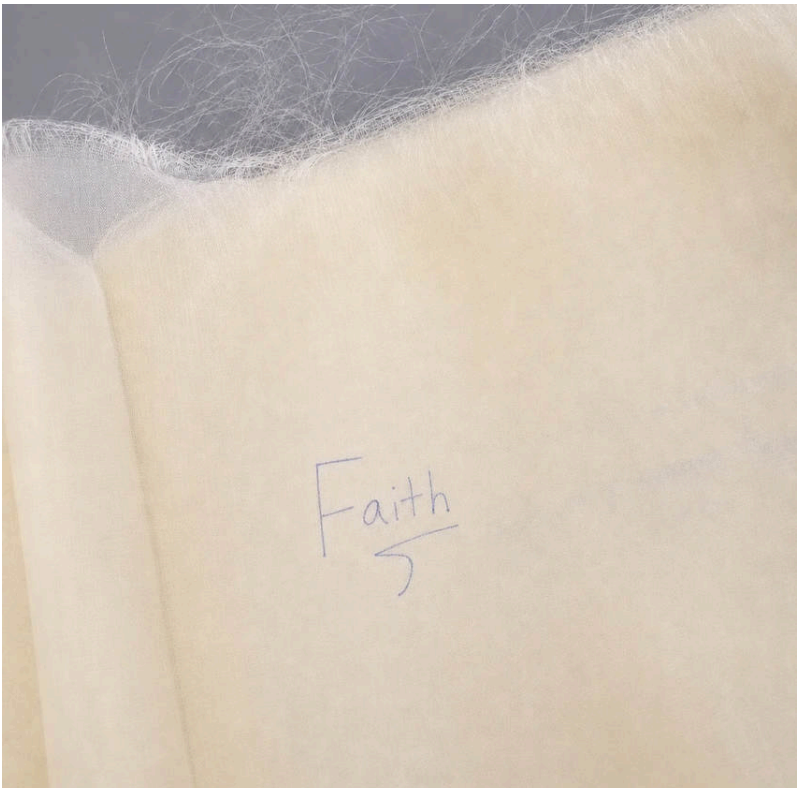

NOT TAKING MYSELF
TOO SERIOUSLY

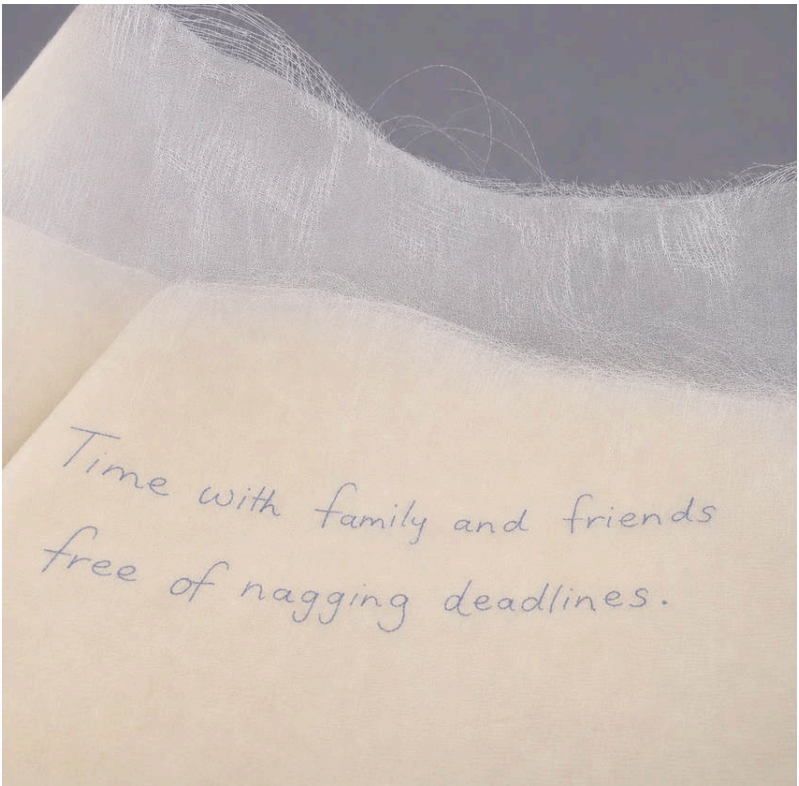

Spending time with my wife.

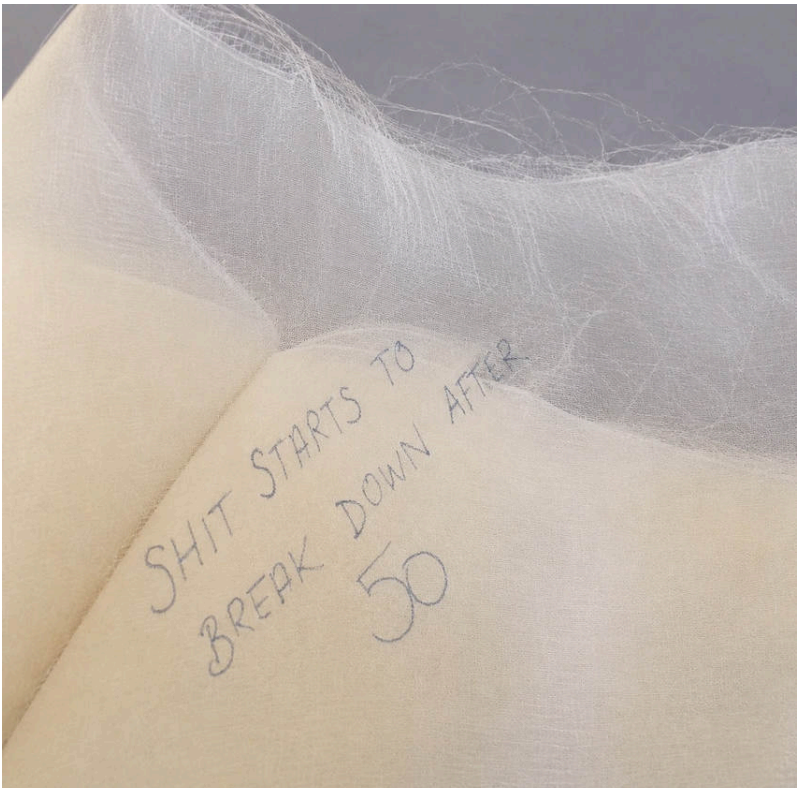

Renaissance

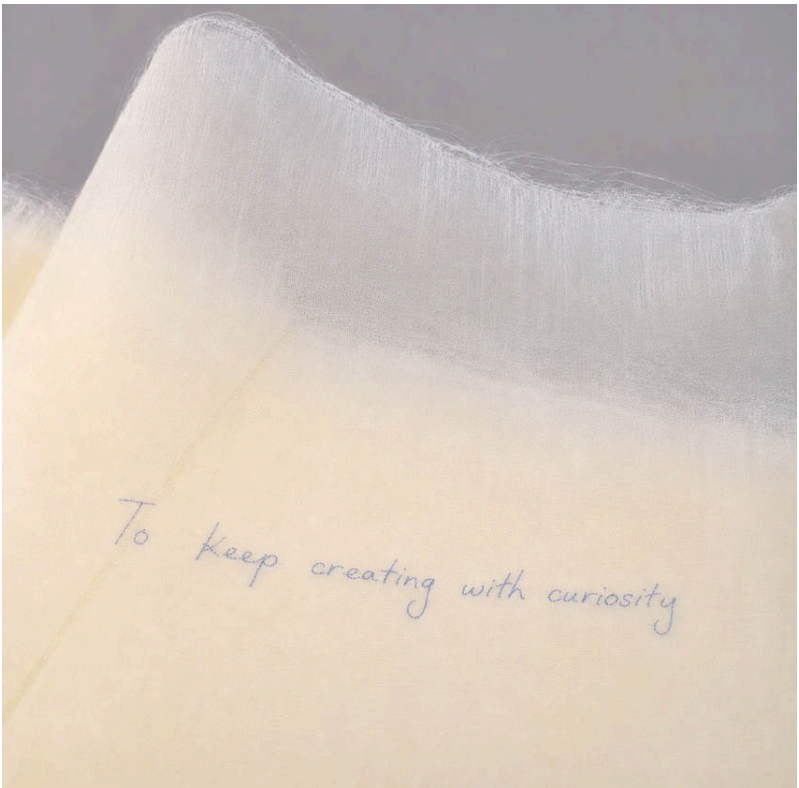

Practising kindness

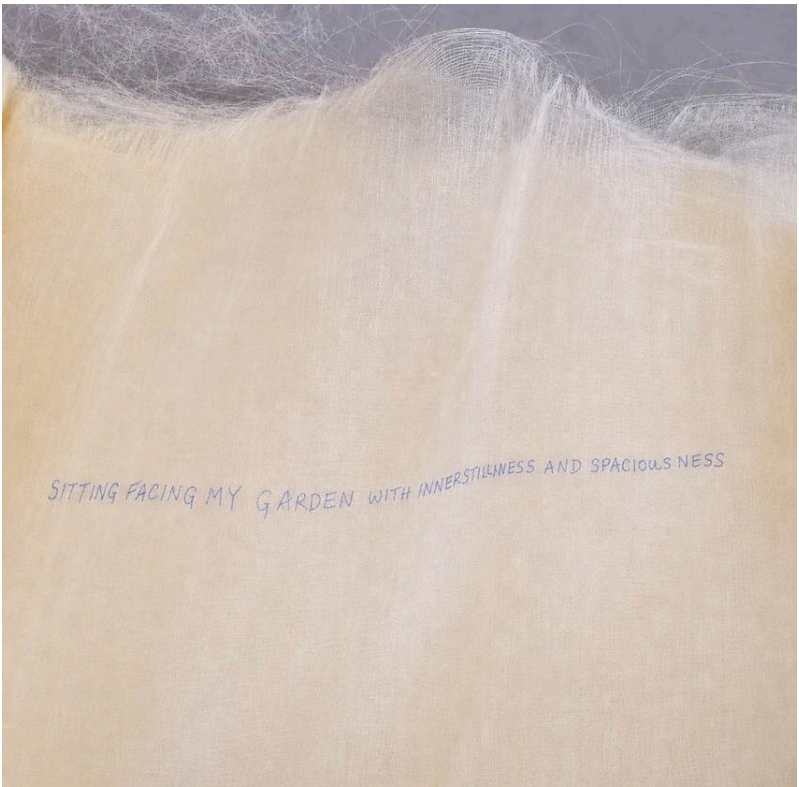

to be totally engrossed in projects which are meaningful...

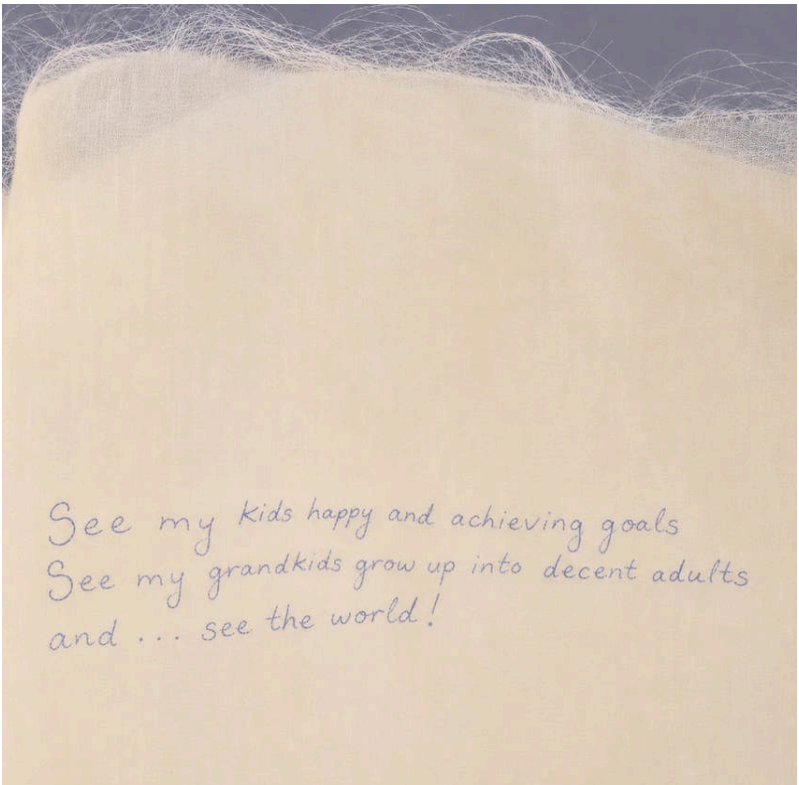

Faith
5

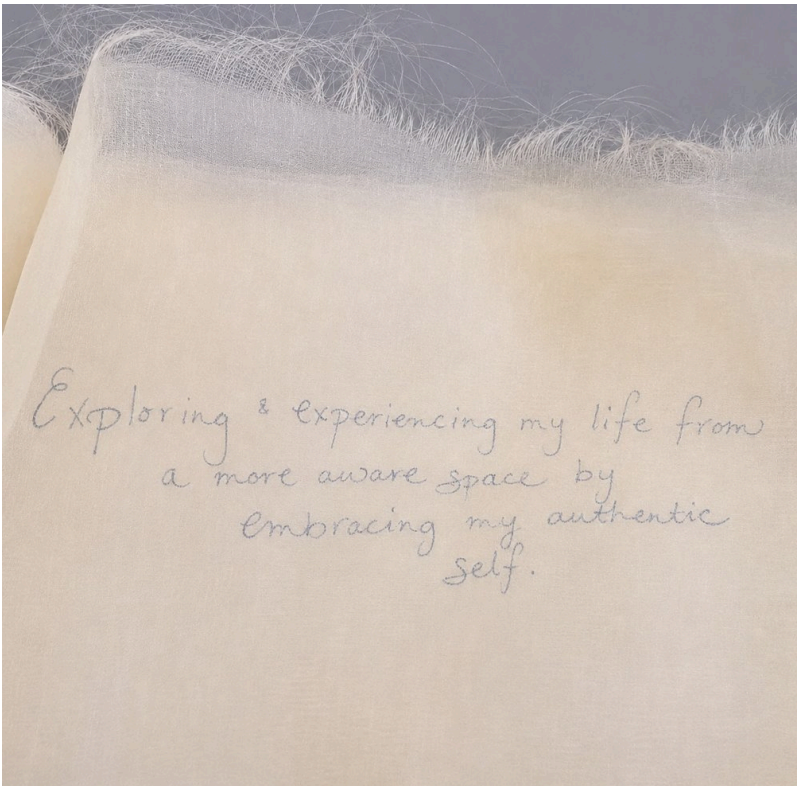

Time with family and friends
free of nagging deadlines.

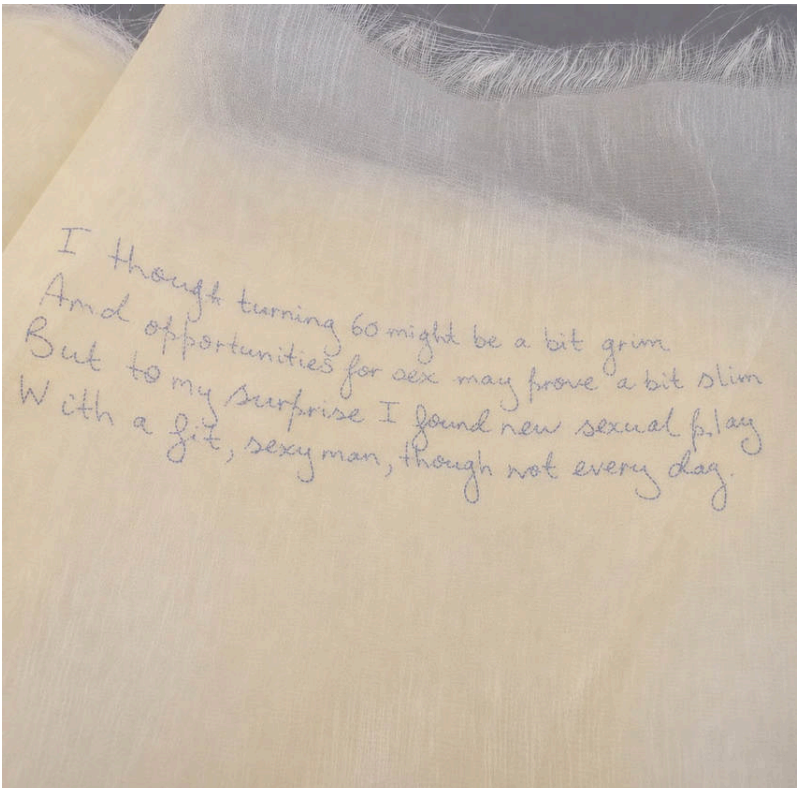

SHIT STARTS TO
BREAK DOWN AFTER
50

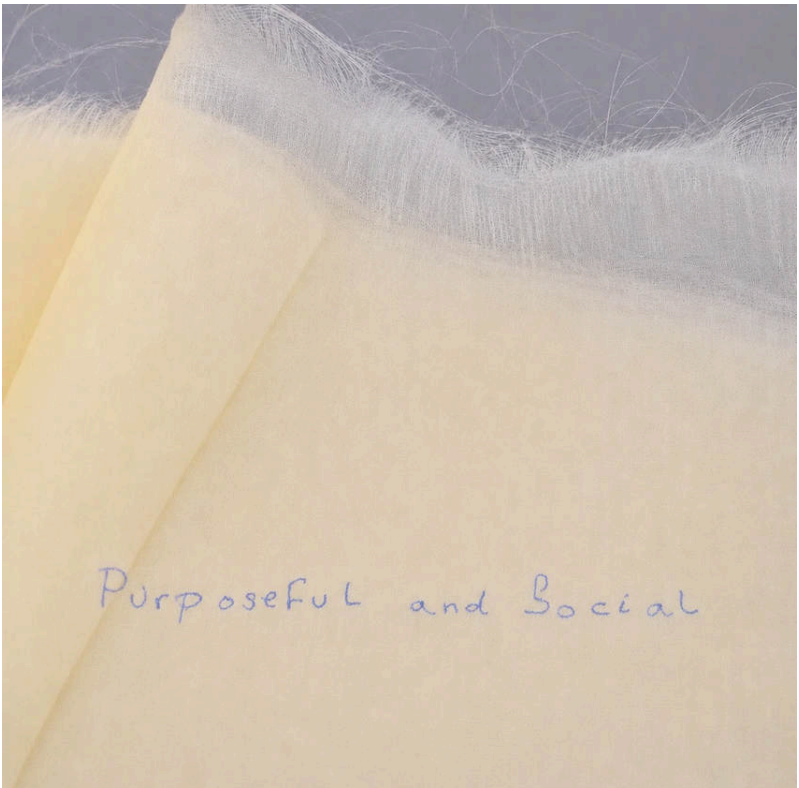

To keep creating with curiosity

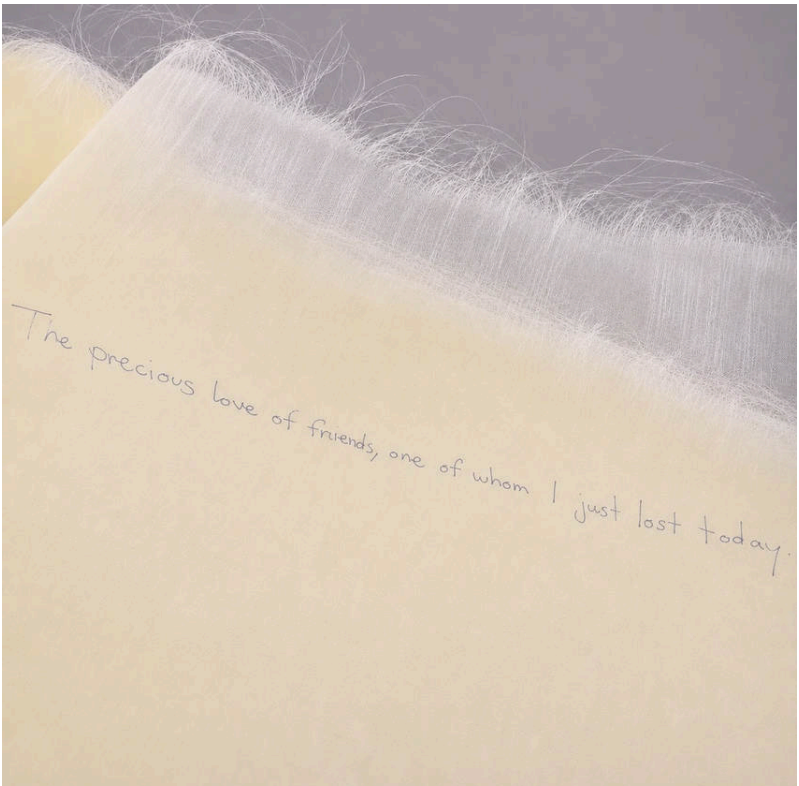

SITTING FACING MY GARDEN WITH INNERSTILLNESS AND SPACIOUSNESS

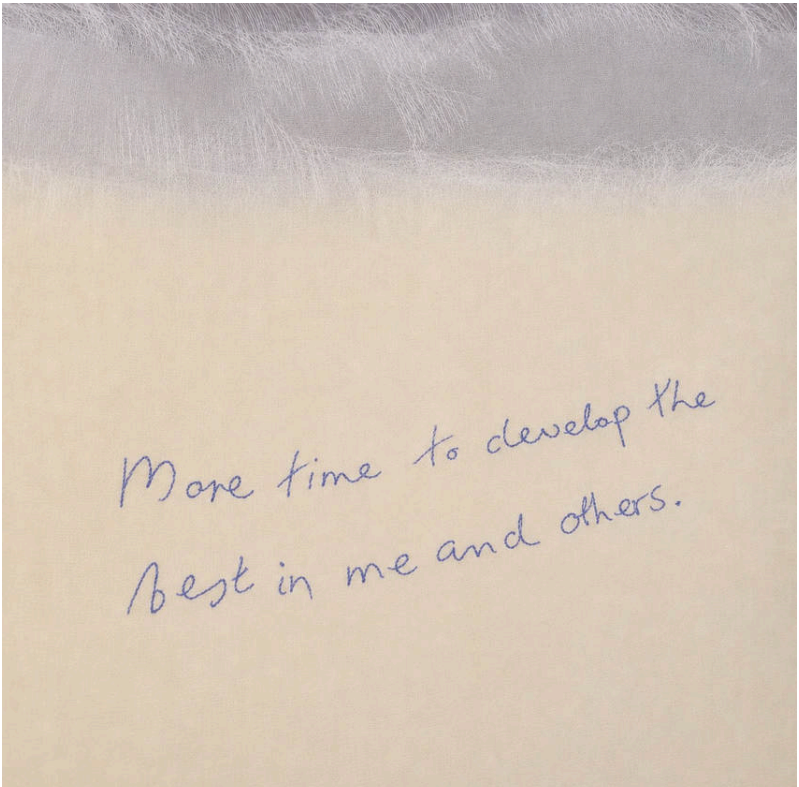

See my kids happy and achieving goals
See my grandkids grow up into decent adults
and ... see the world!

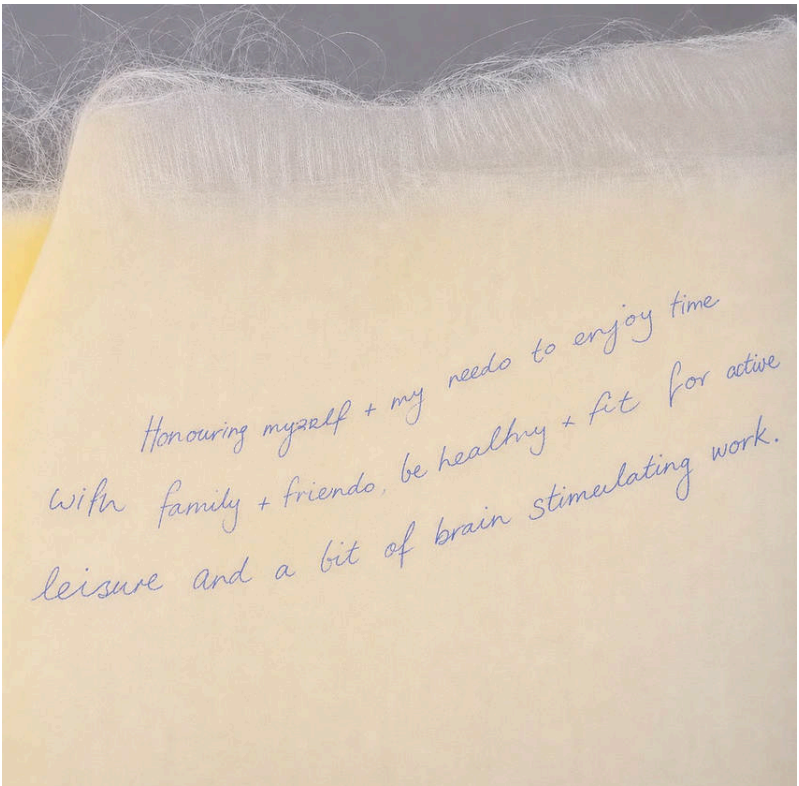

Exploring & experiencing my life from
a more aware space by
embracing my authentic
self.

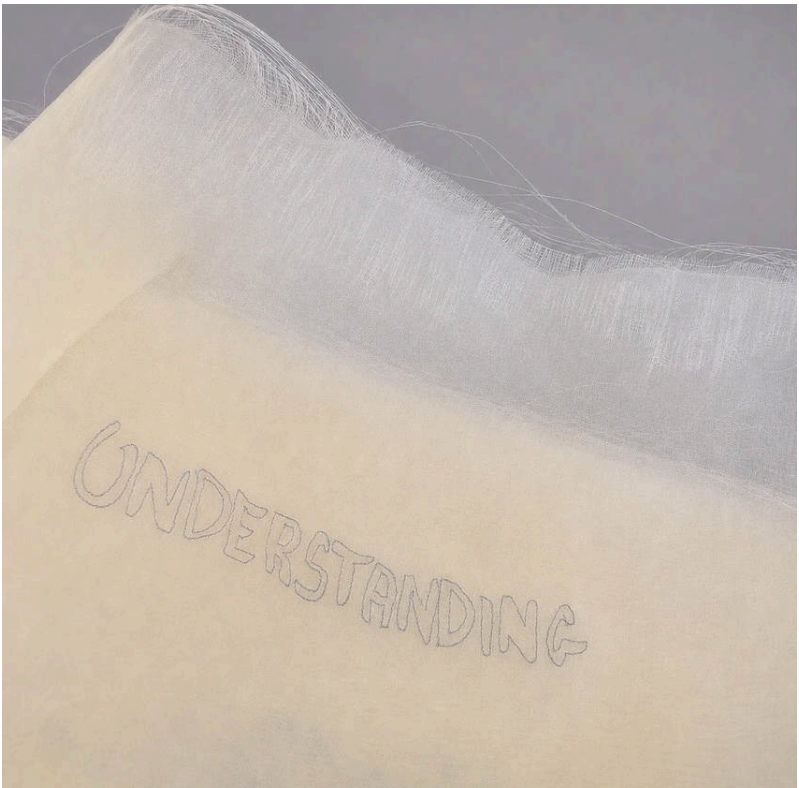

I thought turning 60 might be a bit grim
And opportunities for sex may prove a bit slim
But to my surprise I found new sexual play
With a fit, sexy man, though not every day.

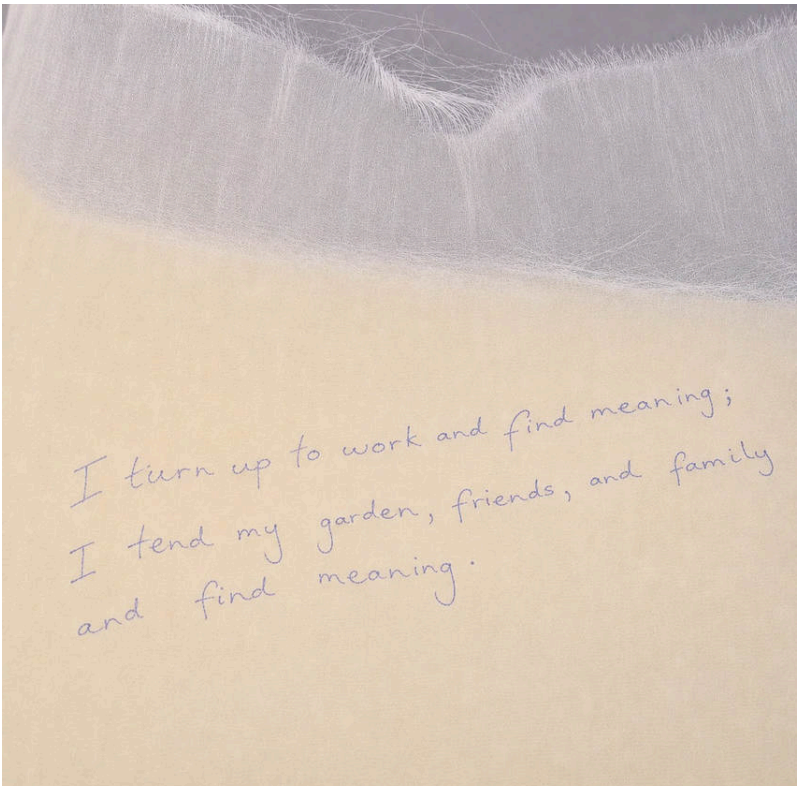

Purposeful and Social

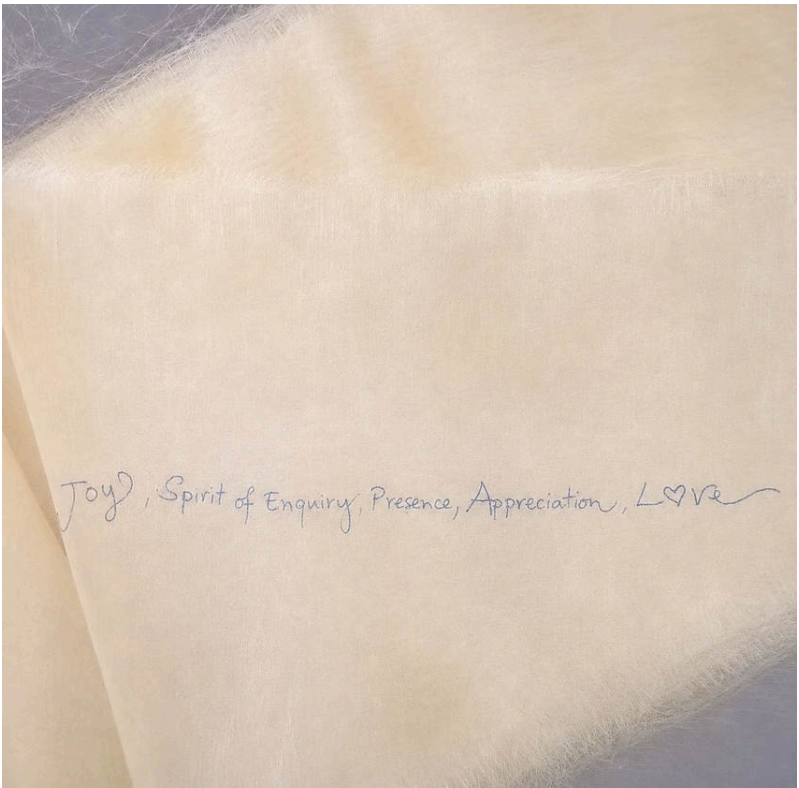

The precious love of friends, one of whom I just lost today.

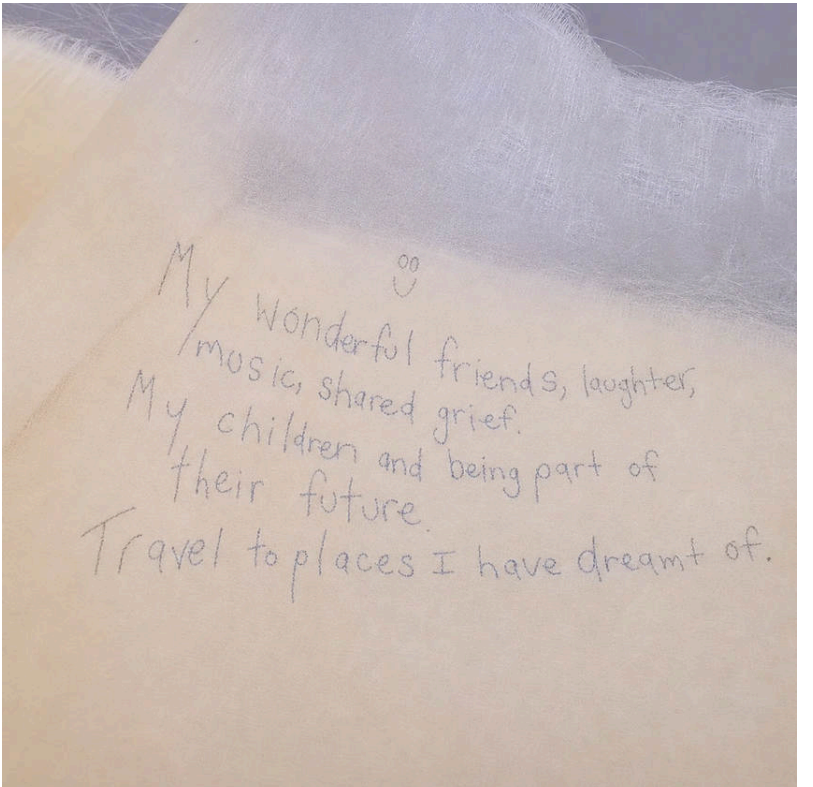

More time to develop the
best in me and others.

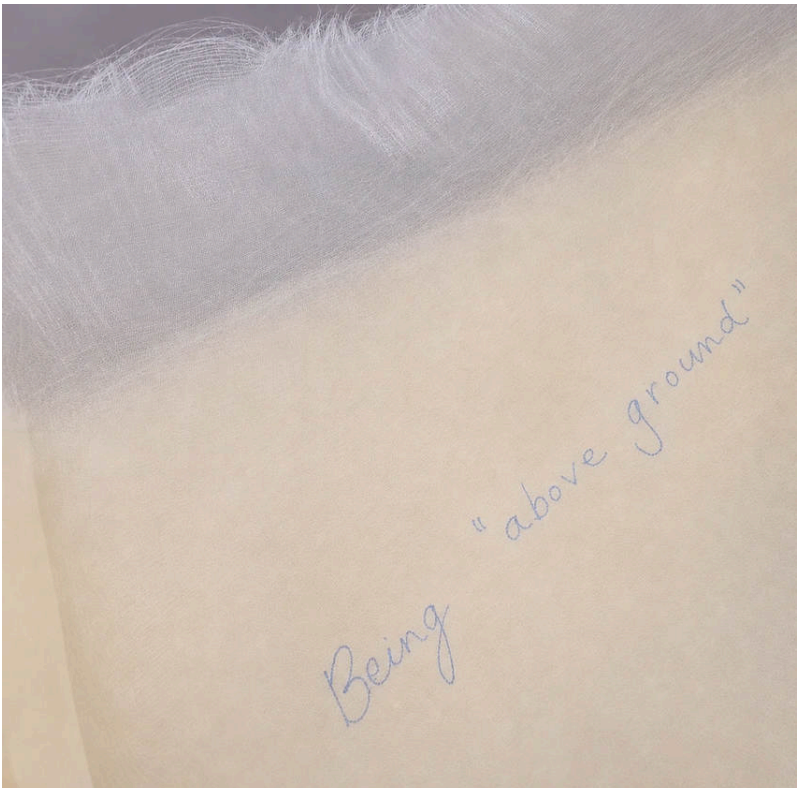

Honouring myself + my needs to enjoy time
with family + friends, be healthy + fit for active
leisure and a bit of brain stimulating work.

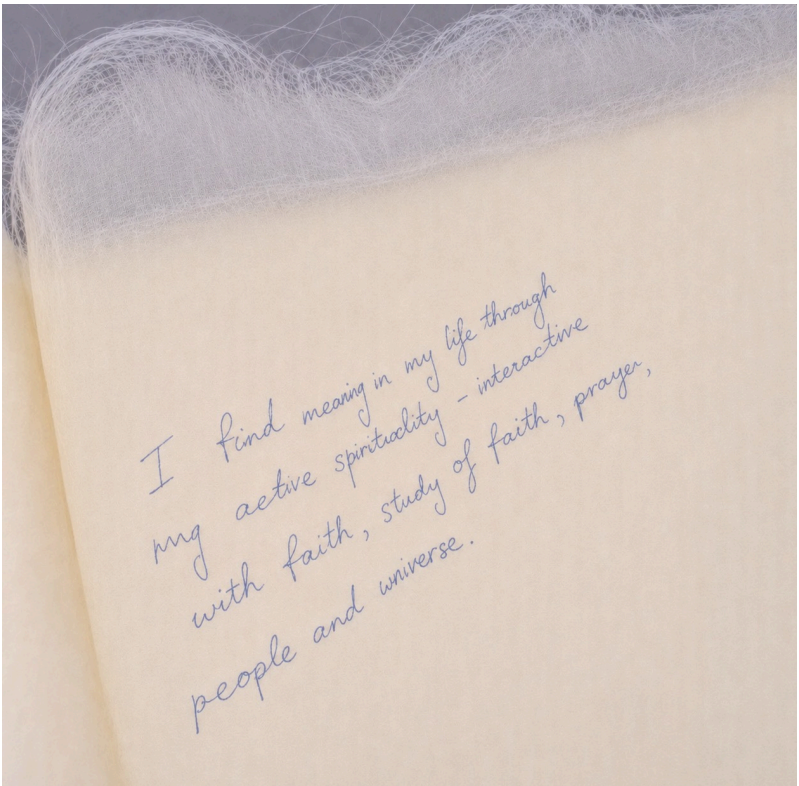

UNDERSTANDING

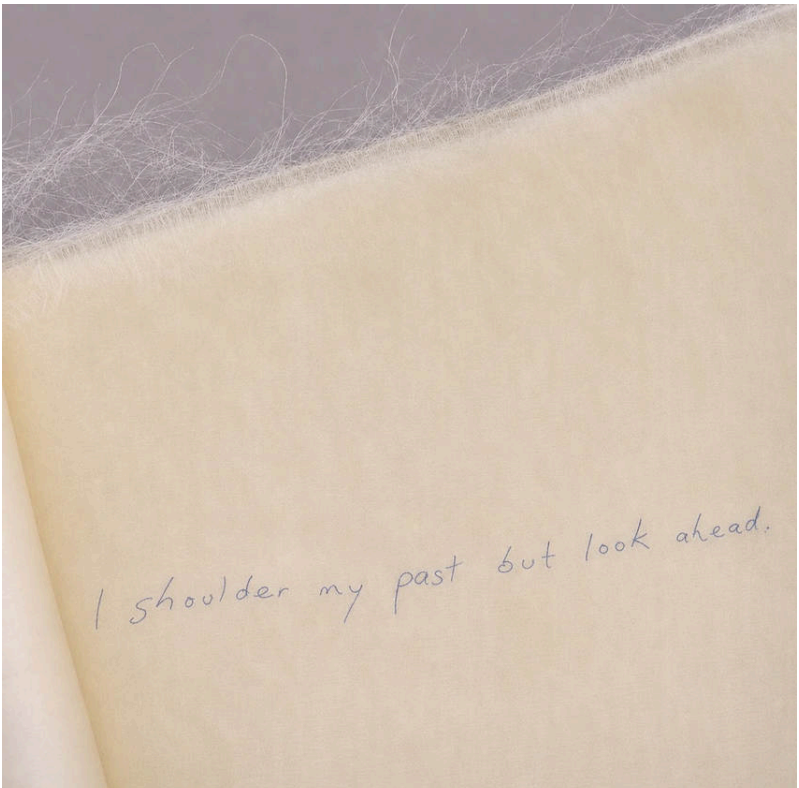

I turn up to work and find meaning;
I tend my garden, friends, and family
and find meaning.

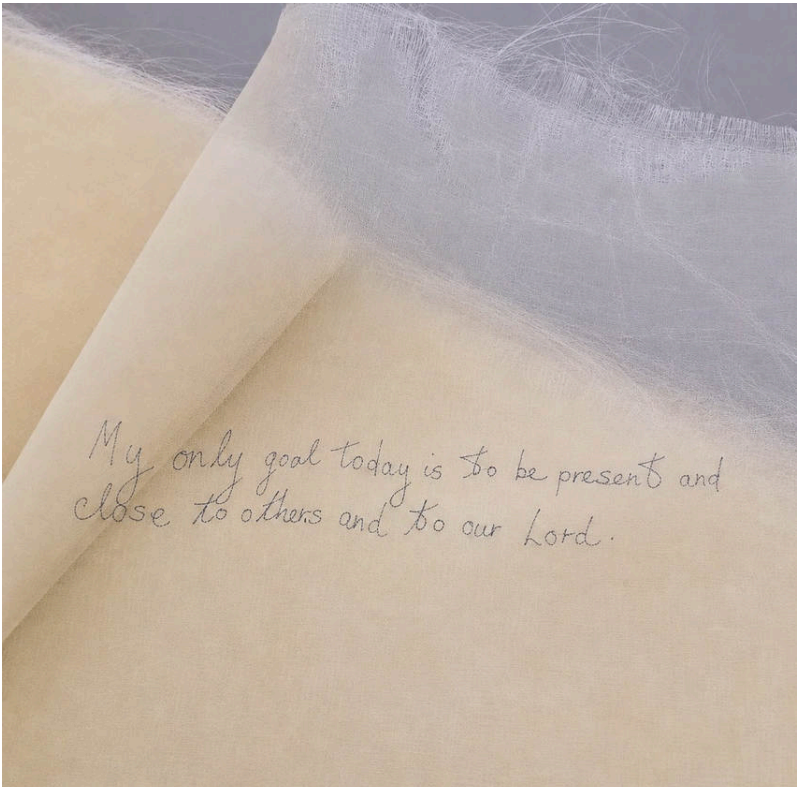

Joy, Spirit of Enquiry, Presence, Appreciation, LOVE

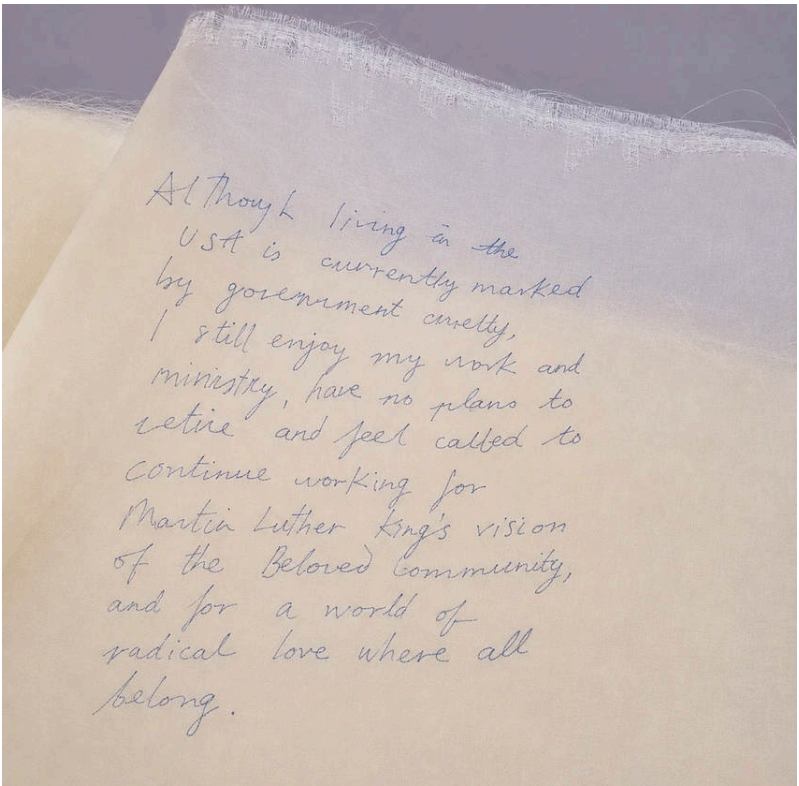

My wonderful friends, laughter,
music, shared grief.
My children and being part of
their future.
Travel to places I have dreamt of.

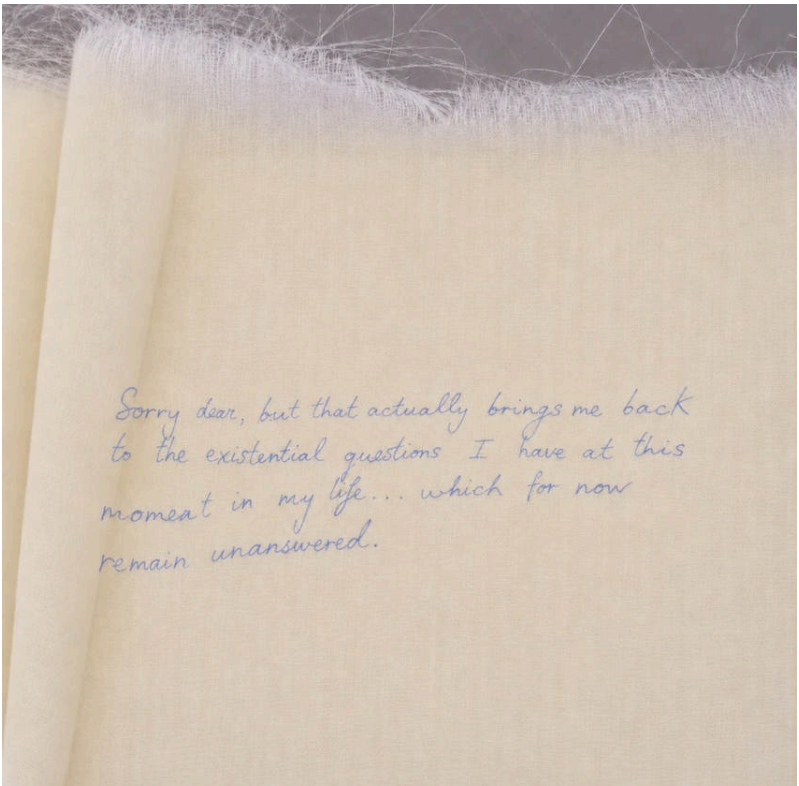

Being "above ground"

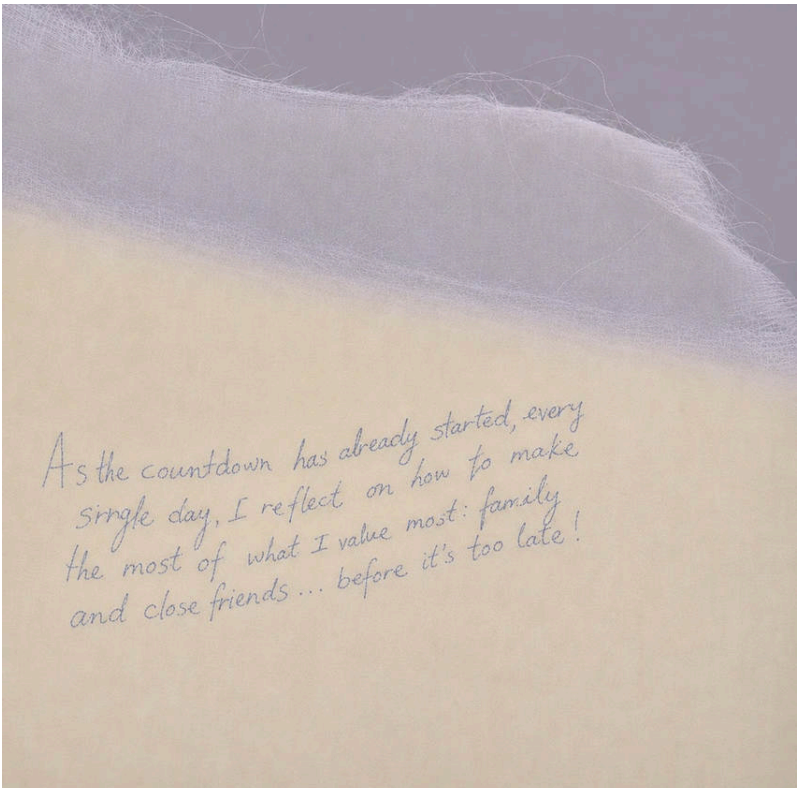

I find meaning in my life through
my active spirituality - interactive
with faith, study of faith, prayer,
people and universe.

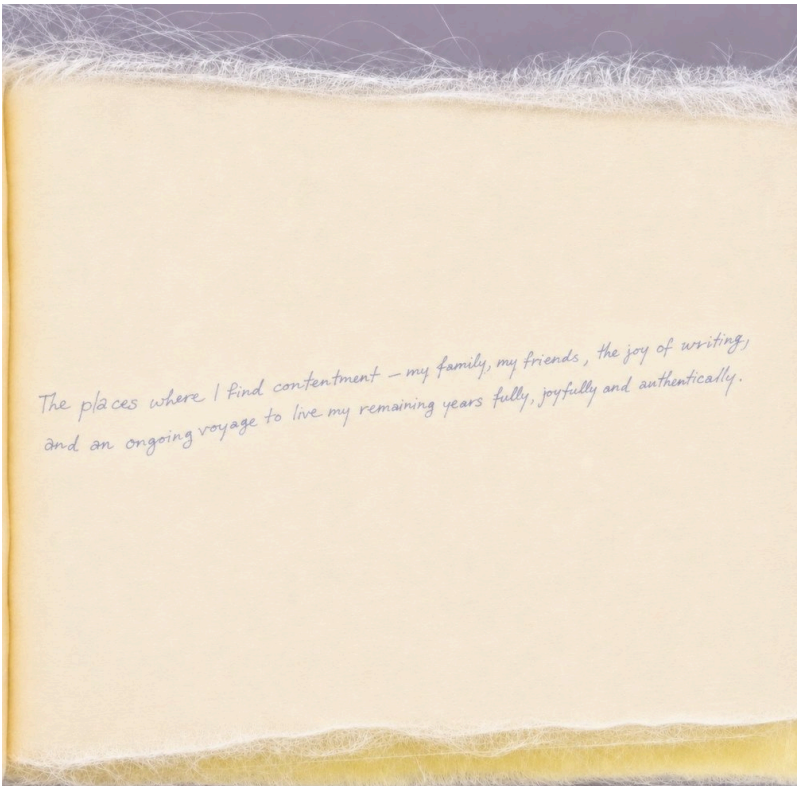

I shoulder my past but look ahead.

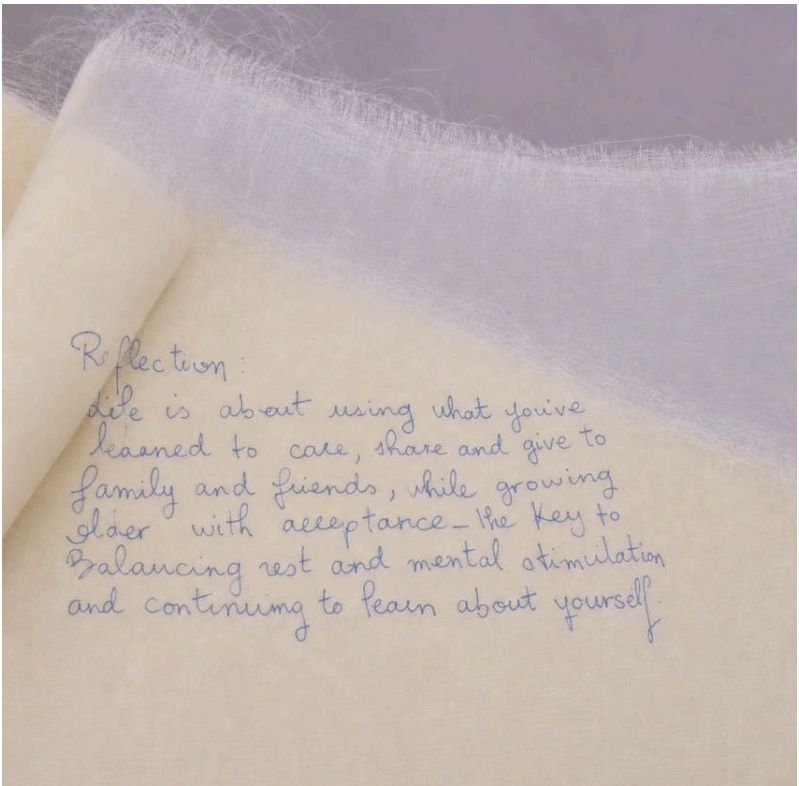

My only goal today is to be present and
close to others and to our Lord.

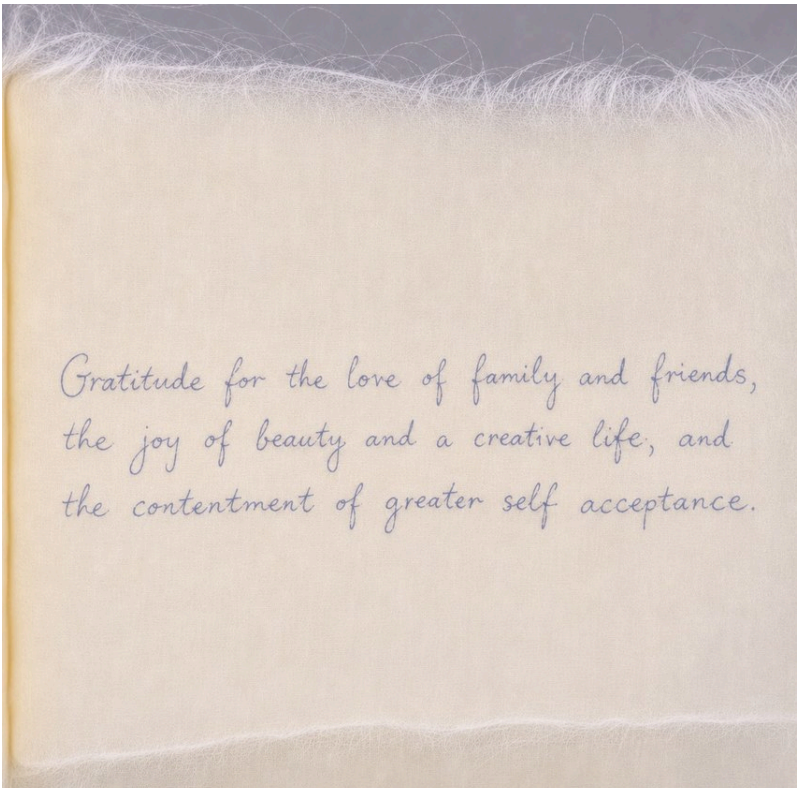

Although living in the
USA is currently marked
by government cruelty,
I still enjoy my work and
ministry, have no plans to
retire and feel called to
continue working for
Martin Luther King's vision
of the Beloved Community,
and for a world of
radical love where all
belong.


Sorry dear, but that actually brings me back
to the existential questions I have at this
moment in my life... which for now
remain unanswered.


As the countdown has already started, every
single day, I reflect on how to make
the most of what I value most: family
and close friends ... before it's too late!


The places where I find contentment – my family, my friends, the joy of writing,
and an ongoing voyage to live my remaining years fully, joyfully and authentically.


Reflection:
life is about using what youve
learned to care, share and give to
family and friends, while growing
older with acceptance - the key to
Balancing rest and mental stimulation
and continuing to learn about yourself.


Gratitude for the love of family and friends,
the joy of beauty and a creative life, and
the contentment of greater self acceptance.

