

ePortfolio 3: String Art

Shuo Ma

Capilano University



Figure 1. Original part of  
“Ascending Faith” (Ma, 2020)



Figure 2. String art made by nails  
and threads. (Ma, 2020)

My creation is a part of the sculpture “Ascending Faith.” It took me about twenty hours to finish my work, which consisted of a 60 cm x 60 cm wood board, more than 50 meters of black string, and over three hundred nails. The process involved stapling nails to the wood board to fix the general outline and then winding the thread clockwise between the nails. I chose black threads because mixing seven different colors could create black. (Smithsonian Libraries, n.d.)

When I read the book *Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation*, one passage gave me an idea about my creative work: “In some Nations, sweetgrass is braided using seven strands. Each strand represents one of the Seven Sacred Teachings” (Smith, 2017, p. 22). Thus, I could also use some threads as the raw materials for my work. Walker made a sculpture using sugar—the sweetest thing in the world—to make people think about the cruel history of the slave trade (Art21, 2014). I want to make my art to emphasize the meaning of connection. The connection can be an association between my identity and my social locations. Each nail

represents a different experience or social category, and a complex interweaving of threads connects these nails to form the final piece, which is, like my identity, complicated. On the other hand, this connection also can be a link with our land. As my ePortfolios 1 and 2 mentioned, the sculpture is about the mother image, and the land is the people's mother. Without the wood board to hold them all in place, the nails will be meaningless—much like people, who, without a connection to the land, may lose their identity.



*Figure 3.* Details of string art (Ma, 2020)

References

Art21. (2014, May 23). *Kara Walker: "A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby" | Art21*

*"Extended Play"* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRkP5rcXtys>

Smith, M. G. (2017). *Speaking our truth: A journey of reconciliation*. Orca Book Publishers.

Smithsonian Libraries. (n.d.). *The science of color*.

<https://library.si.edu/exhibition/color-in-a-new-light/science>