JAN-RU WAN is an American artist-educator who was born in Taipei, Taiwan. Wan repurposes found objects and innovates from traditional textile techniques to address the human condition, especially of collective suffering, loss, and resilience.

A former professor at Eastern Carolina University and NC State University, Wan has participated in numerous solo exhibitions and invitational group exhibitions including at the Asian American Arts Center (NYC), *First International Biennial of Casablanca*, *First Yango Biennale* (Kinshasa, DR Congo), Rauschenberg Gallery (Fort Myers, FL), Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, (Taipei, Taiwan), *6th International Fiber Art Biennale* (Hueman Art Museum, China), Mint Museum (Charlotte, NC), and at the Cameron Art Museum (Wilmington, NC). Wan has also been awarded prestigious artist residencies including at the Headlands Center for the Arts (Sausalito, CA), Burapa University (Conburi, Thailand), Morocco, Artist-in-Residence Fellowship, and Thamgidi Foundation (Arnhem, The Netherlands).

Wan's work has been featured in *Surface Design Magazine*, *Sculpture Magazine*, and the *National Art Education Association Anthology: Globalization, Art, and Education*. UW-Milwaukee has recognized her as the Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) and she is a recipient of an NC Visual Art Fellowship and a fellowship at Women's Studio Workshop (2023).

Above: Jan-Ru Wan, *The Story of Survival*, detail. Inside Panel: Jan-Ru Wan, *Under Your Breath*, detail.
Cover: Jan-Ru Wan,still from *When We Are Still Together.*

artspace

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JAN-RU WAN

WHEN WE ARE STILL TOGETHER

當我們同在一起

DECEMBER 2, 2022–FEBRUARY 12, 2023

WHEN WE ARE STILL TOGETHER
當我們同在一起

Taiwanese-American artist Jan-Ru Wan uses textile installations to explore the delicate tensions that exist in her experience as an artist, mother, and immigrant. The immersive nature of the work creates a space of contemplation and reflection for the viewer to examine broader cultural and social issues that inform the artist's personal experience. The movement of fabric along with the muted palette and use of traditional textile techniques evokes a sense of calm in the midst of our conflict fraught world. Through this space of beauty, the artist invites us to confront the chaos around us with resolve and faith in the positive power of humanity. The exhibition is comprised of three bodies of work, described here by the artist.

When We Are Still Together

In July 2020, during the US COVID-19 shut down, I took my seven-year old daughter back to Taiwan so she could go to school in person, leaving the country I have lived in for the past 20 years. *When We Are Still Together*, was created in my mom's little apartment in Taipei, Taiwan. A collection of foot-shaped ensembles, stitched on fans, dance over the exhibition space without touching one another, reflecting the unreal and almost dream-like shutdown of communal activity around the globe. The video in this exhibition shows two feet/fans dancing over the Taipei skyline, making our societal distance from each other overt. The hand-painted silk foot suggests "other people's shoes," a plea to understand the suffering of others and the hope to bridge the ever-widening socioeconomic gap.

Under Your Breath

Under Your Breath visually represents women's voices which have been purposely dismissed. The subtle embroidery text on the translucent collars is usually easy to overlook but not when there are multiple groupings in a single form. The bloodied but fragile ceramic spoons symbolize the voices that have been repressed or forced into silence. The objects in this work elevate and amplify the voices of all the women who have been silenced and denied.

The Story of Survival

It has been 50 years since the United Nations forced Taiwan out and denied its status as a sovereign nation. We usually call ourselves the "international orphans" because under pressure from China, no country would have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. *The Story of Survival* examines how Taiwanese life has been changed, altered, destroyed, and survived under different colonizers and political environments. Not knowing what Taiwan's future will be, I focus on the strength and resilience of the Taiwanese people. Although Taiwan is constantly a bargaining chip among international powers, I focus on the resilience of its people, the warmth of their hearts, and their admirable ability to cope and adapt.

At left, top-bottom: Jan-Ru Wan, *The Story of Survival*, detail; Jan-Ru Wan, progress shot for *When We Are Still Together*. Far left: Jan-Ru Wan, *Under Your Breath*, detail.