

HEIGHTS **ARTS**

# Spotlight: Paula Damm

**vestige**

: a trace, mark, or visible sign left by something

**June 16th – August 13th, 2023**

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE  
EXHIBITION COMMUNITY TEAM

Team leader: Greg Donley

Team Members: Kate Snow, Jack Stinedurf, Helen  
Liggett, Michael Weil, Amber Ford, Josie Naypauer,  
Juliet Duffy, and Heather Patterson.



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2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



# Paula Damm

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Wind, water and island are a part of my life's fabric and have influenced me as a lifelong maker and teller of stories. Born in Sandusky, Ohio, I sought out places to sit and listen to the water and watch the waves, gulls, and fog as I faced myself and my life. I often say I grew up with fiber in my fingers. I clearly understood from my mom that this is what girls did. It was a hobby, never art. The nearest museum was in Cleveland, so I never really remember seeing art. College was encouraged but not expected and I dropped out after a year to attend nursing school in Sandusky. I became a registered nurse, moving to Cleveland to work (1.5 hours away, but seemed very risky at the time). Marriage, children, Master's in Education, divorce, camp nurse in Maine, school nurse for the last 21 years. I never stopped making things. Looking back, I realize that I spent my life honing my craft and collecting stories. When I discovered the Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation my life changed forever. Seeing paper as fabric and fiber challenged me in ways I could have not imagined. Anything that crosses my path -- a log laying over another, the give and take of conversation, death of a loved one, meeting new friends, personal or global conflict, aging -- can be described in terms of fibers touching as they pass one another. Life and its stories as fiber and textile. I couldn't be happier.

## BIOGRAPHY

Starting as a child with shoestring punch cards, Paula Damm's work has grown to encompass weaving, sculpture, photography, embroidery, papermaking, painting, and the unexpected manipulation of all the above. On the shoulders of the women makers who came before, Paula's marks with needle, thread, paper, paint, and cloth share stories that are deeply personal yet universal – loss, love, aging, and connection to others. Paula lives in Cleveland Heights, Ohio and has recently “graduated” after being a school nurse in a high school for 21 years.

*Letter From My Father*, Cotton, chenille, wood dowels, 11"x9"x5", NFS, 2021

*Losses*, Vintage Homespun, 8"x6", \$75, 2021

*Losses 2*, Vintage Homespun, 7"x7.5", \$75, 2021

*Poem*, Linen, cotton thread, 16.5"x13.5", NFS, 2021

*Points of Connection*, Artist spun and woven paper, turmeric and indigo dye, 15"x18", \$300, 2021

*Que Será Será Dress*, Artist made Kozo paper with personal ephemera, hanger, 16"x21", NFS, 2022

*TogetherVoice*, Vintage table cloth, cotton thread, voice recordings from individuals from around the world sent to the artist after social media request. Voices were made into sound waves which were then embroidered. Participants chose color of voice, 32"x32", NFS, 2021

*Vestige*, 36 plaster casts of navels - volunteers via crowdsourcing on social media, University of Akron student participation, NFS, 2023

*Young Paula with Mask*, Cotton thread on linen, 9.5"x12.5", NFS, 2021



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