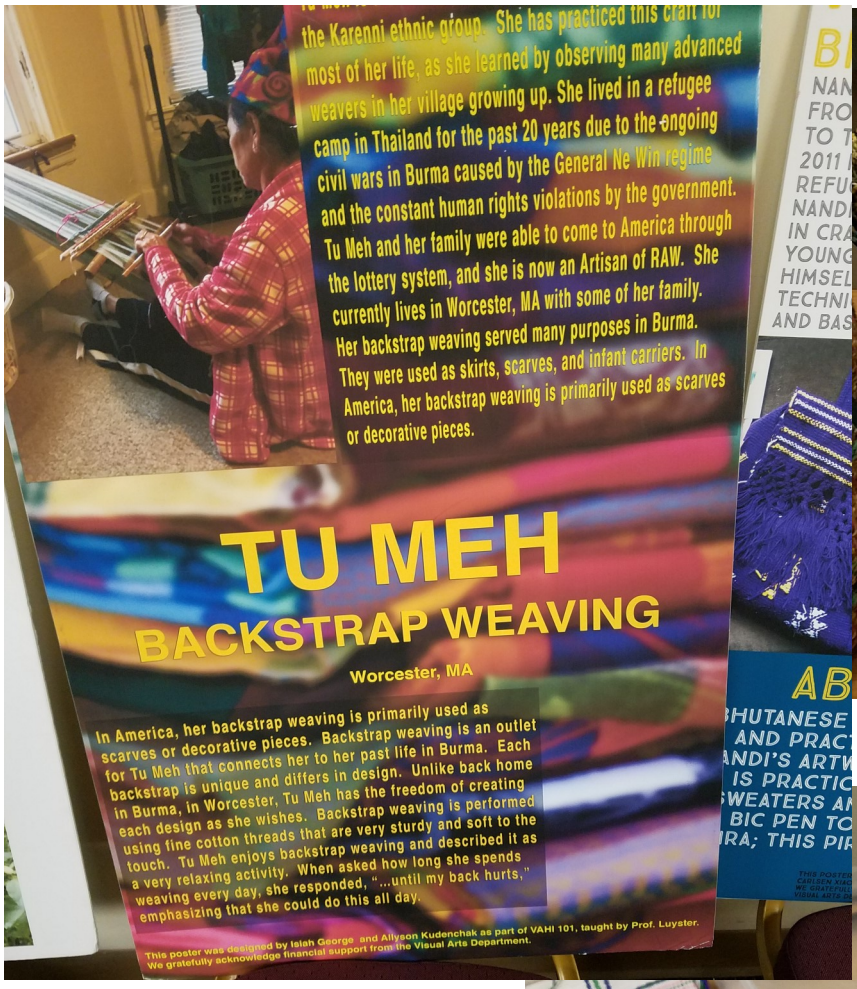
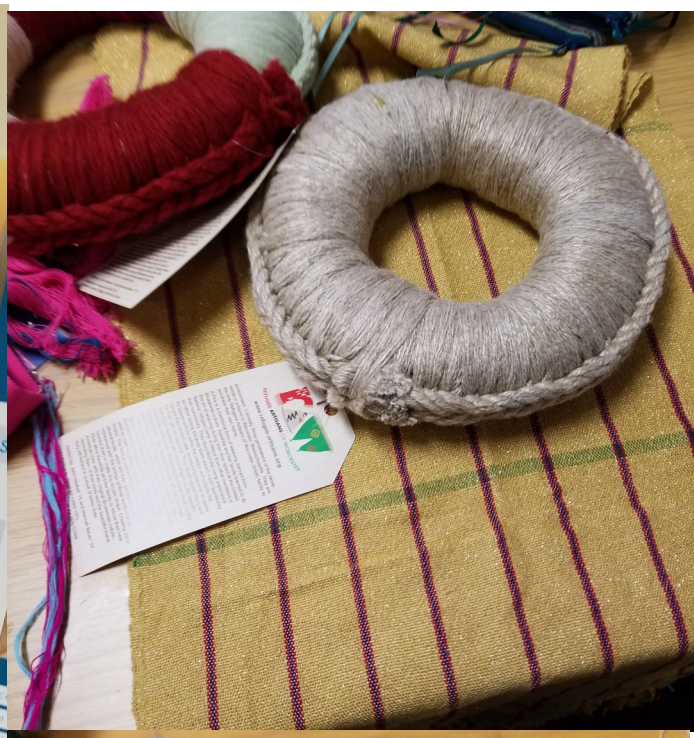
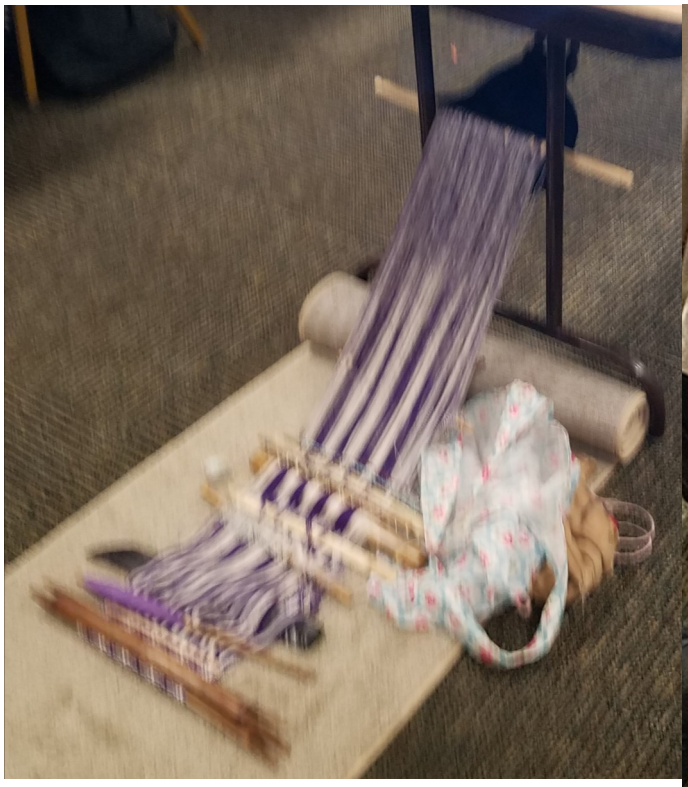

the Karenni ethnic group. She has practiced this craft for most of her life, as she learned by observing many advanced weavers in her village growing up. She lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for the past 20 years due to the ongoing civil wars in Burma caused by the General Ne Win regime and the constant human rights violations by the government. Tu Meh and her family were able to come to America through the lottery system, and she is now an Artisan of RAW. She currently lives in Worcester, MA with some of her family. Her backstrap weaving served many purposes in Burma. They were used as skirts, scarves, and infant carriers. In America, her backstrap weaving is primarily used as scarves or decorative pieces.
TU MEH
BACKSTRAP WEAVING
Worcester, MA
In America, her backstrap weaving is primarily used as scarves or decorative pieces. Backstrap weaving is an outlet for Tu Meh that connects her to her past life in Burma. Each backstrap is unique and differs in design. Unlike back home in Burma, in Worcester, Tu Meh has the freedom of creating each design as she wishes. Backstrap weaving is performed using fine cotton threads that are very sturdy and soft to the touch. Tu Meh enjoys backstrap weaving and described it as a very relaxing activity. When asked how long she spends weaving every day, she responded, "...until my back hurts," emphasizing that she could do this all day.
This poster was designed by Isiah George and Allyson Kudenchak as part of VAHI 101, taught by Prof. Luyster.
We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Visual Arts Department.

RAW Mission
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Embroidery
Halima
The Central African Republic has been plagued with conflict for decades as rebel groups try to seize power. The Seleka rebel group launched a rebellion that internationally displaced hundreds of thousands of CAR citizens.
Halima and her family were among the many to be displaced and found refuge in Chad. She and her family lived in uncertainty for years until they embarked on a new journey in Worcester. Halima's embroidery became her personal business in the refugee camp as a means to express herself, carry on traditions of her homeland, and provide for her family.
Halima makes beautifully sewn embroidered designs that pop with vibrant color to draw upon her memories and styles of her culture.
"It is therapeutic. You don't think about anything else but what color you are going to sew next." ~Halima
Adobe Spark
After the ethnic cleansing in Bhutan and his departure from Nepal, Buddha now lives in a triple decker in Worcester with three generations of his family. Buddha has been involved with the Refugee Artisans of Worcester for the past few years, which has helped him coordinate resources, space, and projects for him to work on.
Bhutanese Stone Carving, by Buddha



In the 1990's Bhutan endured an ethnic cleansing, due to pressures by the government to create a homogenous identity. Buddha was a part of the over 100,000 people from the Lohtshampa ethnic group to move from Bhutan to Nepal. Once host countries began allowing Bhutanese refugees, Buddha moved to the United States.
Bhutanese Stone Carving, by Buddha
The stone-carved pieces Buddha creates are most often used for ceremonial purposes and decorations. Carvings range from small hand-sized figurines, to three-foot-tall statues like the seated buddha pictured, even to statues that rise stories high.
Adobe Spark
HANGMA
RELOCATION
FOLLOWING A "CULTURAL CLEANSING" OF BHUTAN, ALL THOSE WITH NEPALI ANCESTRY WERE FORCED OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND TO CAMPS IN NEPAL. HANGMA WAS IN THE CAMPS FOR TWENTY FIVE YEARS BEFORE BEING MOVED TO AMERICA.
LIFE AFTER RELOCATION
WHEN HANGMA WAS FORCED TO LEAVE BHUTAN, SHE LEFT BEHIND HER FARMS AND EVERYTHING SHE KNEW. HER TIME IN THE CAMP IS NOT SOMETHING SHE LIKES TO LOOK BACK ON. AFTER MOVING TO AMERICA, HANGMA FACED MANY BARRIERS. SHE HAD 90 DAYS TO SETTLE INTO HER NEW HOME WITH SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT. SHE CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH THE LANGUAGE BARRIER. HOWEVER, SHE IS TAKING ESL CLASSES AND IS EAGER TO IMPROVE HER ENGLISH. WHILE SHE DEEPLY MISSES HER HOME, FLOOR WEAVING CONTINUES TO CONNECT HER TO HER FAMILY AND THE PLACES SHE LEFT BEHIND.
"[FLOOR LOOM WEAVING] CONNECTS ME TO MY FAMILY AND GIVES ME SOMETHING TO DO." HANGMA, BHUTANESE FLOOR LOOM WEAVER
FLOOR WEAVING
IN A COUNTRY KNOWN FOR ITS TEXTILES, WEAVING IN BHUTAN IS RESERVED FOR WOMEN.
A SKILL PASSED ON FROM MOTHER TO DAUGHTER, FLOOR LOOM RELIES UPON BRIGHT COLORS AND GEOMETRIC PATTERNS. IT ALLOWS FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AS WELL AS CONNECTION.
Adobe Spark
"Basket making
therapeutic. It p
me at peace, an
gives me liberati
after all the traum
I've been throug
This poster was designed by Tildah Fredua, 2021 and Jennifer Feraud, 2021 as part of VAH 101, taught by Prof. Luyster. We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Visual Arts Department.

Blank Cards
$6.50

welcome