

Blanket Statements

Do you notice the story of a quilt more when it hangs on a wall, instead of being used on a bed?

When Richard puts quilts on the wall, they are like signs we want to read. Some of what we notice isn't spelled out in words: he uses soft things like quilts, knitting, and embroidery. These remind us how we wrap sick people in blankets, give warm clothes to people who need them, and talk with friends as we sew.

Quilts aren't just for warmth. They help us remember stories and special times, like when someone makes a quilt for a new baby or a wedding. Some of Richard's quilts tell stories about his life, even about hard times. When he shares his life in bright colours and careful stitching, it helps him and others feel cared for, even when talking about sad things.



No Longer Homeless, Richard Boulet, 2013.

X's and O's

What does making an "X" mean to you?

Sometimes when we draw an "x," it means something is wrong or we want to cover it up. In cross-stitching, the stitches look like lots of little "x"s. Richard uses these to write words about himself, even parts he might want to hide. By making these words with bright, colorful "x"s, it's like he is crossing out bad ideas—like unfair labels or stereotypes—about himself and turning them into something good.

Richard doesn't just make things look nice—he finds meaning in things other people might throw away. By showing these things matter, he helps everyone feel like they can belong, even if they have felt left out or had difficult experiences.

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PLAIN ENGLISH

Self-guided tour

Art Thou the Accuser of Thy Brethren, or Art Thou the Inspiration of Their Heart?



FLAG, Richard Boulet and Marilyn Olsen, 2021.

Richard Boulet

curated by Wayne Baerwaldt

November 6, 2025 –
January 17, 2026

AGR

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1000 Words



OONNOONNXX, Richard Boulet, 2021.

Who do you usually picture sewing, quilting, or knitting?

Most people think of women doing these things. For a long time, people called fibre art, like quilting or embroidery, “craft” and didn’t see it as real art. Big paintings, especially abstract ones, were seen as “manly” and made by men.

Richard is an artist who makes large quilts with bold colours, patterns, and words, like big paintings, but uses soft cloth and stitches. Some of his quilts flutter in the air from the vents, showing they aren’t stiff or tough like “manly” paintings. Instead, they almost look like they are breathing. By doing this, Richard mixes ideas about what is “for men” and “for women,” breaking old ideas about art and who can make it.

Did you notice names other than Richard’s on some of the labels?

Richard sometimes lists other people as artists on his labels. He likes making art with family and friends because it’s something people can learn and do together. “I made a couple of latch hook rugs with my father when I was about ten. That is a treasured memory.” Sharing these moments and gifts with others is important to Richard.

When Richard uses handmade things from different people, he shows that everyone is part of a community. He wants us to know that everyone’s feelings and stories matter. His art holds memories of people he loves, like a knitted dishcloth, a piece of a wedding dress, or a button collection. Each thing tells us something about the person who gave it. Why do you think these people are special to Richard?



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What do the words ‘say’ about the art?

Some of Richard’s art uses “Concrete Poetry.” This means he uses words not just for their meaning, but also for how they look. In one piece, he covers plain beige cloth with words. Some words are gentle, like “dew.” Others are harsh, like “pox,” or sad, like “broke.” All the words are spelled out with bright, colourful alphabet beads.

If you look at the words as shapes, colours, and textures—not just as things to read—does it change how the artwork makes you feel?



Dark Hair From Soil (detail), Richard Boulet, 2025.