

Davana Robedee, *Biformity*

August 22–November 7, 2025



Biformity installation shot

Shifting Thresholds

Curatorial Essay by Shirley Verrico

Biformity, meaning “double form,” lies at the conceptual core of Davana Robedee’s exhibition of the same name. In this body of work, Robedee examines the universal relationship between body and spirit alongside her own deeply personal experience of how chronic illness shapes her perception of consciousness. Through the labor-intensive processes of stitch-resist and katano shibori, as well as the cultivation of her own indigo, Robedee creates works coaxed into being through patience, repetition, and the natural transformations of pigment.

Labor and process are central to Robedee’s practice. Each piece is planned and executed over several months, with the deep blue pigments grown and extracted from indigo plants she cultivates herself. Stitch-resist shibori is a Japanese dyeing method in which stitched threads prevent dye from penetrating certain areas of fabric, creating intricate patterns. The process involves sewing lines into the fabric, gathering the stitches to compress the cloth, and immersing it in dye. The tightness of the stitching, along with the depth and duration of the dye bath, determines the clarity, contrast,

and character of the design. Katano shibori, named after Motohiko Katano, involves stitching through several layers of fabric without drawing the thread tight; the lines of stitching channel the dye, producing soft, airbrushed-like marks.

Both techniques offer Robedee an indirect approach to image-making. Rather than placing marks directly, she creates conditions that determine where the dye may or may not settle. She sets limitations, defines boundaries, and creates barriers, while also leaving openings for the indigo to flow and transform. In doing so, she guides, coaxes, and invites the image into being, allowing it to emerge gradually through the pathways she constructs.



Stitch resist shibori process detail

Her labor continues into the dyeing process. “I believe that labor endows meaning. The more labor, the more meaning,” Robedee explains. Making indigo dye from her homegrown plants involves extracting, fermenting, and oxidizing the pigment. Once prepared, the fabric is submerged in the dye bath, gently agitated to release air bubbles, and removed after full fabric immersion. Initially bright green, the fabric turns blue as it oxidizes in the air. Full oxidation requires spreading the cloth out in open air, often outdoors in natural light. For deeper tones, the process may be repeated multiple times.

Robedee's interest in indigo comes from both science and history. Indigo dye is an intriguing substance, striking a balance between precise science and alchemy. Long before its scientific understanding, indigo was used by people from all continents for its color, as well as its magical transformation from green to blue. Before knowing that on the molecular level, indigo was bonding with oxygen, it was described as “breathing” as if it were a living entity. “Through growing and dyeing with it, I find a place to hold both the spiritual and the scientific equally. Its place in my practice is symbolic and functional, as indigo is a perfect embodiment of biformity.



In Endo, 2024, stitch resist shibori; dyed with homegrown & pre-reduced indigo on cotton



Glorified Stick Pile, 2025, stitch resist shibori; dyed with home-grown & pre-reduced indigo on cotton

It can go back and forth between chemical states, transforming itself in the process of becoming a pigment,” Robedee states.

The resulting forms are inspired by Robedee’s personal experiences of visual aura, lucid dreaming, and hallucinations—moments when the brain’s “trickery” challenges the certainty of perception. Her works become meditations on the shifting thresholds between thought and matter, dream and wakefulness, life and death. For Robedee, indigo is more than a medium; it is a collaborator. Its transformation from green to blue, rooted in both ancient ritual and scientific process, mirrors her search for the point where the material and immaterial meet.

In Endo (2024), an expansive field of indigo forms unfolds in expressive symmetry, recalling

both human physiology and the mirrored blots of a Rorschach test. Suggestive of cellular interiors and cosmic cartography, the work invites viewers to imagine the body as an interconnected system where the spirit might reside.

Glorified Stick Pile (2025) elevates what might appear as discarded fragments into an intricate, ceremonial arrangement. Its repeating organic structures suggest both skeletal remains and sacred architecture, blurring the line between decay and reverence.

In Broken Blessed Rock 1 (2025), Robedee uses katano shibori to create a layered textile surface that evokes the fractured face of a sacred geological form. The diffused resist patterns suggest fissures, striations, and mineral veining. Deep indigo tones and textured complexity transform a symbol of permanence into a meditation on impermanence, resilience, and the beauty found in transformation.

Together, these works extend Robedee’s central question: if body and spirit are two halves of a whole, how do we stitch the seam between them?



Broken Blessed Rock I, 2025, stitch resist shibori; dyed with homegrown & pre-reduced indigo on cotton



Artist Biography

Davana Robedee is a visual artist based in Syracuse, New York, and a recipient of the NYSCA 2025 Support for Artists grant. Her practice spans drawing, textiles, and installation, exploring themes of perception, consciousness, and the natural world. She holds an MFA in Sculpture from Syracuse University and has exhibited nationally at venues including 3S Art Space in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Riverviews in Lynchburg, Virginia. Drawing on personal experiences and meditative making processes, Robedee investigates the intersections between science, spirituality, and sensory experience, crafting works that invite contemplation of the boundaries between body and spirit. Robedee shares videos of her process on social media, consider following her @davana.robdee

Artist Statement

My experience with various phenomena such as visual aura, lucid dreams, and hallucinations is the driving force behind my creative practice. Because I am personally aware of the ways in which the brain performs “trickery”, I am always questioning the nature of human consciousness. Many of my pieces function as direct metaphors representing the line between thoughts and matter, dream and wake, and consciousness and unconsciousness. I am interested in age old questions like, “How do things become alive?” and particularly, “Where do we go when we die?”

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