



## Thought Leadership Corner

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(MODA)*

[About the Author](#)

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## Greetings from MODA!

At [MODA](#) — the only design museum in the southeastern United States — we believe that design inspires change, transforms lives, and makes the world a better place.

We recently hosted an exhibition titled *Making Change: The Art and Craft of Activism* that explored Craftivism, a movement at the intersection of traditional crafts and social justice activism.

During *Making Change*, we partnered with New American Pathways on an initiative called [The Welcome Blanket Project](#). Created by Jayna Zweiman — one of the designers of the pink p\*ssy hat worn at the Women’s March in January 2017 — The Welcome Blanket Project invites individuals across the US to hand make a blanket that will serve as a “warm welcome” for an immigrant or refugee newly arrived in America.



During Making Change, MODA received hundreds of Welcome Blankets in the mail, sometimes as many as 50 a day. Blanket makers also included a note welcoming a new neighbor to our country and telling their own immigration story. When we received the blankets at MODA, we eagerly unpacked and admired them, then photographed and cataloged them, and hung them on the wall in our galleries for visitors to enjoy.

We rotated the blankets in our galleries often, and when blankets came off the walls, they were packed up and taken to New American Pathways to give to new friends.



Kay, former Burmese refugee and part owner of Tandem Quilting

**Every blanket came with a story that was touching, but one of the most meaningful was that of Kay, a refugee from Burma, who now makes her life in Georgia.** Part owner of Tandem Quilting, Kay heard about The Welcome Blanket Project and wanted to be part of it. She created a beautiful blanket and wrote a note full of advice for a someone new to the U.S. including “be sure to get to know your neighbors.” Her blanket was given to Muna, a newly-arrived Syrian woman, who is expecting her second child at the end of the year.



Muna and her first son received a warm welcome from Kay.

At MODA, we chose to host the Welcome Blanket Project because of its power to connect people already living in the United States with our country's new immigrants through stories and handmade blankets, providing both symbolic and literal comfort and warmth. At the same time, the project offers a positive, hands-on way to confront negative rhetoric about immigration and to privilege the idea of inclusion over exclusion.

*New American Pathways extends our deepest appreciation to MODA and all of the craftivists around the nation who hand made these blankets as a symbol of welcome. September 22nd marks the opening of MODA's next exhibit, [Design for Good: Architecture for Everyone](#). We hope you'll stop by to see it!*