



**NEWS BULLETIN 322  
THURSDAY APRIL 4, 2019**

**Sister Artists of North America Reach Out to Survivors of Violence in Mali**



Quilters in the US and Canada are taking a stand against gender-based violence by producing art quilts out of embroidery made by survivors of the conflict in northern Mali (photo).

Twenty-three American quilters have so far signed up for the project, known as Sister Artists. To participate, [click on this page](#) and follow the instructions.

Sister Artists is a collaborative effort between three organizations that are committed to empowering women through art and embroidery.

The squares were made in Mali by survivors of gender-based violence while they were recovering at a center run by [Sini Sanuman](#), a Malian organization that trains survivors to make soap, clothes and embroidery. Many of the women fled from violence in the north and have used their squares to describe the village life they left behind.

The squares were brought to the US by The Advocacy Project (AP) which has supported Sini Sanuman's program since 2014 and helped hundreds of women around the world to [tell their story through advocacy quilts](#).

The American art quilters have been mobilized by [Quilt For Change](#), which encourages American artists to use their talents on behalf of social justice. Allison Wilbur, an experienced quilter from Rhode Island who launched Quilt for Change in 2009 described quilts as "a way for quilters to process their emotions about difficult things that are happening in our society and around the world."

AP joined with Quilt for Change to [exhibit quilts at the United Nations](#) in New York in 2012 and Ms Wilbur herself has produced several fine advocacy quilts for AP. But this is the first time the two organizations have worked together to connect artists from the north and south.

Once the art quilts are assembled they will be exhibited in Washington and auctioned online. All proceeds will be invested in *Sini Brodage*, a cooperative run by the women in Mali.

Sister Artists has already attracted many skilled artists, including [Dawn Piasta](#), from Manitoba in Canada, who has participated in all past Quilt for Change exhibitions and [Deborah Weir](#) in California, who has long used her art on behalf of the environment and social justice.

With so much talent at work, Ms Wilbur predicted that the Malian quilts will be "absolutely unique."

"It's wonderful to create something that will help someone else," she added.