

Checkerboard

#4

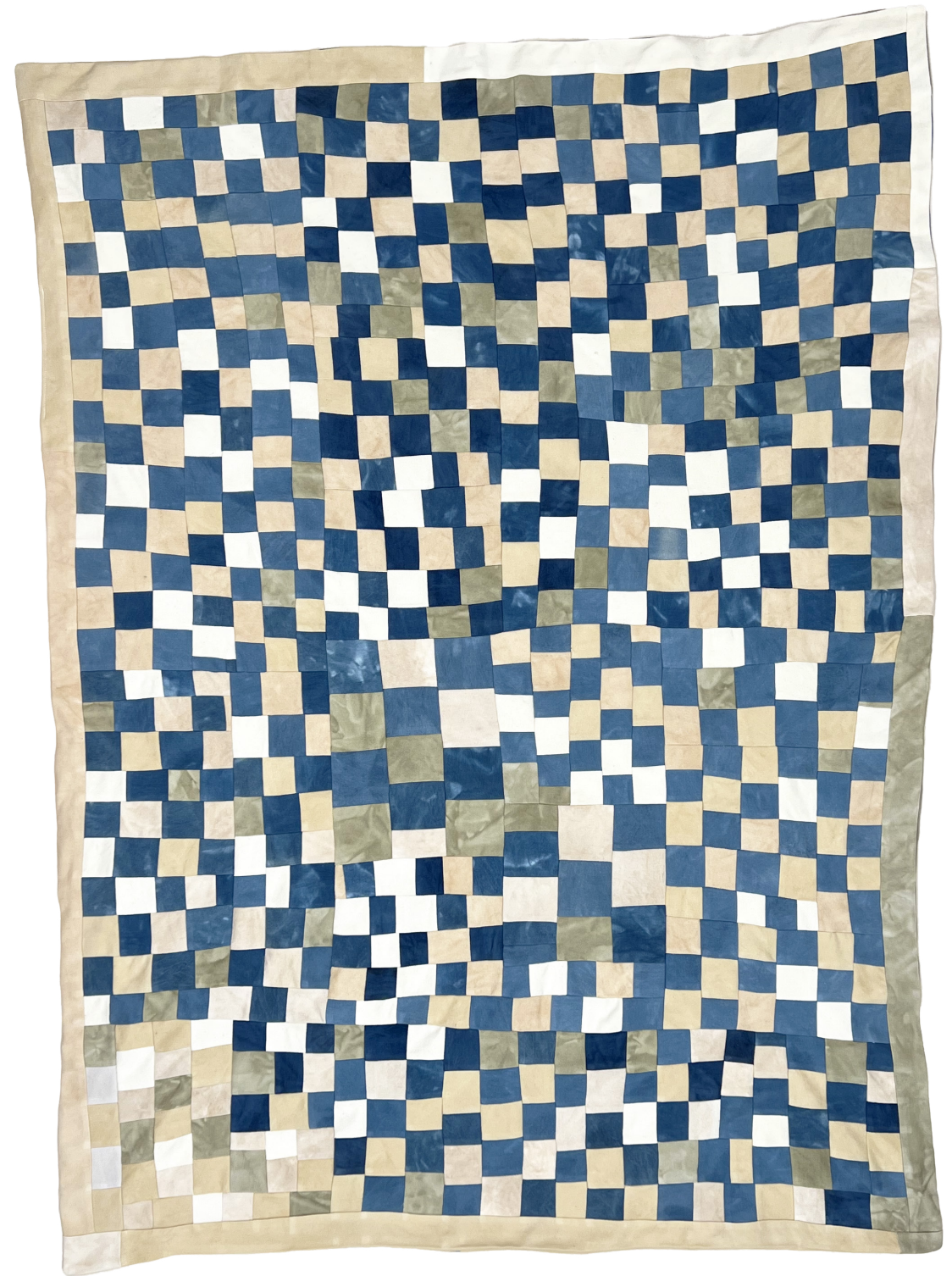
By Matt Katsaros

Jonathan Gold, the first food critic to win the Pulitzer Prize, once said of his native Los Angeles that it is an “anti-melting pot—less a melting pot but a great, glittering mosaic.” Cities like Los Angeles and my home city of San Francisco provide an urban backdrop where the idea of a multicultural melting pot is rejected, and, instead, a “glimmering mosaic” can emerge.

Countless new ideas in art, food, architecture and everything in between emerge not just from the individual pieces that produce these mosaics, but, as Gold says, when “huge numbers of multiple cultures that live in the city come together in this beautiful and haphazard fashion, the fault lines between them is sometimes where you find the most beautiful things.” The image conjured from this metaphor is one that feels familiar as you drive the avenues of the Outer Sunset neighborhood. Repetition and patterns quickly emerge as one passes rows of originally identical Doelger homes now varying only in the tint of their salt-faded colors.

In my practice, I explore this metaphor through quilts and sculptures constructed from fabric colored with natural dyes mainly sourced from neighborhood flora. Using very simple patterns, like the checkerboard pattern seen here, a basic square repeated can quickly shift away from the mundane through only small, improvisational variations in color, size, or orientation.

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Matt Katsaros
Checkerboard #4, 2023

80 x 60 in.

Indigo, eucalyptus, pine bark, dyers chamomile, oak galls & iron, and coreopsis natural dyes on cotton canvas