

# Ngukkei: Family House Home

*Brenda Joy Lem*



photo: KWOI

*Family Laundry, 1996, silk-screen on muslin, bamboo rod, 244x61 cm*



Your Aunt Mary  
could do 25-30 shirts  
with one hot iron.  
Using 1000 watt  
iron, she'd use one  
while the other was  
heating up.  
We were paid 12¢ to  
wash, hang, dry,  
starch, iron, fold,  
wrap and the sack  
shirt. You had to  
work hard for those  
12¢.

Our laundry had a  
high scorer, what  
your Uncle George  
about five at the  
time. Used to sit  
It was Friday night,  
payday, a man who  
worked at General  
Motors came in to  
pick up a big order.  
He said he needed  
any clothes he saw  
on Saturday night  
but he could not get  
her home. He re-  
mained there with his  
hat, finger dipping in  
his watch pocket  
piddling with my  
mother. "Honestly  
ma'am, I don't have  
a cent now, but I'll  
pay you next week."



The lady couldn't  
afford to do the  
work around  
getting paid, but  
because he kept  
at my mother who  
drew in and so she  
took it. It not an hour  
later he returned  
making it like it  
found anything  
on the ground. He  
said he had lost some money.

Mother said "No, don't you remember, you have  
no money".  
Later that evening, Uncle George produced the  
twenty dollar bill he had picked up. The lady  
was no happy because that was a whole lot of  
money to us.



photo: KWOI

Mom, 1996, silk-screen on muslin, bamboo rod, 244x61 cm