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Current Exhibit

Summer Exhibits Challenge Our Assumptions

The summer exhibitions at the Museum of Quilts & Textiles challenge our assumptions about sculpture, knitting, costumes, appliqué and embroidery with pieces ranging from provocative to whimsical.

Beyond Knitting: Uncharted Stitches is an exhibition of contemporary sculptural knitting showcasing the emergence of sculptural art knitting as a 21st century medium of imaginative and cutting-edge artistic innovation.

Pun Intended: The Appliquéd Wit of Dorothy Vance, features 14 of her humorous quilts juxtaposing folk art, politics and pop culture.

In Javanese Moonlight: Sha Sha Higby features three of the monumental sculptural forms created and worn by international performance artist and dancer Sha Sha Higby, juxtaposed with rare royal Indonesian batiks from the private collection of Noeleke Glenn Klavert.

Catch these exhibits before they close August 24.
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These exhibitions and related programs were funded, in part, by Silicon Valley Community Foundation; the David and Lucille Packard Foundation; an Applied Materials Excellence in the Arts grant; a program of Arts Council Silicon Valley; the Turner-Gilliland Family Fund; Lynne McCreight; Connie & Eric Tiegel, Susan Ellis & Mark Linton, Arts Council Silicon Valley in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the National Endowment for the Arts; the City of San Jose; and the Santa Clara Valley Quilt Association.



Line of Fire by Adrienne Sloane, 2007. Knitted wire, 74" x 79" x 55" variable. *Line of Fire* is the third piece in a series about the current war. Sloane writes, "Oil drips out of bullet holes into mouths below in faces imbedded in puddles of oil. The piece comes out of trying to make sense of the daily reporting on the war and wanting to comment on the greed that got us into it."

Summer Exhibits continued

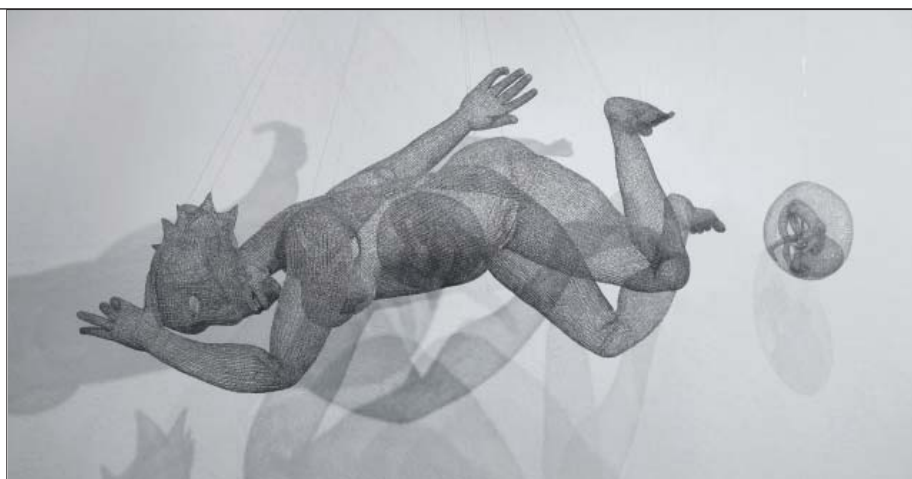
For *Beyond Knitting*, Museum curator Deborah Corsini and guest co-curator and artist Adrienne Sloane have selected a visually stunning, powerful, and intellectually provocative exhibition that highlights the tremendous variety of approaches and subject matter that contemporary textile artists here and abroad are tackling using knitting as the primary technique.

“Knitting shapes have long been defined by the human form,” said Sloane. “Knitting has moved from clothing geometry to sculpture, joining other textile art media in taking advantage of the form’s rich and powerful historical references. The knit art in this exhibit links us emotionally to the past while presenting an important visual commentary on the present.”

Added Corsini, “*Beyond Knitting* uncovers the most current and exciting art being created today by a new generation of knitters who are creating wall art, sculpture and installation. Each of the artists selected for this exhibition transforms the simple notion of needles and yarn with new techniques and fibers to create work that is haunting, humorous, political and personal.”

The exhibition includes ethereal wire sculptures by Czech artist Blanka Sperkova, who developed her own technique of finger-knitting fine wire with a basic looping stitch to create human and animal representations as well as abstract forms. The result is an interplay of the sculpted forms and the transparency of the knitted wire in multi-layered, textured pieces that play with light and shadow.

Lindsay Obermeyer’s surprising work deals with issues of genetic inheritance, aging, and mother-



Madonna of a New Age by Blanka Sperkova, 2000. Finger-knitted wire; 67” x 16” x 12”. According to Sperkova, the Madonna, created at the turn of the Millennium, has lost her baby boy embryo, representing the previous life philosophy, based upon the male principle. “Now, she is pregnant with a girl embryo, hope for the female principle, that it might bring a less aggressive and more protective aspect into the new age.” Photo by Jakub Dvorsky.

hood. Her knitted sweaters with their unusual appendages manifest the hidden nature of her own inner worrisome thoughts and issues.

“On the surface her pieces are bright, humorous and attractive, but there is a darker, deeper content to this work that reflects questions and concerns we all face,” said Corsini.



Genetic Inheritance by Lindsay Obermeyer, 2006. Mohair and acrylic yarns, wool roving, hanger; hand knitting and needle felting, 20” x 22”. Obermeyer comments, “One’s genetic inheritance gives rise to many questions and concerns. Genetic testing can provide a sense of relief or cause a lifetime of worry.” Photo by Larry Sanders.

The artists included in the exhibition are: Katharine Cobey, Donna Lish, Janet Morton, Kerry Mosley, Mark Newport, Lindsay Obermeyer, Karen Paust, Karen Searle, Adrienne Sloane and Blanka Sperkova.

“*Pun Intended: The Appliquéd Wit of Dorothy Vance* showcases her unique, clever and humanly charming folk art quilts,” said Corsini. “We’re delighted to be able to present the original work and vision of an imaginative and irrepressible artistic personality.”

Throughout her life, Vance engaged in various sorts of arts and crafts including pottery, tile making, bread making, writing, and graphic design. In 1977, Vance began to stitch, and continued to create new works until her death in February 2007 at the age of 77.

She combined her writing and sewing skills to embed clever irony and wit into such quilts as the award-winning *Presidents*; the limerick-filled quilt *There Was An Old Man*; and *Odd Couples*, a humorous pairing of icons from history and popular culture who share the same last name, such as Nat and Lana Turner, Karl and Harpo Marx, and James and Marilyn Monroe.

continued next page >>

Summer Exhibits continued



Odd Couples, detail, by Dorothy Vance, 2006. Mostly cotton, applique and embroidery, 48" x 47"

Bob Shaw, a curator and appraiser, wrote of her work, "Vance used her stitched and appliquéd art to express her political views and wide ranging interests in wryly humorous and complexly allusive ways. Most of her quilts feature cartoon-like caricatures of historical and contemporary figures, and many incorporate her own humorous verse, which compares favorably with the work of Ogden Nash."

In Javanese Moonlight: Sha Sha Higby features three of the exotic sculptural costumes that Higby wears in performance.



Sasadhara, in *Javanese Moonlight* by Sha Sha Higby/Sasadhara. Carved water buffalo hide, commissioned to villagers Rubiman, Sugiman. Photo by Robin Collier.

Higby approaches dance through the medium of sculpture. She creates intricate costumes of materials such as wood, buffalo hide, batik fabric, silk, paper and gold leaf and animates them with subtlety and grace in performances of her

own contemplative form of dance. Higby's contemporary mixed-media fiber sculptures are juxtaposed with rare royal Indonesian batiks from the private collection of Noeleke Glenn Klavert. In this way visitors are provided an introduction to the many cultures whose symbols have shaped the iconic designs found in Indonesian batiks and whose artistic and spiritual practices transformed Higby's approach to modern dance.

In Javanese Moonlight will showcase batiks whose design influences can be traced to India, China, Japan, the Middle East and Holland.

"This exhibit situates Higby's work within the context of Indonesian batik traditions," said Museum Curator Deborah Corsini. "Like batik artists, whose work is deliberate and slow—not infrequently taking months or even years to produce one stunning length of cloth—Higby mines the spiritual meaning in the physical discipline required to devote up to two years developing a complex sculptural form. As stationary art objects and as moving sculpture in her performances, these forms are an invitation to a meditative space, where time slows down and we find ourselves quietly contemplating life's mysteries."

In Javanese Moonlight is co-presented by the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in San Francisco, Indoarts and Harsanari, the San Francisco Indonesian Dance Company.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Higby will present a lecture, *Sha Sha Higby in Transition*, on Saturday, August 23, 2-3:30pm. Tickets are \$15 and [available online](#) or by calling 408.971.0323 x14.

Sha Sha Higby in Performance

Sunday, August 24 Higby brings one of her popular performances to San Jose for the first time with a showing of her new production, *In a Cloud of Glass*. Bringing together sculptural costume, dance, and puppetry, *In a Cloud of Glass* explores the atmospheric world within the magical borders be-



Costume for *In A Cloud of Glass*

tween death and life, and reflects Higby's recent travels to Myanmar and Thailand. The evening performance opens with the San Francisco Indonesian Dance Company Harsanari presenting traditional Indonesian dance.

The performance includes a processional gamelan and accompaniment to Higby's performance by the award-winning Balinese orchestra Gamelan Anak Swarasanti.

In a Cloud of Glass will be performed on Sunday, August 24 at 6pm next door to the Museum at MACLA, 510 South First Street in downtown San Jose. Tickets are [available online](#) or by phone at 408.971.0323 x14. Tickets are: \$20 in advance with a \$5 rebate at the door for members with membership card; \$10 children; \$25 at the door (if available).

August 2008

President's Letter

Dear Members,

As I write this the Olympics are dominating the visual world as millions watch athletes at the pinnacle of their careers vie for medals that will for the rest of their lives show the world that at one time they were the very best.

Amid all the emotions surrounding this spectacle is the time clock in my head that says the Olympics means it is August and that summer is almost over, the weather is beginning to change and plans need to be made for the upcoming holiday season! It is in this in-between state that I find myself today. Summer has been relaxing but I am excited about what I see coming in the next few months.

For me personally there is a new grandchild due, some remodeling at home and some travel to conferences for my artwork. For the Museum there are remodeling projects, new exhibits of quilt and textile artists that will delight our imaginations and expand our knowledge, and some travel as the exhibit of Chinese textile art arrives and anticipation grows for this exciting exhibit next February.

Over the next few months quilts will dominate our exhibits with the work of Radka Donnell and wedding quilts from our permanent collection.

You'll have the opportunity to experience quilt artists at the top of their game, along with masters of ikat tapestry and weaving, followed by contemporary Chinese textile art and then quilts from the collection of Jack Walsh.

We will have our own fiber art collecting event with the *High Fiber Under Five* benefit on November 7. Read more about it on page 6.

Our website continually adds information, special events and donor opportunities that correlate with the exhibits and promote support for all that the Museum brings to us and our community. Check the site frequently to see all that is happening here.

Drop into the store to see the ever changing stock of work from local artists and artists related to current exhibits. Hint: best time is at the beginning of an exhibit when choices are most numerous.

Choose to spend time in the galleries with the artworks to expand your knowledge of quilts and textiles and to inform your own artwork either by intention or osmosis.

Choose to donate to the Museum to support the continuing efforts to preserve and present our chosen art medium to the public so that our grandchildren can benefit from our involvement in this artform dear to our hearts.

The excitement level is growing as we work like Olympic athletes to bring you "gold medal" exhibits and life-long impressions of great quilt and textile art.

I look forward to seeing you in the galleries and at the Museum events soon...and often!

Sincerely,

Connie Tiegel
President
Board of Directors



Sleeping in a Sandstorm, by Sha Sha Higby, 2002.
Japanese Urushi, wire, silk netting.
Photo by Albert Holander.

From the Editor

Welcome to the new online edition of the Museum's quarterly newsletter. Many, many of you expressed a preference for the convenience of online communications and the desire to save trees, ink and postage.

The format of the newsletter will continue to evolve as we learn how to best take advantage of Web technologies to keep you informed and up to date.

In the meantime, enjoy this issue and look for Jane Przybysz's "Director's Corner" to return in the next issue.

Best regards,

Sandra Duncan
Vice President
Board of Directors

Textiles Roadshow Coming to a Festival Near You



Textile art is the one art form that is central to all cultures worldwide. To celebrate this common thread, the Museum will bring its expertise in world textiles out to Bay Area ethnic festivals in the coming weeks with a program aptly titled, *Common Threads*.

At each festival the Museum is offering a kind of 'antiques roadshow' event. The public is invited to bring their textiles to the festival to learn more about them

from our ethnic textile experts. At the festivals we will also display examples of textiles from the celebrated culture with select pieces from the Museum's permanent collection and from private collections.

You can take part by visiting our booth and bringing your Vietnamese textiles to: *Viet Heritage Day*, Children's Discovery Museum, downtown San Jose, Saturday, August 23 (12 Noon-4pm).

Or visit our booth and bring your Mexican textiles to: *Fiesta Patrias*, Discovery Meadow, downtown San Jose, Sunday, September 14 (10am-6pm) and *Mariachi Festival*, Mexican Heritage Plaza, Sunday, September 28, (9am-7pm).

If you would like to volunteer to help at these exciting events, please contact Kristen Calvert at 408.971.0323 x14.

This program is funded in part by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation.

Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

Summer's almost over and that means back to school time not only for the neighborhood kids but for the volunteers who present our in-school education programs to hundreds of second- and fifth-grade students throughout the county.

As the program is popular with schools from Morgan Hill to Mountain View we are always seeking additional volunteers.

Have you ever wondered what life was like for a nine-year-old child traveling across the country in a covered wagon in 1849? Or a Russian immigrant girl settling in Kansas in 1874? Or how quilts were used along the Underground Railroad?

It only takes a short time to learn these stories and then share them with fifth-grade classes using quilt patterns, other visual aids and music to bring the past to life.

You'll deliver first-person narratives gleaned from diaries, journals, letters and autobiographies of early Americans, and link the development of various quilt patterns to U.S. social and political

events, uniquely blending art and history curriculum.

Participation in the fifth-grade program helps meet the California Visual Arts content standards for Artistic Perception (1.2 & 1.3), Creative Expression (2.7), Historical and Cultural Context (3.2) and Aesthetic Valuing (4.2), and History-Social Science content standard 5.8.

Second-graders are treated to a highly interactive presentation where they learn about the different parts of a quilt, are introduced to new shapes and terms, and learn bits of United States history.

We present two dozen quilt blocks and discuss the origins of the block designs and pattern names. If you recognize Sunbonnet Sue when you see her, you can deliver this program.

The program concludes with each student creating his or her own quilt block using cloth and permanent markers that can be assembled into a beautiful quilt for the classroom.

Participation in the second-grade program helps meet the California



Visual Arts content standards for Artistic Perception (1.1), Creative Expression (2.1 & 2.2), and Historical and Cultural Context (3.1 & 3.3) and the Mathematics content standards for Measurement and Geometry (2.1 & 2.2).

If you're still not sure about volunteering, observe a few classes first to see how it's done. Then decide it's worth spending just a few hours a month. It's a fun and easy way to share your passion, learn some history and help provide rare and vital arts instruction to our youth.

For more information contact Educational Outreach Coordinator Sylvia Carroll at 408.293.3787.

Are You Getting Enough Fiber?

Join us Friday, November 7, 2008, from 6pm-11pm for *High Fiber Under Five*, a first-of-its-kind art sale devoted to world class fiber art – and at this exciting benefit, all pieces are \$500 or less.

highfiber
under five

Works include wall pieces, sculpture, and wearable art.

Come early for the best selection, stay late as the excitement continues.

If you're uncertain about taking the plunge into collecting, or considering a new approach, you can increase your F.Q. (Fiber Quotient) before *High Fiber Under Five* at a very special fiber art collecting event: *The Art of Collecting and Becoming Collectible*, October 11 at the Museum. More details on our website soon.

And remember, a lifestyle high in fiber is clinically proven to enhance your well-being.

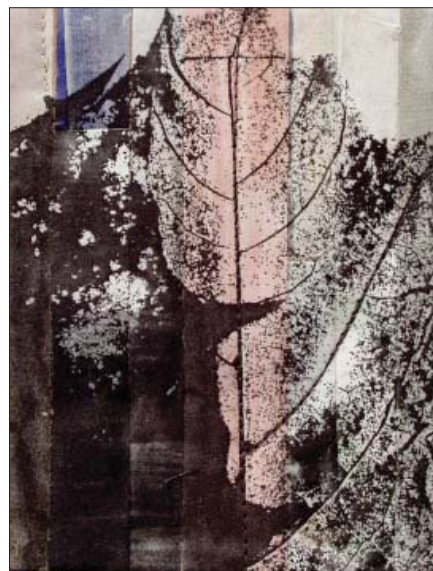


A Degree of Abstraction by B.J. Adams.

High Fiber Under Five includes works by established and emerging invited artists from around the country and includes works by such highly collectible stars as:

Elizabeth Barton
James Bassler
Louise Berube
Judith Content

Rosemary Eichorn
Nancy Erickson
Natasha Kempers-Cullen
Linda MacDonald
Therese May
Dominie Nash
Yvonne Porcella
Michael Rhode
Joan Schulze
Consuelo Underwood
Barbara Watler



Forest Four, detail, by Joan Schulze.

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