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## Current Exhibits

### Scrap ART

The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles celebrates the beauty and utility of upcycled fiber art in *Scrap ART*, a new exhibit running through October 16, 2011. Repurposing and upcycling are not new to the textile world. Textiles made before the industrial revolution were woven by hand, making each scrap a precious and treasured commodity as well as a source of creative inspiration. Quilters have long created from scraps, as have sewers, designers, and crafts makers, in cultures around the world. Contemporary fiber artists have renewed interest in this tradition and it is especially timely in the current climate of environmental awareness. *Scrap ART* celebrates the entire continuum of fiber-based recycled art.

*Scrap ART* examines the history of the original scrap quilt, from functional historical quilts pieced from bits and pieces of leftover fabrics to works of contemporary artists that embrace repurposed textiles and upcycled materials for their aesthetic and narrative qualities as well as their references to thrift and ecological awareness. Going beyond historical quilts and contemporary art quilts, *Scrap ART* also includes contemporary sculptural works made from many of the remnants of daily life.

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**Vertical 1** by Deborah Franzini, 2010. Used denim jeans and scrap yarn; machine pieced, machine quilted in unmarked spiral circles; scrap yarn couched on denim seam lines with monofilament thread. 43" x 34"

*These exhibitions and related programs are funded in part by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Arts Council Silicon Valley in partnership with the County of Santa Clara; the City of San Jose; and the Santa Clara Valley Quilt Association.*

## Scrap ART

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Drawn from the Museum's collection of historic and contemporary quilts, ethnic textiles, works by invited contemporary artists, and those culled from private collections, *Scrap ART* surveys the long and varied history of textile reincarnation.

From the Museum's collection are some dazzling one patch quilts. Composed of hundreds of tiny squares these vibrant pieces have a pixelated quality that reverberates with energy. Other historic examples of quilts come from the community and private collectors and have never been seen in a museum setting.



**Crosses, detail,** (Stone Mason's Puzzle) c. 1940-1970, maker unknown. Cottons, pieced, 71" X 81." Collection of Roderick Kiracofe. Photo by Sharon Risedorff.

Although old, these historic quilts have a decidedly modern abstracted sensibility and their irregular materials, variety of patterns, and randomly pieced shapes add to their contemporary appeal.

A selection of historic Chinese textiles from the collection of Chinalai Tribal Textiles features early to mid-1900s Yao applique blankets made of scraps from Guangxi, China, and early to mid-1900s Miao blankets of recycled

and re-woven scrap material from Guizhou Province, China.

Functioning as bedcoverings their soft patina and sun washed fading gives them a timeless quality. Included in this section is the work of a contemporary Thai artist Somporn, who also uses old Chinese scraps to create elegant patchwork textiles.

Curator Deborah Corsini said, "This exhibition features an exciting range of artists and reinvented textiles. The textural materiality and physicality of the quilts and artwork resonates with depth, transformation and personality. Inspired by scraps, leftovers and throwaways, these works highlight the creative redemption of materials into powerful works of art and beauty."

Contemporary artists in the exhibition include Canadian, Barbara Wisnoski, whose rhythmic textural color field quilts explore structure and process and the interplay of surface texture and ritual. Using hundreds of similarly hued and sized scrap fabrics her quilts have a modernist aesthetic akin to a Mark Rothko painting.

Sweater sleeves and ribbed cuffs, yokes and necklines are easily identifiable in the wonderful upcycled pieces by Ellen Danforth.

Other artists like San Jose's own Charlotte Kruk use paper



**Autumn Texture (detail)** by Wendy Hill, 2009. Zippers, commercial cotton and shot-cotton fabrics, cotton batting; pieced, collaged/appliqué, machine quilting. 24" x 40.5." Photo by Craig Howell.

wrappings from candy bars, coffee bags and sugar wrappers to design fabulous fashion and political statements about what we wear and throw away, while Sarah Nishiura's sophisticated and elegant quilts are created from her thrift shop findings of men's cast-off shirts.



**Untitled #4,** by Sarah Nishiura, 2009  
Sarah's quilts and prints are now available in the Museum Store.

Wendy Osher's sculpture is inspired by and composed of dirt-encrusted flags, cloth flower petals, bits of plastic and other

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## Scrap ART

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grave decoration findings from her gathering walks through cemeteries, a profound reminder of our own frail mortality and ultimate recycling.



**Promise, detail**, by Wendy Osher, 2011  
Mower-shredded bits of flags, cloth flowers, and trash found in a cemetery over a two year span, hand-stitched, 68" x 50" x 24"

Old clothes, jeans, ties, shirtings, fabrics, textiles, zippers, plastic, flags, buttons, books, paper, and teabags are just some of the usual and unusual materials combined to make the fantastic, recycled creations of *Scrap ART*. *Scrap ART* embrace's the collective scrap bag of our culture and applauds the universal desire to create something beautiful from the leftover materials, the discards and throwaways of a material culture.

With environmentally aware consciousness, *Scrap ART* explores the creative ways in which reused, reworked and upcycled materials, discards and scraps are an important and continuing legacy in the textile arts.



**Pray Tell** by Patti Shaw, 2011. Waxed linen thread, aluminum cups recycled from votive candle tea lights. Aluminum cups are cut, folded, punched and tied together, 72" x 84"

## The Enduring Vision of the Black Mesa Weavers

On July 17 the Museum hosted an interesting and provocative program in conjunction with the exhibition *Banded Blankets*.

*Black Mesa Weavers: Enduring Vision, Sustaining Community* was a fascinating glimpse into the lifestyle of the contemporary Diné (Navajo) and the importance of the Churro sheep to their life and to their weaving. Carol Halberstadt, co-founder of Black Mesa Weavers for Life and Land, gave a passionate introduction to the non-profit organization that arranges the wool buys and finds partners and industries to use this special wool. She introduced Verna Clinton, a Diné educator and Churro sheep raiser and Lorraine Herder, a weaver and dyer.

Clinton's presentation revealed the landscape and lifestyle of contemporary Diné sheep herders and weavers and the special quality of living on "sheep time." Herder demonstrated Navajo

weaving and talked about her creative process.

The fascinating documentary film, *Weaving Worlds*, was shown in the final hour. This film gives an intimate look at the current dilemmas facing Diné weavers and of the interconnectedness of the sheep to the weavers, to nature, to the traders as they strive to continue their cultural legacy in an ever-changing world.

The Museum, in collaboration with Black Mesa, is offering a limited edition Pendleton blanket, a fund raiser for both organizations.



Designed by Diné weavers and made from 100% Churro wool the blanket has both a male (dark) and female (light) side. Only 125 blankets are being produced and they are available for order in the shop. We hope that you will take this opportunity to support both of the non-profits and invest in this unique and beautiful blanket. This project was generously supported by a grant from the Christensen Fund.

Because of the limited number, place your order now. \$300 non-members; \$270 members. Contact Museum Store Manager Joy Nojima at [joy@sjquiltmuseum.org](mailto:joy@sjquiltmuseum.org); 408.971.0323 x11.







