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## Current Exhibits

### **Earthly Paradise: Memory, Myth, Metaphor and Eden Re-imagined**

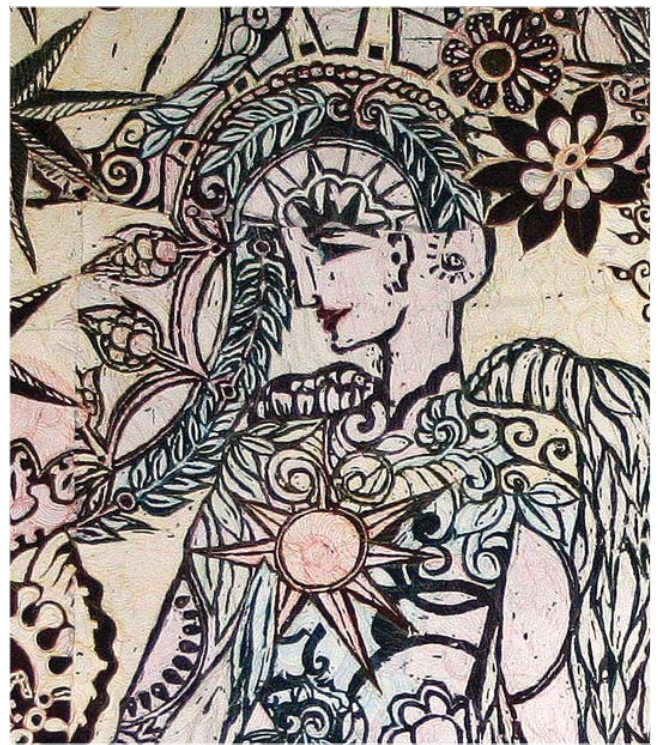
The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles showcases the work of two collaborating teams of contemporary fiber artists in two unique exhibits on view through May 1, 2011.

*Earthly Paradise: Memory, Myth, Metaphor* highlights the imaginative quilted works of A Bee, the collective duo of artists, Carrie Houseman and Darbury Novoselic. *Eden Re-imagined* presents the embroidered work of Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone and is the first time the two artists have a solo exhibition outside of their native country of Argentina.

*Earthly Paradise: Memory, Myth, Metaphor* features large scale quilted allegorical textiles that are inspired by medieval tapestries, mega-fauna and life-size proportions. A Bee—the creative collective of Carrie Houseman and Darbury Novoselic—create visually complex and graphic pieces that evoke a personal and symbolic world of mythological characters, figurative elements, animals and stylized flowers.

Houseman and Novoselic combine their own original prints, often mirrored and repeated with an abundance of quilted stitchery that gives the pieces texture and adds color and weight.

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**Purloin, detail** by A Bee, 2009. Hand screened silk haboti, organic cotton batting, hand dyed raw silk tussah, silk and hemp blend, hand dyed silk satin. Hand printed fabric mirrored, repeated, appliqué; obsessive quilt stitching throughout. 90" x 103"

*These exhibitions and related programs are funded in part by Silicon Valley Community Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; 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.*

## Earthly Paradise

continued

Focusing on the beauty of the natural world, they create allegorical modern day stories that are infused with many different layers of meaning.

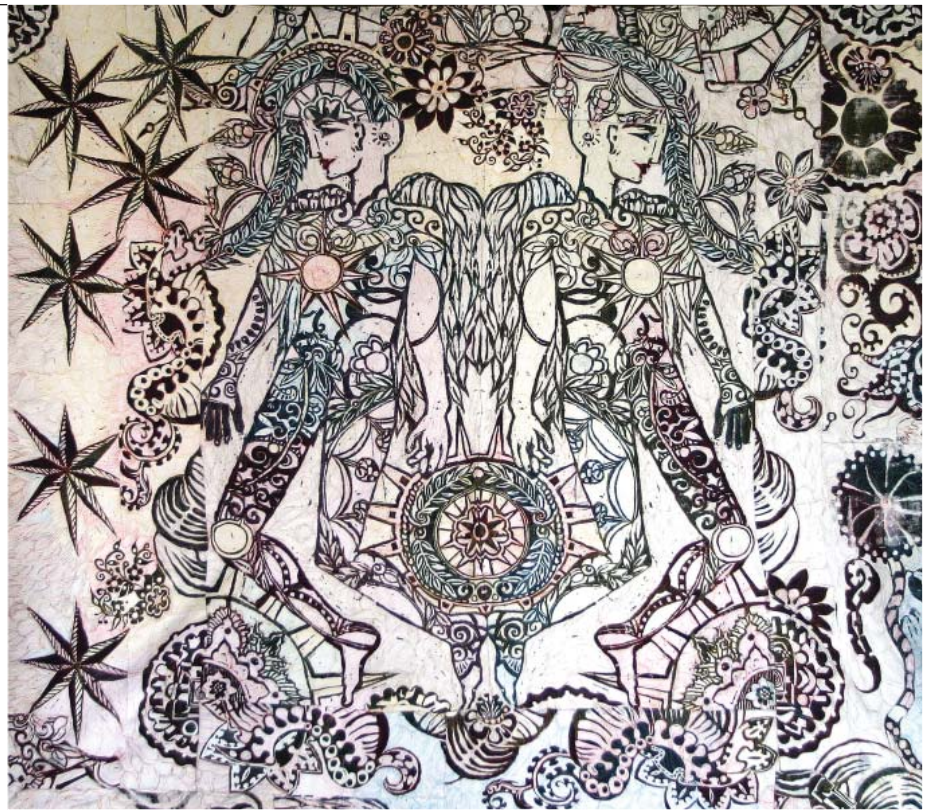
Museum Curator Deborah Corsini noted, “Although quilt-like in structure, A Bee’s work feels more like tapestry because of the grand scale of the work and the allegorical content of the imagery. Their imagery is fresh, original and passionate. It pushes the boundaries of the art quilt into new directions.”

As A Bee describe it, “We create stories in print and thread.”



**Water Lily** by A Bee, 2009. Hand printed silk haboti, organic cotton batting, hand printed, hand dyed silk patchwork, hand dyed silk satin trim, cotton threading. Hand printed fabric mirrored, repeated, appliqué; obsessive quilt stitching throughout. 90” x 98”

**The Story of Water Lily:** “While a simple diorama of what a dragon fly might see after a rainstorm, this story is played out in the studio when both sets of eyes fight for balance and breathing room. This water lily is a beauty from the present world. A world where dragonflies, crickets, lilies and swans still exist, the river is flooding; the hills are full of mist and what we see around us every day.”



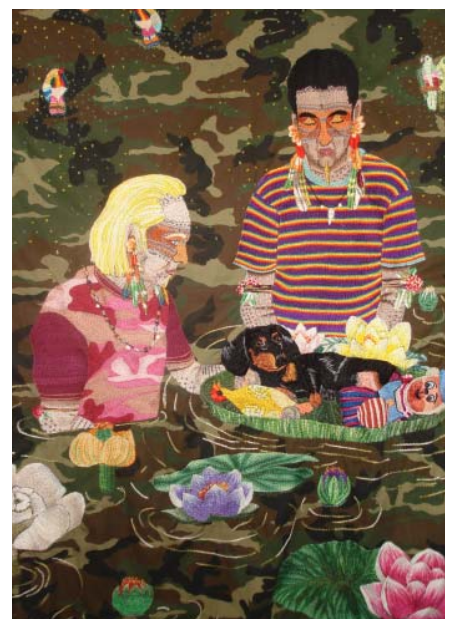
**The Story of Purloin:** “Purloin is most reflective of A Bee, a self-portrait that could be titled “Growing a Spine.” A purloin is a support cross beam that anchors the trusses together on a hoop house, an extension of our studio. The work of A Bee is becoming strong—strong enough to grow wings and fly—not in an angelic kind of way, but we want the work to soar on its own merit. Our goals are lofty. This is about becoming confident in our mode of expression, the medium of silk and stitch. The print imagery on the bodies represents armor, metal working, or filigree of courtly armor used for battle or joust. It protects its inhabitants thus allowing the collective of A Bee to flourish.”

## Eden Re-imagined

*Eden Re-imagined* is an intimate look into the private and imaginary world of life partners Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone. Their self-referential stitched embroideries depict the artists in various landscapes, often disguised as indigenous people and include their beloved dachshund, Piolin.

Their embroidered stitcheries range from intimate small scale portraits to lavishly embellished pieces with carefully rendered details of their faces, clothing and environment.

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**El Nacimiento (Birth)** by Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone, 2010. Cotton thread, camouflage fabric; hand embroidery. 55” x 64”  
Photo credit: Daniel Kiblsky

## Eden Re-imagined

continued

Included in this exhibition is the large scale installation *Brujas Protectoras* (Protective Witches) which shows the artists in shamanistic garb framing their dog.



*El Nacimiento* detail.

According to the artists, “We are always the protagonists of our works. In the beginning, our portraits were realistic, but we began to abandon this when we began to enjoy our embroidery more, and we decided to show ourselves more as we see ourselves in our dreams.”



*Piolin y sus juguetes (Piolin and his Toys)* by Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone, 2007. Cotton thread, silk, wool, plush sconces, carpet; hand embroidery. 39" x 71"



*Los Herederos (Heirs)* by Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone, 2008. Cotton thread, Chita stone, scarves; hand embroidery, appliqués, 20" X 20"

Museum curator Deborah Corsini said, “This is a provocative, fascinating and intimate look at the work and powerful relationship of two artist partners and their unique world view.”

## Boy Code—Works by Wendy Osher

The *Boy Code* project, comprised of eleven embroideries, investigates the power doodles that so many boys spontaneously produce, teach each other, and practice during early adolescence. The original drawings reproduced by artist and mother Wendy Osher capture the complexities of boys' early teen years as they acquire their young adult identities.

“Faithfully rendering the determined graphite line quality and insistent erasures with embroidery floss, I have attempted to induce the time and attention required to decode the complexities and vulnerabilities embedded in the boys' searingly brutal images of male figures,” said Osher.

“The *Boy Code* project is a unique example of an artist (and mother) attempting to get a better understanding into the fascinating transformation of her ‘sweet boys’ on their path to manhood,” added Corsini.



*Jacob*, by Wendy Osher, 2003. Cotton floss on cotton, repurposed silk, wool, and cotton fabrics from men's suits, ties, dress shirts. Hand-embroidery, 20.5" x 13.5"

Framed in *thangka* (Tibetan portable altar) format, constructed of cast-off clothing from men's suits and ties, the doodles are linked to the stereotypical symbols of male power in our culture.



*Isaac Power Level*, detail, by Wendy Osher, 2003. Cotton floss on cotton, repurposed silk, wool, and cotton fabrics from men's suits, ties, dress shirts. Hand-embroidery, 21" x 16"

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February 2011

## President's Letter

Dear Members,

Spring is arriving in San Jose announced by the budding and blossoming of the cherry trees and acacia, the same beautiful combination of colors contained in the Museum logo. The change from winter to spring is a welcome one.

There are changes going on at the Museum as well. The major change is the resignation of our Executive Director, Jane Przybysz.

Jane is taking a new position as Executive Director of the McKisick Museum at the University of South Carolina. We wish Jane all the best as she makes this wonderful move in her career and is able to live closer to her father.

Our new interim director is introduced in a separate article. Please welcome Linda Craighead and make her feel at home. The Board has put a transition process in place to do a national search for a permanent executive director. We will make an announcement when the process is complete. We

expect it to take approximately 4-6 months.

Also new at the Museum is the finished upstairs administrative space. The staff moved up at the end of February and are now able to work in natural light and ample space, yet in a team setting to facilitate ease of communication and collaboration. Our volunteers will enjoy a wonderful break area and the library will soon be arranged and set up for research and resource opportunities.

Our staff has an extraordinary set of exhibits planned for this year. Be sure to visit the present exhibit of embroidery/tapestry in all of its imaginative glory. This is a mind-expanding experience for anyone who loves threads.

The final phase of our Capstone Campaign will be launched this spring. Our Major Donor Committee has planned and updated materials and needs to clearly define our goals and timeline.

Expect to receive information in the mail regarding this campaign and please respond as you can.

The sooner we complete our goals the more we can bring to exhibitions, programs and growing the collection. Call me if you have any questions. I am happy to share the details with you.

I hope to see you at the Museum as we say goodbye to Jane and wish her well. The present exhibit is really a tribute to the philosophy that Jane has brought to the Museum—that imagination has no limits and we all benefit from exposure to the extraordinary.



Thank you Jane, for all that you have taught us!

Connie Tiegel  
*President, Board of Directors*

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### Museum Staff

Jane Przybysz  
*Executive Director*  
Deborah Corsini  
*Curator*  
Joyce Hulbert  
*Collections Manager*  
Caroline Ocampo  
*Marketing Director*  
Joy Nojima  
*Store Manager*  
Ann Rossouw  
*Development Assistant*  
Kristen Calvert  
*Visitor & Member Services*

Zsuzsanna Veres  
*Curatorial Assistant*  
Michelle Debono  
*Visitor Services*  
Jessica Paulin  
*Administrative Assistant*  
Sylvia Carroll  
*Educational Outreach*  
Denise Martin  
*Arts Express*  
Janet Hagquist  
*Quilts as Women's Shelter*  
Pat Havey & Jenn Vickers  
*Kids Create*

### Board of Directors

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Sandra Duncan  
*Vice President*  
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Larel Bondi  
Nancy Franklin  
Karin Hazelkorn  
Derrick Koh  
Lynn Koolish

Michele McKee  
Marie Strait  
Yvonne Porcella  
Leah Thompson

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## Modern Maya

*Modern Maya*, huipils from the collection of Paul and Kathleen Vitale presents a stunning collection of contemporary Mayan clothing and the weavers who produced them in the first decade of the 21st century.

The collection, owned by Paul and Kathleen Vitale of Vallejo, is an integral part of videos produced by the nonprofit Endangered Threads Documentaries during the past six years.

The Vitales have traveled hundreds of miles, on unpaved back roads, to small communities and remote villages in Guatemala. There they often spend months at a time getting to know the women who weave and wear the traditional garments of their heritage. Through their documentaries they want to preserve the fast disappearing art of Guatemalan back strap weavings and the traditional cultures that go with it.

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### Women Behind the Lens with Kathleen Mossman Vitale

April 17, 2–3 pm

In this lecture with assorted film clips, documentarian, filmmaker and collector Kathleen Mossman Vitale will present her work with contemporary Mayan weavers and her approach to working with these women who are overcoming the daily challenges of being indigenous, female, and survivors of the horrific 36-year Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996). \$15; \$10 members and students. Reservations: [www.sjqmilmuseum.org/calendar](http://www.sjqmilmuseum.org/calendar) or 408.971.0323 x14.



Huipil by Barbara Tinay, from the collection of Paul and Kathleen Mossman Vitale.

## Scrappy Art is Coming ...and you can help!

The Museum is planning an exhibition focusing on both historical and contemporary examples of scrap textile art, and we are seeking excellent examples of scrappy quilts and other forms of scrap textile art to be considered for the exhibition.

The exhibition will highlight examples from the Museum collection of historical scrappy quilts as well as document current trends in re-purposing of materials in the textile arts.

We are reaching out to our community to inquire if there are quilts you would like to share with us for consideration of loan or donation towards this exhibition.

Historical pieces, quilts with an eclectic flair, textile art that features wide-ranging combinations of color and materials, and contemporary textile art that transcends the historical trend to include innovative re-purposing of recycled materials are especially desired.

Examples can be submitted in two ways—**By Email:** An image of the object can be sent by email as a Jpeg. Please send an

overall and a detail as well as any information on the history or artist. Put Scrap Art in the subject line and send to Deborah Corsini, Curator, at [deborah@sjquiltmuseum.org](mailto:deborah@sjquiltmuseum.org) or Joyce Hulbert, Collections, at [joyce@sjquiltmuseum.org](mailto:joyce@sjquiltmuseum.org).

**Bring to the Museum:** We will hold a *Call for Scrap Art* at the Museum on Tuesday afternoon, April 12th to view and consider objects from the community for possible inclusion in *Scrap Art*. Please be in touch with us by phone or email to reserve a time to bring in objects from your collection and artwork. 408.971.0323 x20.

It seems everywhere we look there are textiles being used in new and exciting ways, whether in the interest of recycling or free-wheeling art exploration. At the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles we know this kind of thing has been done for a very long time—and done exceptionally well—by historical quiltmakers as well as cutting-edge textile artists.

Thank you for considering sharing with us your “scrappy” textiles and we look forward to hearing from you. We invite each of you as well to join us in supporting this special exhibition.

## Director's Corner

When the Board of Directors with Maria Rubio at the helm hired me back in 1998 to serve as the executive director of the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, they were very clear that securing the Museum a permanent home was to be my top priority. Since the interim director, Lynn Upchurch, was already far along in her conversations with the City of San Jose about a small, two-story structure on San Pedro Street becoming the Museum's home, I figured I'd be at this job three-to-five years and then find my way back to an academic setting where I could return to the teaching, research and writing I'd been trained to do.



The Museum celebrated the grand opening of its permanent home in 2005.

Twelve years and three facility planning projects later, the Museum is about to complete Phase IIA of the renovation of the home it owns at 520 South First Street. The organization is fortunate to have a highly talented and dedicated staff and a Board of Directors that is well suited to take the organization to the next level. The Knight Foundation has just awarded the Museum a \$60,000 grant to seed a digital textile workshop in the space that has served temporarily as administrative offices. And the Museum is

poised to launch the final phase of its capital campaign to pay off the mortgage. In other words, I've more or less accomplished what I was hired to do.

That is why—when my former boss at the McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina called me to say she was retiring this year and invited me to apply for her job—I decided to throw my hat in the ring. Having not applied for a job in 12 years, I figured I could use the practice. So I applied and they made me an offer I couldn't refuse. At the end of March, I will leave San Jose to take a new job as executive director of McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina.

My decision to leave the Museum after 12 years of service is in no way a reflection of any diminished commitment on my part to SJMQT's mission, values, programs or long-term organizational sustainability. Rather, I see taking this new position as an opportunity both to secure relief from the financial stress that the economic downturn has created for my family and to make a difference at an institution and in a place where the need for committed culture workers arguably is greater than the need is here in California.

Even as I write this, the Board has named my friend and colleague Linda Craighead as interim director and is preparing to launch the search for a permanent executive director. While it's important that the Board lead this process, you should know that I have made myself available to the Board, staff and volunteers to assist in whatever

ways I can to ensure the continued success of the organization in which I have invested 12 years of my life's work.

This work has enriched my life immeasurably. I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to join with you, present and past board members, staff and volunteers to build an institution that I firmly believe has made the world a better place—for quilts, textiles and the people who create and value them.

Jane Przybysz  
Executive Director

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## Linda Craighead Joins Museum as Interim Director

The Board of Directors has selected Linda Craighead to serve as interim director of the Museum as it searches for a new permanent executive director.



Linda was most recently director of Arts & Sciences for the City of Palo Alto. She also served as director of the Palo Alto Art Center for more than 16 years and brings a wealth of programming, development and management experience to the Museum.

"I have long been a fan of this institution and look forward to working closely with the Museum's board and staff to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership," she said.

Linda holds a master of fine arts degree from San Jose State University and numerous certificates in non-profit management and fund development.