



News Release

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SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF QUILTS & TEXTILES PRESENTS

JEAN RAY LAURY: A LIFE BY DESIGN

First Major Retrospective of Influential Artist's Life Work

SAN JOSE, Calif., November 30, 2005 – The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles will present the first major retrospective of the work of Jean Ray Laury, one of the seminal figures in the contemporary fiber art movement with *Jean Ray Laury: A Life by Design*, January 17, 2006 – April 9, 2006. An opening reception with the artist is scheduled for Sunday, January 22 from 2:00-4:00pm. Live jazz music will be provided by the Daniel Green Trio. The reception is open to the public and free with admission.

Artist, designer, author, teacher and social commentator, Jean Ray Laury was at the cutting edge of the contemporary fiber art movement that was just beginning to form in California in the late 1950s, blazing the trail that became crowded with followers by the 1970s. She has remained an enormously influential figure.

“With quiet persistence, an incisive eye, and tongue planted firmly in cheek, Laury has spent her life redesigning the world, poking fun at the establishment, as well as firmly established ideas, while inviting viewers and students to consider the absurd contradictions of human behavior,” said Curator Robin Treen.

The first major retrospective of her work, *Jean Ray Laury: A Life by Design* will explore Laury's life as an artist and designer, and her work in multiple mediums, including wood appliqué, quilting, and paper cutwork, among others. She began her career in the 1950s, accepting design commissions from publications such as *House Beautiful* and *Family Circle*. As the contemporary art quilt movement began to evolve and the first seeds of the feminist art movement were sown, pioneers such as Laury returned to an emphasis on content in their work.

“Laury takes an innovative approach to traditional textile-making techniques, inviting people into a distinctive world filled with contradictory images and sly wit; a world in which cartoon-like irons fly through the air emitting innocent puffs of steam, absurdly happy housewives pursue their drudgery in a dreamy state of bliss, and politicians are hoisted on their own petards,” said Treen. “Laury's work is a reflection of the complex patterns of contemporary life, the simple beauty of natural forms, and the human need to explore our connections to each other and our various worlds.”

Jean Ray Laury: A Life By Design will showcase some 75 pieces of art and related objects representing Laury's 50-year career making art and commenting on life. Works will be drawn primarily from private collections and the artist's holdings. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue with an introduction by author, artist and critic Dr. Sandra Sider.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will present a slide lecture with Sider titled *Art Quilts and America During the 1960s and 1970s*, Sunday, March 19, 2006 from 2:00-3:30pm. Sider will discuss how American art quilts evolved in the turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s, especially in relation to contemporary politics and space-age materials. Jean Ray Laury was a pivotal figure during this period. The lecture derives from sections of Sider's current book-in-progress: *Quilts and Art, 1960-1980*.

Sandra Sider is known internationally for her curatorial expertise and critical writing on fiber art, which has appeared in *Fiberarts Magazine*, *Surface Design Journal*, and various exhibition catalogues during the past two decades. She holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of North Carolina. She teaches art history in New York City and is also a quilt artist.

Jean Ray Laury received bachelor's degrees in Art and English from the University of Northern Iowa, and a master of arts in Design from Stanford University. She has taught at numerous colleges and universities, including California State University at Fresno and the University of California Santa Cruz, and is the author of sixteen books, including a recent novel. Her work has been widely exhibited and published, and is represented in numerous public and private collections.

Founded in 1977, the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles is the oldest museum of its kind in the United States and in 2005 became one of the top 10 attractions in San Jose. Museum and Museum Store hours are: 10:00am-5:00pm Tuesday through Sunday; open until 8:00pm Thursdays; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$5 general; \$4 students and seniors; and free to museum members and children under 13. Admission is free on the first Thursday of each month. Program fee for *Art Quilts and America* is \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. Reservations are required. For more information, call 408-971-0323 or visit www.sjqquiltmuseum.org.

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