



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Renowned Collection of Contemporary Art Quilts Comes to San Jose**

SAN JOSE, Calif., February 18, 2009 – The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles presents *Reservoir: John M. Walsh III Collects*, May 5 – July 26, 2009. *Reservoir* showcases an extraordinary group of contemporary art quilts from the private collection of advocate and champion of the contemporary art quilt movement, John M. Walsh III. The opening reception, free with admission, is Sunday, May 10, 2:00-4:00pm.

Also premiering May 5 is *Connections: Small Tapestry International*, sponsored by the American Tapestry Alliance, and featuring a stunning range of 48 small format tapestries.

*Reservoir* includes a selection of 29 quilts based on water and nature-inspired themes, a primary component of the Walsh collection. Walsh began collecting art quilts in the early 1990s and has built one of the country’s leading collections by nationally and internationally renowned artists. Because of his own connection with water—as owner of a water purification business and the owner of property with a waterfall—quilts dealing with the subject of water have become a focus of his collection.

“Water has always played a big part in my life: as a little child playing in the glen that ran through my grandparents’ farm, living on the shore of Lake Michigan as a teenager, now playing in the same glen with my grandchildren,” said Walsh. “My life’s work is making water safe to use including purifying drinking water, preventing pollution and controlling corrosion. When I commission a work for the collection, I normally request that water be the theme. Water takes so many forms—lakes, clouds, snow, steam, ice—that it allows the artist freedom of expression while tying the works together with a common thread.”

From ethereal works like Rachel Brumer’s “Describing Rain,” a quilt in two panels contrasting abstract imagery and photorealism, to the earthy views of a river at forest edge in “Forest Flowing,” by Karen Perrine, water is explored in its many forms and contexts. Some of the other artists whose work is included in this exhibition are: Therese Agnew, Pauline Burbidge, Judith Content, Gayle Fraas and Duncan Slade, Tim Hardy, Marilyn Henrion, Therese May, Velda Newman, Katie Pasquini-Masopust and Joan Schulze.

“This timely and provocative exhibition demonstrates the art quilts’ power to express our relationship to water and nature with works of great sensitivity, beauty and variety,” said Museum Curator Deborah Corsini. “It is also an intimate look at the growth and maturation of an important contemporary quilt collection.”

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*Vermont Swimmers*,  
detail, by Catherine  
McConnell



*Wisconsin Wetlands II:  
River Bend* by Sue  
Benner



*Jack's Falling Water*  
by Gayle Fraas and  
Duncan Slade

**Connections: Small Tapestry International** was juried by Jane Sauer of Jane Sauer Gallery in Santa Fe, NM. The intimate scale – 100 square inches – creates a provocative challenge for the artist weavers. All the elements of design, material choice, color, sett (the number of warp ends per inch) and concept become sharply honed and finely tuned in this format.

According to Corsini, tapestry weaving (defined as a hand-woven, weft-faced fabric with discontinuous wefts) with its long history is well represented here in all its rich diversity, its meticulous craftsmanship and its inspired vocabulary of idea. “A wide range of ideas and styles—from the traditional to experimental, from the realistic to abstract—are showcased and the technique is thriving in the talented hands of these artists. Although small in scale the exhibited works express a powerful and imaginative creative voice,” said Corsini.

Several programs are planned in conjunction with the exhibitions:

May 10, 2009; 1pm

**Collectors, Collaborations & Commissions**

A conversation with John M. Walsh III, Penny McMorris and artists Judith Content and Joan Schulze.

May 10, 2009; 3pm

**Connections Artists Talk**

A conversation with a number of the *Connections* exhibiting artists.

May 11 – 13, 2009; 9am-5pm each day

**Toolkit of Tapestry Techniques**

Workshop taught by Christine Laffer

May 17, 2009; 2-4pm

**The Rising Tide – Climate Change and San Francisco Bay Wetlands**

Lecture by Adam Parris

and

**Raising Environmental Awareness for Water through Textile Art**

Lecture by Linda Gass

For details on these and other events, visit [http://sjquiltmuseum.org/calendar\\_may.html](http://sjquiltmuseum.org/calendar_may.html)

San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles was the first museum in the United States dedicated to quilts and textiles as an art form. In 2005, San Jose Mercury News named the Museum one of the top 10 attractions in San Jose. Museum and Museum Store hours are: 10:00am-5:00pm Tuesday through Sunday; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$6.50 general; \$5 students and seniors; and free to museum members and children under 13. Admission is free on the first Friday of each month. The San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles is located at 520 South First Street in downtown San Jose. For more information, call 408-971-0323 or visit [www.sjquiltmuseum.org](http://www.sjquiltmuseum.org).

These exhibitions and related programs are funded in part by Carmen M. Christensen; Silicon Valley Community Foundation; 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; Adobe Systems Incorporated; Tapestry Weavers West; and the Santa Clara Valley Quilt Association.

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Editor’s Note: For available images go to: [www.sjquiltmuseum.org/primg\\_walsh](http://www.sjquiltmuseum.org/primg_walsh)