



News Release

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RETROSPECTIVE OF PIONEERING ART QUILTER COMES TO SAN JOSE

***Charged Sites: Radka Donnell's Art Quilts* examines 40-year career of feminist artist**

SAN JOSE, Calif., July 1, 2008 – Opening September 2, 2008 at the San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, *Charged Sites: Radka Donnell's Art Quilts* examines the 40-year career of a pioneering and influential art quilter, feminist, and author in her first west coast retrospective. Radka Donnell's quilts are distinguished by a bold, painterly, abstract expressionist approach to the use of color, line and pattern. In Donnell's approach to her art she freely combines large scale printed fabrics cut in unusual shapes to create original, improvisational works. The exhibition runs through November 2, 2008. The opening reception, free with admission, is scheduled for Friday, September 5, 6-8pm

"Her work captures an exuberance and spontaneity of expression, and a unique liveliness that is still fresh and significant today," said curator Deborah Corsini. "Quiltmaking is considered to be one of the true American art forms and Donnell's work, like a jazz riff, is experimental, bold and energy packed."

In her book, *Quilts as Women's Art: A Quilt Poetics* (1990), Donnell explains her longtime commitment to making quilts. "Making quilts became an issue of liberation for me. Thinking and talking about quilts, learning about their special nature as everyday objects in our lives and as women's art, have ever since, been a context for my search for the neglected part of myself and for a better human climate altogether." Donnell writes, "Quiltmaking politicized me." She was the first artist to take a feminist stand and speak of quilts as "liberation." She was ahead of her time with her freeform approach to the quilt medium and has influenced many contemporary quilt artists, including Michael James, Sylvia Einstein, and Nancy Halpern. The exhibition will feature a significant body of Donnell's work, showcasing her innovative vision, and will also include work by artists who have explored the bed as a "charged site," a notion Donnell introduced in *Quilts as Women's Art*.

San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles is the first museum of its kind in the United States, and in 2005 was named 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.sjqquiltmuseum.org.

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Editor's Note: For available images go to: www.sjqquiltmuseum.org/primg_donnell