

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Kathleen Glass
Communications Manager
Asheville Art Museum
828.253.3227, ext. 116
kglass@ashevilleart.org

See bottom of page for image credit.

See also: attached list of additional corresponding high resolution images available upon request.



Asheville Art Museum presents Art/Sewn

Opens Friday, September 14 with Reception from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. | Gallery Talk at 4:00 p.m.

ASHEVILLE, NC – *Art/Sewn* focuses on works of art in which sewing is integral to the making and viewing experience. The exhibition blurs the distinction between art and craft, as many of today’s fine artists adopt craft forms and techniques and craft artists produce non-functional works. *Art/Sewn* will be celebrated with an **Opening Reception on Friday, September 14 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.** (free with Membership or Museum Admission) and will remain on view through Sunday, January 6, 2013 in the Museum’s North Wing. The Opening Reception is preceded by a **Gallery Talk at 4:00 p.m.** with the guest curator, Ward Mintz, and several featured artists.

What the works featured in *Art/Sewn* share is sewing—sewing on woven fabric, felt and paper, as well as the technique of sewing as a means of production, as expression and as the basis of a variety of narratives. The exhibition presents contemporary artworks in a variety of forms—quilts, assemblage, hangings, embroidery on cloth and paper, among others—that consciously blur the distinction between fine art and craft.

According to guest curator Ward Mintz, the exhibition “provides a vivid contemporary response to the history of art made with thread and highlights sewing as an integral element in the art-making process.”

The guest curator places these sewn works in a historical context. He notes that, in virtually all world cultures, sewing has been the province of women. As early as the mid-1700s in the United States, while most women sewed for practical reasons, women and girls from wealthier families were producing pictures made with thread. With the rise of the middle and upper middle class in the 1800s, sewing became a means of self-expression and a route to knowledge for women. In addition to pictures sewn with thread, they were producing items such as quilts and samplers. By the end of the century, as the United States became an industrial power, even more middle class women were able to indulge in leisure pursuits. They produced quilts and other sewn items that were valued more for their artistry and less for their usefulness. As the country moved into the

20th century, though, there were still those who needed to produce sewn items for warmth and comfort, such as the quilts made by the women of Gee's Bend, Alabama.

By the 20th century, more women were becoming artists, though few were given the opportunity to achieve the celebrity of their male counterparts. By the late 1960s and 1970s, feminist artists demanded greater recognition and exhibition opportunities while creating artworks that legitimized the personal as an appropriate subject for art, resulting in an unprecedented expansion of artistic forms and practice, including sewing.

Their heirs, whose work is featured in *Art/Sewn*, use sewing as an integral element in their work. Three of the artists make quilts or quilt-like work. One, Sandy Benjamin-Hannibal, embraces the African-American quilt traditions of asymmetry and improvisation. Another, Denise Burge, combines piecing and quilting with crochet and uses cartoon-like imagery to tell the story of "the destructive interaction between ourselves and nature." A third artist, Gina Phillips, has created a room-size installation in which a quilt, "Holt Cemetery Tooth Comforter," makes reference to cemeteries in her adopted city of New Orleans where human teeth and bones emerge from freshly dug graves.

Still other artists, such as Emily Barletta and Linnea Glatt, borrow from the traditions of Minimalism and Post-Minimalism and create mesmerizing works that seem to substitute the needle for the pencil and paintbrush. Hannah Chalew combines drawing and sewing to chart how Mother Nature is reclaiming New Orleans neighborhoods.

The artists included in this exhibition are Emily Barletta, Sandy Benjamin-Hannibal, Denise Burge, Hannah Chalew, Elisa D'Arrigo, Linnea Glatt, Janet Henry, Cyrilla Mozenter, Gina Phillips, Jessica Rankin and Anna Von Mertens.

About the Asheville Art Museum

Founded by artists in 1948 in Asheville, NC, the Asheville Art Museum annually presents an exciting, inviting and active schedule of exhibitions and public programs based on its permanent collection of 20th and 21st century American art. Any visit will also include experiences with works of significance to Western North Carolina's cultural heritage including Studio Craft, Black Mountain College and Cherokee artists. Special exhibitions feature renowned regional and national artists and explore issues of enduring interest. The Museum also offers a wide array of innovative, inspiring and entertaining educational programs for people of all ages. Additional information for upcoming exhibitions and public programs at the Museum can be found online at www.ashevilleart.org.

Above: Denise Burge, *Machination*, 2002. Fabric and yarn, 98 x 70 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.

Special thanks to [Bold Life](#), [Verve](#) and [Carolina Home & Garden](#) magazines for their support as a Media Sponsor of the Museum for the 2013 fiscal year. For more information about media sponsorships, please email Kathleen Glass, Communications Manager, at kglass@ashevilleart.org.

Asheville **Art** Museum

The Asheville Art Museum is the only nonprofit visual arts museum serving the 24 counties of Western North Carolina. Incorporated by artists in 1948, the Museum collects, preserves and interprets American art of the 20th and 21st centuries with a focus on work of significance to the Southeast.

Centrally located in downtown Asheville on Pack Square, the Museum is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Special docent-guided tour packages are available for groups and students.

Admission to the Museum is \$8.00 for adults and \$7.00 for seniors, students with ID and for children 4-15 (children age three and younger are admitted free). Members are admitted free to the Museum.

The Asheville Art Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums and receives general operating support from businesses, foundations and individuals, as well as from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. Additional support is provided by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

The Asheville Art Museum asks when reprinting images, please keep all artwork at their original proportions; please do not crop them or alter them disproportionately. Provided image credit information is mandatory and images are not for resale.