Social Fabric

The Craft and Folk Art Museum presents an exhibition of contemporary artists who intersect fabric-based art with social engagement

January 27 – May 5, 2013

Public opening reception
Saturday, January 26
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

LOS ANGELES, CA — The Craft and Folk Art Museum presents Social Fabric, an exhibition of seven contemporary artists who confront the problems of mass production and consumption through fiber-based art that incorporates social engagement and public interaction. The exhibition will be on view from January 27 through May 5, 2013 and has been curated by Anuradha Vikram, Curator of Worth Ryder Gallery at the University of California Berkeley, Department of Art Practice.

Fabric is a rich material for contemporary American artists who are engaged with social critique and public engagement. Textiles communicate a range of ideas that reflect personal tastes and cultural identifications; yet, they also carry implications about larger concerns related to labor, global commerce, and sustainability. The emerging and mid-career American artists represented in Social Fabric use their fabric-based art as a conduit to question global economic and labor systems.
The artists featured in this exhibition apply social practice forms of art to create opportunities for interaction between artists and audience members through performances, workshops, and collaborations. The resulting collaborations with art viewers and non-artists expand notions of single authorship for artworks. The *Counterfeit Crochet Project* by Stephanie Syjuco enlists the work of participants around the world to make crocheted imitations of designer handbags and accessories. She refers to this system of outsourced labor as “improper ways of interfacing with capitalism,” in that the work made by the individual makers belongs to them, and Syjuco does not profit from it.

Artists such as Allison Smith, Bean Gilsdorf, and the Combat Paper Project utilize refashioned military textiles to articulate collective memory around war and histories of nationalism. Combat Paper helps veterans turn their military uniforms into paper, mining the therapeutic potential of art. Smith’s practice of recreating wartime gas masks extends to workshops that simultaneously teach sewing skills and engage veterans and civilians in understanding the war experience.

Performance artist Frau Fiber’s mending workshops encourage people to learn sewing skills in order to increase their sense of competence and reduce their dependence on shopping. Her installations of “upcycled” and re-gendered used clothing highlight several collaborative projects she is involved with both in the United States and Haiti. Frau Fiber’s exhibition-related workshops will coincide with historical dates in feminist and labor history to invoke the connections between labor history and economic disparity in the textile industry worldwide, which is largely female.

Each of the artists in *Social Fabric* considers the act of making as an assertion of self-sufficiency against the worker’s disenfranchisement within industrialized society. That agency extends beyond the artist’s studio and empowers all those who encounter the art to be active participants rather than passive observers. To that end, even traditionally installed works of art by artists Donna Huanca and Rachel Bernstein will respond to the cultural and social contexts at play in museum architectures, extending from the gallery to the windows and facade of the museum itself.

An opening reception for *Social Fabric* will take place on Saturday, January 26 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The reception is open to both members and the public.

**Public programs:**
CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition. Other events will include CraftLab family workshops, held on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

**Saturday | March 2**  
Artist talk with Stephanie Syjuco  
3:00 p.m.

**Sunday | March 3**  
Counterfeit Crochet Workshops with Stephanie Syjuco  
10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Beginner workshop  
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.: Advanced workshop (participants must have crocheting experience)

**Monday | March 25**  
How to Sew a Shirtwaist Blouse with Frau Fiber (commemorating the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire)  
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday | May 1
Collaborative Mending with Frau Fiber’s Bicycle-Powered Sewing Factory (commemorating May Day)
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) engages people through diverse exhibitions and programs that challenge established ideas about craft and folk art and inspire a sense of inquiry and creativity within all people. Located on Los Angeles’ historic Miracle Mile, CAFAM is the city’s only institution exclusively dedicated to celebrating craft, design and folk art. CAFAM’s dynamic exhibitions feature established and emerging artists whose work is rooted in both traditional and contemporary craft and design. CAFAM is a venue that makes art accessible to all audiences and serves as a forum in which art can be presented and described by the artists and communities who create it.

In addition to the exhibitions on view, CAFAM hosts the Shop@CAFAM, an on-site and online shopping experience that features fair-trade art and handicrafts from local and global artists and artisans. For current program and exhibition information call 323-937-4230 or visit www.cafam.org.

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE on the first Wednesday of every month

Regularly: $7 for adults; $5 for students, seniors, and veterans; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday – Friday, 11am – 5pm; Saturday/Sunday, 12pm – 6 pm; closed Mondays.

Museum Tours: For group tour information, call 323-937-4230 x28.

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