

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Renate Raymond
425.519.0752 or renater@bellevuearts.org

(photos available)

****Press preview and walking tour with the Museum Curator on June 7th 1:00pm To RSVP, please email marketing@bellevuearts.org or call (425) 519-0749**

On Mapping: New Perspectives with a Common Thread
June 8-September 3, 2006 (6/08/2006- 9/03/06)

Bellevue, WA – Bellevue Arts Museum’s exhibition *On Mapping: New Perspectives with a Common Thread* will bring together four contemporary West Coast fiber artists -- Linda Gass, Matthew Gerring, Barbara Lee Smith, and Toot Reid – each of whom has found inspiration in the sensuous and intellectual experience of nature. Their creations, which features systems of machine-sewn contour lines or hand-stitching, layering, quilting, and embroidery to add texture and shadows, are often two- and three-dimensional works which, not unlike maps, use collected information such as colors, lines and forms.

Linda Gass’ quilts are aerial views of the San Francisco Bay. They are inspired by the landscape’s natural and seasonal changes and by the unnatural concentrations of chemicals in the ponds and marshes; the colors are vibrant and bold. Most of the quilts are paintings created with silk dyes on whole silk cloth. Gass’ quilts create a hypnotic and dynamic dance of textures in a swirling and whirling of wave lines and contours.

“Gass’ colors fight to cancel any process of deduction, claiming for themselves the viewer’s only physical engagement. Their mantra sings: there is nothing else here but color.” Stefano Catalani, Curator, Bellevue Arts Museum

Barbara Lee Smith’s mix media textiles are inspired by color-subdued views of the Puget Sound. Smith paints, prints, fuses and stitches together silk and synthetic materials to create large panels. The landscapes and seascapes views of the Sound are assembled and stitched together through topography-like contour lines. The viewer experiences the ebb and flow between the vistas from a distance and the scattered elements of maps in the close-ups.

Toot Reid’s abstraction textiles are vivid images gathered from the direct experience of nature -the colors are striking, and the forms originate from the organic. Reid’s work stretches the process of abstraction to the most distant point from grounded reality but still remaining strung to it. Her pieces express an interplay of a fragmented and scattered foreground against an apparently solid background.

Matthew Gerring’s work is distinctly material-based with a strong emphasis on labor. Awarded with the 2005 International Sculpture Center Award for Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture, Gerring’s piece *Moon* is 7 feet in diameter, and the surface is covered with craters like the surface of the moon. Based on old Victorian dark-ground maps the piece is executed in machine embroidery on black technical

nylon. Gerring refers to it as the demonstration of how science has deconstructed magical celestial bodies in an attempt to “know” them.

These maps, however, are fiber and utilize a different “key”. Through the process of building layers, the artists are able to create maps that are not concerned with delivering geographic information, but capturing the allure of representation. Fabricating a textile surface is both a way to explore and frame the individual artist’s perception. Their works become a repository of the memory of the artist’s initial experience of nature and the manifest attempt to help the viewer discern, discover and understand a work of art through the process of mapping it, by imitation or abstraction, with the eye of the mind.

This exhibition has been organized by Bellevue Arts Museum.

Related programs:

Friday, June 16

Walking Tour with Curator Stefano Catalani

Take a walking tour of the exhibition *On Mapping: New Perspectives with a Common Thread* with Bellevue Arts Museum Curator Stefano Catalani. Catalani will take visitors through the show and talk about the unique styles of four contemporary West Coast fiber artist’s, Linda Gass, Matthew Gerring, Barbara Lee Smith, and Toot Reid, who find inspiration in the sensuous and intellectual experience of nature.

Meet in Museum Forum

6:00 pm

Free with Admission

Friday, June 23

Lecture and Walking Tour by Barbara Lee Smith

One of the four artists featured in the exhibition, *On Mapping: New Perspectives with a Common Thread*, Barbara Lee Smith’s mixed media textiles are inspired by color-subdued views of the Puget Sound. Smith paints, prints, fuses and stitches silk and synthetic materials to create large panels. The landscapes and seascape views of the Sound are assembled and stitched together through topography-like contour lines. Barbara Lee Smith holds an MFA with emphasis in Mixed Media from Northern Illinois University where she was a University Scholar. Her work has been featured in exhibitions and museum collections throughout the world.

Museum Auditorium and Galleries

6:30 PM

Free with Admission/Members free

Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest’s center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design. An emphasis is placed on regional craft artists as part of the national and international conversation on fine craft and design. Bellevue Arts Museum is located at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. The Museum’s main information line is 425.519.0770 and website is www.bellevuearts.org

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