

The Mysterious Content of Softness

February 4 – June 26, 2011

Teacher and Student Education Guide



Diem Chau

Empty Hand

Porcelain plate, organza, thread

Image courtesy of the artist and G. Gibson
Gallery

ART | CRAFT | DESIGN
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

The Mysterious Content of Softness

February 4 – June 26, 2011

The Mysterious Content of Softness presents sculptures, installations and crafts by 11 emerging and established artists making important work during the past decade. The artists have been selected for their emotional response to fiber's potential for capturing the beautiful fluidity and existential dimension of life, as embodied in their work.

Whether employing time-honored techniques such as knitting, crochet, embroidery and loom weaving, or foraying into new uses of traditional textiles, these artists explore the physical, psychological and cultural associations of fiber to the body. The intrinsic qualities of fiber: its softness, sagginess and fragility, its ability to drape, protect and clothe, as well as to fabricate and express identity, make it possible for the textile medium to incomparably capture the nature of the flesh and human existence, that 'boundless mystery of the content of softness,' as Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz put it in a 1979 artist statement.

Life is love and loss, tenderly and mortally so. The power everyone has to shape his or her life goes hand in hand with vulnerability. The artists in *The Mysterious Content of Softness* exploit fiber's ability to present itself as metaphor of the very fiber of our being. They offer a visual survey of approaches, motivations, processes and outcomes in regard to the shared starting point of the material. The works on display follow distinct threads, however inevitably woven together: Some pivot on the durability and fragility of the medium, which brings a host of

anxieties of impermanence and mortality to pass; A large number address issues of sexual and gender identity, by repositioning and humorously challenging the expectations from a medium so stereotypically feminine or queer; Inevitably, sexuality and mortality are sewn together in more than one installation; And finally, the sphere of the domestic, indisputable in the making and mending of the stitching and knitting gestures, permeates many works and creates a sense of comfort, a safe haven from which to meditate over life. Overall a sense of individual existence and cultural identity, be it heritage-, survival- or gender-conscious, pervades the works in exhibition.

Acknowledging the relevant place of craft and craft-based sculpture in post-modern art, this exhibition seeks specifically to highlight the almost unique quality of fiber and textiles to merge art with everyday life.

The Mysterious Content of Softness is organized by

Bellevue Arts Museum

Curated by Stefano Catalani

Made possible by 4Culture and City of Bellevue Arts Program



Bellevue Arts Museum Education Guides are produced by Patrick McMahon, M.Ed, Education Curator. Teachers and students are welcome to use these guides to supplement museum visits for educational purposes.

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About Bellevue Arts Museum

Mission:

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design through exhibition, educational programs and partnerships, emphasizing the work of regional artists.

History:

The Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Association, Bellevue Arts Museum's sponsor, was founded in 1947 with two goals in mind: to promote the artists and crafts people of the region, and to establish a cultural and educational center serving Bellevue and East King County.

The first event sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Arts and Crafts Association was an outdoor art fair presented in Bellevue Square, a regional shopping center, in July 1947. The annual Fair has been held in the same location ever since, and today the **Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair** is the largest and most prominent art event in the Northwest, attracting more than 350,000 visitors each year.

Bellevue Arts Museum was established as an arts museum in 1975. Over the years, the Museum has consistently presented high quality exhibitions that have had a broad regional and/or national impact and has developed a strong reputation as an important showcase for contemporary and traditional art.

Deciding to tap back into the museum's roots as a community art fair, the Board of Trustees hired national craft and design expert Michael Monroe, who had served as curator and then director of the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery of American Craft and Director of the American Craft Council, in 2004 to head the renewed vision of "illuminating and enriching the human spirit through art, craft and design." Since then the Museum has presented 46 world-class exhibitions celebrating high-caliber international and local artists, as well as over 500 free or low-cost educational programs attracting over 50,000 annual visitors.

In 2011, Bellevue Arts Museum will continue its focus on craft and design by both Northwest and internationally renowned artists while expanding its programming and outreach.

About Bellevue Arts Museum Education Guides

Bellevue Arts Museum is happy to offer education guides that help draw connections between exhibitions and classrooms. The information, activities, and ideas provided in these education guides work best when they are supported by a classroom visit to the Museum and a docent-led tour. Educators are welcome to mold the activities and assessments to fit their specific classroom environments. Educators are allowed to make copies of information related to exhibits provided they are for educational purposes and classroom use.

Thank you for your interest in Bellevue Arts Museum. We look forward to seeing you in our galleries.

Sincerely,

Bellevue Arts Museum
Education Staff

Planning Your Visit

Tour Reservations: Please schedule your school tour two weeks in advance through our online tour request form. www.bellevuearts.org/education

You may contact Patrick McMahon, Education Curator, at 425.519.0793, or patrickm@bellevuearts.org for more information.

School Tour Days & Times: School tours are generally offered between Mondays and Fridays between 11 am and 3 pm. BAM also reserves the 10 am hour exclusively to scheduled group visits.

Tour Options: A typical tour takes approximately 45 minutes total. Please inquire if you might be interested in an optional 45 minute time period in a classroom working on an art project that correlates with the exhibit. We can work with the teacher to provide the best experience for students.

Confirmation: After your school tour is scheduled, a docent will contact you to confirm the arrangements and review any special requirements

World Languages: Our World Language docents are available to give tours in German, Mandarin, Russian, and French.

Special Needs: Bellevue Arts Museum is fully accessible for those with special needs. We are willing to make other reasonable accommodations if necessary. Please let us know of any special needs or requirements that will require accommodations when you are scheduling your visit.

Group Fees (group rates 10+ people):

- Students/seniors: \$4 per person
- Adults: \$6 per person
- Art Project (Optional): \$2 per student materials fee
- 1 free chaperone is admitted for every 10 students. (20 students = 2 free chaperones, etc.)
- Additional chaperones are welcome at the adult group rate
- All student groups receive 1 free chaperone regardless of size

Please inquire about our sponsored admission for free or reduced lunch recipients.

Payment options: We accept cash, checks (payable to Bellevue Arts Museum) Purchase Orders, and the following credit cards: Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover.

Food: Tours should generally conclude with enough time to return to school for lunch. No food or beverage is allowed in the upstairs galleries. If students plan to bring sack lunches, accommodations may be made in the museum. Also, Bellevue Downtown Park and Bellevue Square are within walking distance of the museum.

Feedback: We welcome both affirmative and constructive feedback so I can learn what works well and how we can improve so we can continue to offer the best possible experience for you and your students at Bellevue Arts Museum.

Transportation/Student Drop off Areas:

If the cost of school busses is a deterrent, please inquire with the museum for possible bus reimbursement assistance.

Busses:

Bellevue Arts Museum works closely with Kemper Development to provide accessible parking for school busses and vehicles higher than 9'2". Arrangements MUST be made in advance or we cannot accommodate bus parking.



Directions for busses: The arranged location for bus parking is adjacent to the Museum's southern wall. Busses can enter the lot when traveling north on Bellevue Way NE and turning right at the *Scan Design* sign immediately prior to the Bellevue Arts Museum parking sign. This will lead to a lot between the Museum and the old Safeway/ Bartell's lot. Busses can let off here and park along the red railing for the duration of the group visit. The parking spots are numbered and labeled as *reserved*, however they are not being used. To exit, busses can either turn around and exit onto Bellevue Way NE or pull through the lot and turn onto NE 6th street.

Carpool: If you carpool, we offer free parking in our garage.

About the Exhibition

Featured Artists

- Diem Chau, Washington
- Lauren Dicioccio, California
- Angela Ellsworth, Arizona
- James Gobel, California
- Angela Hennessy, California
- Rock Hushka, Washington
- Lisa Kellner, New York/Virginia
- Lacey Jane Roberts, New York
- Jeremy Chase Sanders, California
- Miller & Shellabarger, Illinois
- Nathan Vincent, New York

Quick Artist Overviews

Diem Chau



A Vietnam native, Diem Chau and her family came to the U.S. as refugees in 1986. Working from photos, the artist embroiders silhouettes and portraits onto silk organza delicately stretched over the rims of porcelain plates, saucers, and cups, which have been found in thrift stores or gifted by friends. The images, floating in the hazy, milky gauziness of the organza, suggest a form of storytelling in which the hairstyle and attire of some of the figures reveal identity issues at work. The intrinsic fragility of the taut translucent silk celebrates ultimately the preciousness of the fleeting existence.

Lauren Dicioccio



Lauren DiCioccio sews, stitches, and hand-embroiders life-size replicas of objects culled from everyday life. The artist's repertoire of models is vast and includes: newspapers, National Geographic magazines, pencils and writing pads, plastic bags, watches, cassette tapes, film spools, plastic water bottles, and 35 mm slides, just to name a few. DiCioccio captures the fleeting nature of life through the fragility of the fiber medium and the unavoidable suggestion that today's objects are the relics of tomorrow.

Angela Ellsworth



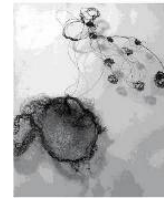
Angela Ellsworth is an interdisciplinary artist whose startling performance pieces and objects often draw on her own background as a descendant of Mormon pioneers. Ellsworth's *Seer Bonnets: A Continuing Offense* focuses on the nature of the sister-wives' relationship and on polygamy's legal prohibition as result of its perceived immorality, finding a parallel between this cultural history and her own identity as a lesbian woman. The bonnets' iridescent exteriors, formed entirely by the pearl-tips of tens of thousands of corsage pins, belie their dangerous needle-point interiors.

James Gobel



James Gobel's meticulous attention to detail and his use of felt, yarn and fabric—all supple and highly tactile materials usually associated with homemade handicrafts—imbue his gently humorous portraits with a sense of loving familiarity. Referencing Pop art as well as the portraits of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Gobel's fabric “paintings” celebrate the unsung sensuality of heavysset men.
~Nayland Blake, Hammer Museum

Angela Hennessy



Angela Hennessy is an Oakland-based interdisciplinary artist. Her work and research examine the aesthetics of loss, constructions of race and mythologies of hair, dirt, and beasts. She teaches courses on death, memory, material culture, and contemporary textile practices. Much of her work is based on the act of unraveling black velvet, a slang term for black women; a material rich in references to luxury, labor, and sensuality.

Rock Hushka



In his textile works, Rock Hushka employs motifs inspired by late medieval and early Renaissance tapestries in the form of small, densely stitched embroideries which the artist then pieces together onto a larger cloth. “These embroideries emphasize an esoteric but centuries-old reminder of the cycles of human suffering and the exercise of empathy. The quiet and austere aesthetic opens a dialogue about the moral responsibility of each person to make positive changes in the world for the comfort and safety of their fellow human.”

Lisa Kellner



In Lisa Kellner's work, each bulbous silk organza shape is hand-formed by stretching fabric around an object and treating this surface through a lengthy process in which pigment, ink, acrylic and bleach are applied until the intended painterly effect is achieved. Once the original object is removed, what is left is a translucent, apparently fragile, yet deceptively strong skin, maintaining the shape of an organ-like form or cell structure. Inspired by microscopic images of disease and yet prompting feelings of fragile beauty, Kellner's silk sculptures strive to capture life's duality of beauty and decay.

Lacey Jane Roberts



Roberts' current work merges craft with objects of violence and control to examine large structures of power and how they might be interrupted by ways of making that are often labeled as gendered, amateur, and low.

Jeremy Chase Sanders



Sanders experiences a neurological phenomenon called synesthesia, which causes him to see a particular color associated with every number and letter of the alphabet. He hand dyes thread to match the colors seen in text and then weaves cloth resembling plaid patterning that contains coded language, specifically pejorative slang words applied to gay men—which have been reclaimed by the gay community. Sanders point to issues of identity and sexuality, specifically within the gay community.

Miller & Shellabarger



Dutes Miller & Stan Shellabarger's performances and artist books document the bittersweet rhythms of human relationships. Their work shifts between moments of togetherness and moments of separation, between spaces of private and public, protection and pain and visibility and invisibility. While maintaining separate artistic practices, the Chicago-based artistic duo and life couple have been working collaboratively for almost twenty years, examining the dynamics of love and loss within relationships.

Nathan Vincent



Nathan Vincent's work explores gender permissions and questions the cultural qualities of gender by examining what constitutes the masculine and the feminine. Vincent does so by creating "masculine objects" using "feminine processes" such as crochet and sewing—the quotations marks here drawing attention to the stereotypes at work in such definitions.

About the title of the exhibition:

The title for this exhibition was inspired by famous Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz, notable for her use of textiles as a sculptural medium.

In a 1979 statement, she wrote:

"I was a small child, crouching down over a swampy pond watching tadpoles. Enormous, soon to become frogs, they swarmed around the bank. Through the membrane covering their distended bellies, the tangle of intestines was clearly visible. Heavy with the process of transformation, sluggish, they provoked one to reach for them. Pulled out onto shore with a stick, touched carelessly, the swollen bellies burst. The contents leaked out in a confusion of knots. Soon they were beset by flies. I sat there, my heart beating fast, shaken by what had happened. The destruction of soft life and the boundless mystery of the content of softness. It was just the same as confronting a broken stem with sap flowing out, provoked by an inexplicable inner process, a force only apparently understood. The never fully explored interior - soft and perishable. Many years later, that which was soft with a complex tissue became the material of my work.

ARTIST LABELS IN EXHIBITION

DIEM CHAU

A Vietnam native, Diem Chau and her family came to the U.S. as refugees in 1986. “Having left so much behind, the few possessions we had were of necessity,” remembers the artist. Chau learned her own family history through only a few photos and the oral tradition as recounted by family. Embedded in the stories, Chau says, lies, “the connection to our past, our culture, and the occasional escape from reality.”

Working from photos, the artist embroiders silhouettes and portraits onto silk organza delicately stretched over the rims of porcelain plates, saucers, and cups, which have been found in thrift stores or gifted by friends. The white background of the porcelain enhances the drawing quality of her stitches, while the used dishware evokes the comforts of the domestic sphere.

The images, floating in the hazy, milky gauziness of the organza, suggest a form of storytelling in which the hairstyle and attire of some of the figures reveal identity issues at work. The artist explores symbols such as braids not only for their association with cultural and visual identity, but also with the passing of time: the longer the braid, the longer the time spent to grow it. In Chau’s work the braid—a cultural symbol of vanity and youth—attains the status of a measure of life, both literally and metaphorically.

Chau’s stories are told also through her attention to minor details: the fragmented nature of her figures brings focus onto those uneventful moments—

forgotten, faded, or too brief to retain—which a photo from the past immortalized nonetheless. Chau’s work suggests that perhaps, in the end, these “memories” constitute the threads that hold together the fabric of our existence. The intrinsic fragility of the taut translucent silk celebrates ultimately the preciousness of the fleeting existence.

LAUREN DICIOCCIO

Lauren DiCioccio sews, stitches, and hand-embroiders life-size replicas of objects culled from everyday life. The artist’s repertoire of models is vast and includes: newspapers, National Geographic magazines, pencils and writing pads, plastic bags, watches, cassette tapes, film spools, plastic water bottles, and 35 mm slides, just to name a few.

Skillfully and meticulously crafted with obsessive care, DiCioccio’s work reflects the artist’s interest in memorializing the quotidian, even banal, objects that accompany our daily life and which are usually thrown away after use or replaced once obsolete, with newer, technologically more advanced versions.

DiCioccio’s machine-sewn and hand-embroidered sculptures redirect the gaze of the viewer to the rather overlooked flotsam and jetsam of living. For example, the artist commemorates culture’s disposable objects by creating facsimiles of crunched water bottles whose gauziness instills an air of preciousness over the otherwise anonymous, though ubiquitous, objects.

Her compositions of found objects such as postcards and trinkets inside Ziploc® bags express concern for life’s impermanence through the attempt to preserve.

Similarly, the large Still Life—with its plethora of classical Vanitas symbols such as the skull, the violin, and the hourglass, as well as new ones such as an extinguished light bulb and red and blue card house—captures the fleeting nature of life through the fragility of the fiber medium and the unavoidable suggestion that today's objects are the relics of tomorrow.

ANGELA ELLSWORTH

Seer Bonnets: A Continuing Offense is an installation of pioneer bonnets encrusted with thousands of pearl corsage pins, nodding to early pioneer headpieces, plural wives, and seer stones.

Each of the nine bonnets in the installation stands in for one of the multiple wives of Lorenzo Snow (1814-1901), fifth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Ellsworth's great great grandfather. In 1885, Snow was indicted by a federal grand jury for three counts of unlawful cohabitation as a result of the Edmunds Anti-Polygamy Act of 1882, which deems polygamy a felony. According to documents, Snow had lived with more than one woman for three years, and the jury therefore delivered one indictment for each year, convicting Snow on three counts. The Supreme Court later overturned two of the convictions, finding that the unlawful cohabitation was not three separate offenses, but rather one 'continuing offense.'

Ellsworth writes, "As a fourth generation Mormon growing up in Salt Lake City, Utah, the installation is part of a larger body of work called the *Plural Wife Project*, which navigates issues of the body in relation to gender, sexuality, and cultural history of the Western United States."

Ellsworth's *Seer Bonnets: A Continuing Offense* focuses on the nature of the sister-wives' relationship and on polygamy's legal prohibition as result of its perceived immorality, finding a parallel between this cultural history and her own identity as a lesbian woman. Pointing to how Lorenzo Snow's love for and marriage with each of his wives was deemed morally and legally unacceptable, Ellsworth's ironic and heartfelt reference to the continuing offense of the Supreme Court's verdict hints at the current limitations to marriage rights for same-sex couples.

The bonnets are offered to the viewer as beautiful and precious garments, yet they are capable of inflicting a torturing pain. Their ambiguous nature—tempting and hurting—seems to reflect on the difficult choice between following one's nature and conforming to social norms.

JAMES GOBEL

James Gobel's "paintings" are made of felt and yarn meticulously cut and carefully inlaid to create a soft marquetry of calm beauty.

His subjects, invariably, are paunchy, furry-faced men whose heavy-set looks suggest they are just working-class, regular guys. Whether they wear flannel shirts, blue jeans, and suspenders as they engage in activities such as drinking, tailoring, or lounging on a couch, or are all dressed up and glitzy like 1980s pop stars on stage, Gobel's portraits take inspiration from a specific gay subculture, the "bear" community, which shuns the popular stereotype of the effeminate homosexual male. Challenging this established perception, "bears" reclaim and

accentuate a traditionally masculine visual identity, defined by work clothes, mustaches, beards and body hair. They are quintessentially masculine gay men who are comfortable with their gender identity.

Traditionally associated with handicrafts and feminine activities, the tactile materials such as yarn and felt that Gobel uses combine the dimension of the homemade handicraft with his ursine male subjects, producing an effect both revelatory and comforting: The soft nature of the medium bestows upon the subjects of the portraits the cozy familiarity of the domestic: it suggests the idea that gay men might look just like any other “manly man” as they go about their daily lives and engage in activities that any man—gay or otherwise—might do.

Furthermore, by replacing the high art medium of oil paint with the craft-based medium of fabric, the artist frees his portraits from the reverence and detachment associated with visual art, instead delivering them into the sphere of everyday life, thus softening the cultural barriers—and tension—between viewer and subject.

ANGELA HENNESSY

Angela Hennessy’s installations involve the transformation of materials beyond recognition. Much of her work is based on the act of unraveling black velvet, a material rich in references to luxury, labor and sensuality; it is also a slang term for black women.

The color black has emerged as a recurring theme in her practice, as both a category of racial identification and as an indication of mourning and

melancholy. Her research centers around cloth and hair, and their role as metaphor for identity and loss.

For *The Mysterious Content of Softness*, Hennessy has created *Parlor*, an installation of elegant disorder referencing 19th century sitting rooms in which the preoccupation for collecting dead things was indulged. Entering through the doorway, a specimen table on the left orients the viewer to the slow laborious process of unraveling velvet from which the rest of the work originates. Here, piles of fuzz begin to take bodily form, while on another table, black round sculptures, mounted on carved soap bases, allude to the definition of blackness against whiteness. Small objects hang from the ceiling, framed in between glass; diaphanous forms resembling aquatic organisms float mid-air. Their Petri-dish-like appearance, suggests histological studies of ill tissues.

Using the idea of the parlor as point of departure, Hennessy at once stages an inquiry into multiple themes: themes of identity and the construction of blackness; of loss, through the disintegration of velvet; and of the fluidity of life, through the material’s transformation, before the viewer’s eyes, into something beautiful. The ambiguous nature of the work, says the artist, arouses the desire to touch, to understand not by logic but by tactile experience from one body to another.

ROCK HUSHKA

Rock Hushka employs motifs inspired by late medieval and early Renaissance tapestries in the form of small, densely stitched embroideries which the artist then pieces together onto a larger cloth.

The fragments, per se survivors of violent destruction or slow decay, introduce the idea of the fragility of all human things and, by proxy, of human existence. As the artist observes, “every moment feels overwhelmed by forces outside an individual’s control. The world seems beset by war, injustice, poverty, hunger, violence, and disease. Fearlessly, and with courage exceeding that of those who steal and destroy, we must accept responsibility for our personal role within the cultural systems that allow humanity to suffer.” Putting the pieces back together becomes then an act of defiance: a mending gesture of hope.

From the fiber tradition of the medieval world—a world equally stricken with war, violence, and plague—Hushka draws not only imagery—plants and flowers from the *mille-fleurs* tapestries—but also technique—the bullion stitch, which was traditionally used to work silver and gold thread into the surface of brocades—to create embroideries of quiet beauty. The *mille-fleurs* style, the best known examples of which include the religious allegories of *The Lady and the Unicorn* and *The Hunt of the Unicorn*, provides the artist a deeply symbolic association with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, who in the Catholic tradition intercedes on our behalf to ease humanity’s pain and suffering.

Blood spilled or “stitched” onto the fabric amplifies these references to shared human sufferance and mortality, while materializing the host of fears that its sight instinctively summons: wounds, violence, and contagion. By means of such a highly charged body fluid—a vehicle for

transmission of infection—and by depicting images of the red ribbons, which since 1991 have honored those lost to AIDS, the artist weaves in references to the horrific plague that decimated the homosexual community in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Stitched in the early hours of the morning, Hushka’s embroideries have the devotional and meditative intensity of a prayer, both seeking Mary’s compassion and calling us to be compassionate to each other. As the artist states, the pieces, “are inspired by the sincere belief that each human can truly make a difference.”

LISA KELLNER

In Lisa Kellner’s work, each bulbous silk organza shape is hand-formed by stretching fabric around an object and treating this surface through a lengthy process in which pigment, ink, acrylic, bleach and compost are applied until the intended painterly effect is achieved. Once the original object is removed, what is left is a translucent, apparently fragile, yet deceptively strong skin, maintaining the shape of an organ-like form or cell structure.

Feeding on the Entrails of My Strung Out Mind grapples with the notion of the engorged and the gorging. Explains the artist, “Gorging speaks of the act of overeating but also relates to the notion of over-indulgence and excess. I am interested in creating a fleshly bodily structure that appears engorged yet vacuous—bursting at the seams, yet completely empty—and how this relates to the impulse in contemporary society to binge on objects and information.”

Like a new life growing into the uterine cavity of the gallery niche, or an abnormal growth or tumor invading and filling all available space, Kellner's sculpture is ambiguous in its references to both life and death. Spewed on the floor, the small, round shapes recall a cell system gone awry or a life-bearing stream of blood cells.

Inspired by microscopic images of disease and yet prompting feelings of fragile beauty, Kellner's silk sculptures strive to capture life's duality of beauty and decay.

LACEY JANE ROBERTS

Lacey Jane Roberts' large-scale and often site-specific installations are made of acrylic yarn, knitted with the help of children's toys: specifically, a vintage 1974 Barbie™ knitting machine and a Cool Corder™ which, as advertised, can produce, "18 feet of cording in just 10 minutes."

"My crank knitting machines," says the New York based artist, "are really small and portable, so I knit pretty much everywhere all the time—on the train, while watching movies, at bars. Once I have a ton of tubes knitted I'll start the construction of the fences which involve hand-weaving and sewing." Making one piece requires from eight months to one year, sometimes even more.

Completed in 2007, *We Couldn't Get In. We Couldn't Get Out.* epitomizes Roberts' interest in textiles' ability to address issues of gender within society. As the title suggests, the life-size barbed wire fence is a barrier both controlling access and

preventing escape. Like any boundary built to protect and exclude, it becomes then a strong metaphor for all the barriers society erects with the purpose to contain diversity in order to promote a sense of safety for the rest. By arresting the viewer with its vibrant color and physically blocking the flow of visitors through the galleries, Roberts' soft, 10-foot high hot fuchsia fence draws attention to and critiques the existence of such barriers. At the same time, the installation neutralizes the effect of such barriers as they pertain to the gay community by re-appropriating them into a queer visual vocabulary.

Like other artists in exhibition, Roberts uses the feminine processes of knitting and crochet to create stereotypically masculine objects, and thereby manages to emasculate societal gender roles and gender prescriptions. With the 'sissiness' of the pink and soft chain links in stark contrast with the 'butchness' of the work's size and barbed wire, *We Couldn't Get In. We Couldn't Get Out.* is, quite literally, a fence in drag.

JEREMY CHASE SANDERS

Jeremy Chase Sanders weaves patterned traditional fabrics using a peculiar system of color-coding based on the "synesthetic" association of a particular color to each letter of the alphabet: for example F is orange, E is green, and so on. Featured in *The Mysterious Content of Softness* are works from two of the artist's recent series: *Patriarchitecture*, and *Fabricating Masculinity: Queer Plaids*.

Patriarchitecture consists of three hand-woven, handmade neckties and three pairs of handmade

shoes. Each coordinated pair—necktie and shoes—is named after a title of authority: *Minister*, *Doctor*, and *Officer*. As the artist explains, “while these authoritative titles are not intrinsically masculine, by pairing the words with [the] masculine sartorial attire of neckties and oxfords I am elucidating a gender preference that is inherent in these titles.”

Fabricating Masculinity: Queer Plaids is composed of three hand-dyed and hand-woven cloths based on designs from significant stages in the history of Scottish tartan. Each cloth’s color pattern, however, is the result of literally weaving a pejorative slang word applied to gay men—*Queen*, *Fairy*, *Gay/Fag*—that has since been reclaimed by the gay community. Sanders exploits the tartan’s references to cultural identity and masculinity to examine contemporary gay male culture.

For *The Mysterious Content of Softness*, the artist pairs each tartan from the *Fabricating Masculinity* series with a figurative piece from *Patriarchitecture*. The combinations of *Queen* with *Minister*, *Fairy* with *Doctor*, and *Gay/Fag* with *Officer*—not without a dose of clever humor—go on to conflate the authority and masculinity of the titles with ideas of queerness. While gender politics are the conceptual underpinnings that drive Sanders’ work, the bright colors and patterns present a playful, lighthearted aesthetic. “Humor, the artist reminds us, “is a strategy that has often been employed by queer artists and individuals. Like drag queens, for example.”

MILLER & SHELLABARGER

While maintaining separate artistic practices, Chicago-based artistic duo and life couple Miller & Shellabarger have been working collaboratively for almost twenty years, examining the dynamics of love and loss within relationships.

Through autobiographical performance pieces, photographs, collages and handicraft techniques—such as knitting, stitching, and embroidery—the couple makes objects that are literally and symbolically loaded with the measure of the time spent together in the making: the daily labor of love of the artists’, as of any, relationship. Their impulse is not so much a statement about their orientation as about their union: whether creating a twin set of pillow cases, each monogrammed with hair from their long beards as thread, or a performance during which they sew themselves together along the seam running up their clothes from ankle to neck, only to cut themselves apart and start anew, the doing and undoing of universal bonds between loved ones remains the core of their art.

Pink Tube is an ongoing performance started in 2003. Over the years, Miller & Shellabarger have sat together many times—always in public—to crochet opposite ends of the giant tube of acrylic pink yarn, which is now more than 60 feet long. The artists will continue to work on the piece until one or the other passes away or can no longer continue to work on it. True to their poetic oeuvre, when one of them dies, the other vows to unravel the tube.

With an existence of its own insofar as both artists breathe life into it, the soft, fleshy tube—an

intestine, a limb, an umbilical cord, a penis—is a metaphorically loaded object: it is the couple’s family intimacy as shared with the audience during the performance; and it is the embodied work of a relationship which connects and nurtures, and while keeping them tethered, also pushes them apart with the passing of time. Delving into the domestic sphere by means of craft techniques usually associated with the feminine, the artists, whose heavy-set looks and long beards reinforce the traditional idea of masculinity, scrutinize the association of queer masculinity with traditional femininity while poignantly exposing the universality of the shared human experience of love.

NATHAN VINCENT

Nathan Vincent’s work explores gender permissions and questions the cultural qualities of gender by examining what constitutes the masculine and the feminine. Vincent does so by creating “masculine objects” using “feminine processes” such as crochet and sewing—the quotation marks here drawing attention to the stereotypes at work in such definitions.

“Creating a stereotypically masculine space,” says the artist, “with a stereotypically feminine process brings to [the] surface questions around activities that our culture deems acceptable for men and women. Why is it that sports are still equated with masculinity? And why do we still think that crocheting and knitting are mainly for women?” All the works on display focus on this contradiction between medium and subject matter.

Locker Room plays upon the false sense of masculinity and safety the room conveys. “The locker room of a gym is a space... for men to be private and safe after the work out. [Yet] in actuality, there is often comparing, measuring up, and [a] general feeling of being inadequately masculine. The obviously open construction and layout [of the room] and the knit and crocheted objects point out the distance between the offer of a temple of masculinity and the reality of how constructed gender roles truly are.” Yet, by also evoking stereotypical homoerotic fantasies, *Locker Room* cunningly offers another side to its interpretation.

Crocheting objects so steeped in masculine stereotypes, the artist breaks down the barrier of traditional gender permissions. The objects are no longer rough and manly, but soft and inviting: they evoke the feminine. With humor, Nathan Vincent offers a refreshing view of the fluidity of life by questioning the expected in these cultural constructions.

Major Exhibition Themes

There is a fair amount of overlap between the following themes, and one could make an argument to easily move many of the artists among the themes. Consider this a starting point.....

- Mortality – (death, decay, loss) – evidenced in Hushka, Kellner, Hennessy, and DiCioccio (vanitas)
- Cultural Identity – cultural identity takes many forms – racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, gender. (Chau, Gobel, Ellsworth, Hennessy)
- Sexuality and Gender Roles – questioning permissions, stereotypes, and status quo (Vincent, Gobel, Roberts, Sanders, Ellsworth)
- Domestic Dimension – the familiarity of fiber and the domesticity often associated with the process – (Miller & Shellabarger, Vincent)
- Sexuality and mortality – and/or the link between the two, i.e. Hushka's works that relate to HIV/Aids
- While some of the works/titles/terms etc. may seem like they could be uncomfortable or awkward to discuss, their content is actually quite universal. If one considers how light blue is for baby boys and light pink is for baby girls - that serves as a simplification of many of the questions being presented and explored in these artworks. Why is it we have to dress or look a certain way? Why are crocheting, knitting, sewing considered feminine?
- Fiber is directly connected to the body – perhaps the medium we most interact with – simply by dressing in the morning we interact with fiber that has been made and designed. Yet the choice of that fiber we choose to wear says so much about us, and can do so much – serves to shield both visually and physically (in the case of armor), and serves as a cultural signifier of one's identity.

Diem Chau

- <http://www.diemchau.com>
- <http://www.wolfecontemporary.com/chau/bio.htm>
- <http://ifitshipitshere.blogspot.com/2007/09/diem-chaus-crayon-carvings.html>

Lauren DiCioccio

- <http://www.20x200.com/artists/lauren-dicioccio.html>
- <http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/16/view/10278/lauren-decioccio-soft-goods.html>
- <http://www.laurendicioccio.com/pages.php?content=statement&navGallID=Statement>

Angela Ellsworth

- <http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/10/view/10580/angela-ellsworth-seer-bonnets-a-continuing-offense.html>
- <http://www.lisasettegallery.com/a-ellsworth.htm>
- <http://www.aellsworth.com>

James Gobel

- <http://www.cca.edu/academics/faculty/jgobel>
- http://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/detail/exhibition_id/45
- <http://www.marxzav.com/artist.php?artistID=26>

Angela Hennessy

- <http://www.angelahennessy.com>
- <http://cca.edu/academics/faculty/ahennessy>

Rock Hushka

- www.crisbruch.com/resume_01.html
- <http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/page.aspx?cid=717>

Lisa Kellner

- <http://www.artistaday.com/?p=3600>
- <http://todayinart.com/2010/01/17/silk-sculptures-by-lisa-kellner/>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVd12c-CohvU>
- <http://www.lisakellner.com/>
- <http://www.artslant.com/ny/artists/show/18494-lisa-kellner>

Lacey Jane Roberts

- <http://www.laceyjaneroberts.com/images/pinkfence1.html>
- <http://www.soex.org/exhibit/79.html>
- <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/War/Roberts.html>

- http://www.madmuseum.org/DO/Open%20Studios/2009_fall-winter/lacey%20jane%20roberts.aspx
- <http://cca-viscrit.com/sightlines/author-index/m-r/lacey-jane-roberts/>

Miller & Shellabarger

- http://www.westernexhibitions.com/miller_shellabarger/bio.html
- http://www.westernexhibitions.com/miller_shellabarger/resume.html
- http://www.westernexhibitions.com/miller_shellabarger/1_pages/2_work/images.html
- <http://chicagoartmagazine.com/2010/05/an-interview-with-dutes-miller-and-stan-shellabarger>
- <http://chicagoartmagazine.com/2010/07/radical-art-and-yarn-local-roundup/>
- <http://www.westernexhibitions.com/index.html>
- <http://www.chicagoartmagazine.com/2011/01/is-time-really-everything-time-based-artists/>
- <http://www.chicagoartmagazine.com/2010/08/sunday-at-the-chicago-cultural-center-stan-shellabarger-and-dutes-miller%R2%80%99d-untitled-performance-pink-tube%C2%A0/>
- <http://www.badatsports.com/2010/episode-268-stan-shellabarger-and-dutes-miller-courtney-fink-art-publishing-now/>

Jeremy Chase Sanders

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synesthesia>
- <http://www.cca.edu/academics/student-artists/jsanders>
- <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/Threads/Sanders.html>
- <http://www.jeremychasesanders.com/Welcome.html>

Nathan Vincent

- <http://www.marthastewart.com/article/nathan-vincent-yarn-creations>
- <http://tryhandmade.com/nathan-vincent/>
- <http://www.lostaminor.com/2010/02/23/nathan-vincent/>
- <http://nathanvincent.com/home.html>
- http://blog.craftzine.com/archive/2010/05/nathan_vincent-manly-doolies.html

ARTS

- 1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.**
 - 1.1 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.
 - 1.3 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary

- 2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.**
 - 2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.
 - 2.3 Apply a responding process to an arts presentation: engage actively and purposefully, describe what is seen and/or heard, analyze how the elements are arranged and organized, interpret based on descriptive properties, evaluate using supportive evidence and criteria.

- 4. The student makes connections within and across the arts, to other disciplines, life, cultures, and work.**
 - 4.1 Demonstrate and analyze the connection among the arts disciplines.
 - 4.2 Demonstrate and analyze the connection between the arts and other content areas.
 - 4.3 Understand how the arts impact lifelong choices.
 - 4.4 Understand that the arts shape and reflect culture and history.

4.5 Demonstrate knowledge of arts careers and the role of the arts skills in the world of work.

COMMUNICATION

- 1. The student uses listening and observation skills and strategies to gain understanding.**

To meet this standard, the student:

 - 1.1 Uses listening and observation skills and strategies to focus attention and interpret information.
 - 1.2 Understands, analyzes, synthesizes, or evaluates information from a variety of sources.

Project: Cool Cording

Exhibition Link: *The Mysterious Content of Softness*

Grade Level: 4 - 12

Time: 45 minutes, varies

Overview & Rationale

Lacey Jane Roberts' *We Couldn't Get In. We Couldn't Get Out.* lists crank-knit yarn as one of the materials. Using a simple knitting machine, kids can create cords of yarn very similar to the ones used by Roberts, using essentially the same device. While they won't necessarily be creating 10' fences as seen in the exhibition, they can incorporate their creativity by deciding what to do with their cords. – convert them into jewelry, braid them together, manipulate them into shapes, run wire through them to create bendable limbs and shapes, etc. It requires knitting machines which can easily be found online. The *Cool Corder* or *Embellish Knit Machine* can be found on such online retailers as Amazon.com for under \$10. These one with the hand crank are the same machine used by Lacey Jane Roberts.

Objectives

- Students will explain the process of knitting.
- Students will demonstrate how the artwork in *The Mysterious Content of Softness* was created.
- Through creating a variety of pieces from their cords, students will demonstrate critical thinking by using their knitted cords to create a variety of different final products.

This project also works towards the following Washington State Essential Academic Learning Standards for the arts:

- 1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.**
 - 1.2 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.
 - 1.3 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary
- 2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.**
 - 2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.

Materials

Cool Corders/Embellish Knit Machines (ideally, one per student) & their accessories
Balls of lightweight/baby weight yarn
Thin gauge wire (optional for inserting into cord to allow cords to hold their shape)
Other accessories as desired (beads, thread, clasps etc.)

Tasks

- Follow the directions that accompany the crank knitters. Have students spool their yarn into the machine, begin cranking and watch as the machine's four hooks creates a cord.

- Check with students throughout the process so each is able to set up the machine properly.
- Have the students study the machine's workings and take notes/document the process as they will later explain *how* the machine knits the cord. Suggest they crank very slowly for part to watch in detail what the machine's hooks are doing.
- Walk them through the finishing step of weaving the loose end of the yarn through the four woven loops to cinch off the end of the cord.
- Once the students have their cord(s) they can begin deciding how to use them – jewelry, for example.
- After they have completed their piece, ask the students to begin creating their explanations of how these machines work. (or how it compares to knitting by hand)

Assessment Options

Have the students present their final pieces – what did they do with their cords?

Read through their explanations of how the machine functions and grade appropriately.

Adaptations/Modifications

Teachers can incorporate a more difficult writing task by asking kids to study how the machine actually does the knitting and create an explanation or series of picture-directions or videos to explain the process. Similar hand-knitting machines are also readily available. They use the same general knitting concept as the crank-knitters but require one to

actually use a hook to create the stitches. These, however, are more versatile because they allow a user to incorporate beads into the cord and also for the use of non-yarn such as jewelry wire to create a range of other products.

Project: Yarn Drawings

Exhibition Link: *The Mysterious Content of Softness*

Grade Level: K - 4

Time: 30 minutes

Overview/Rationale

This project explores the principal elements of line and shape as well as the concept of conceding some of the control an artist has over a work of art. It is also a fun way to incorporate fiber into a non-fiber artwork. Students will start with a length of yarn. They will drop the yarn onto their sheet of paper and use small amounts of glue to adhere it to their sheet. The line and shapes created by how the yarn fell will become the basis for their drawings. In the yarn, they may see an image, a scene, or simply lines and patterns that they wish to develop. Once the yarn is glued, the creativity and creations becomes theirs again, but their initial starting line is somewhat dictated by outside forces such as gravity, wind and friction.

Objectives

This project works towards the following Washington State Essential Academic Learning Standards for the arts:

1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.

- 1.1 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary
- 1.2 Develop arts skills and techniques
- 1.3 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.

2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.

2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.

3. The student communicates through the arts.

3.1 Use the arts to express and present ideas and feelings.

Materials

- Pre-cut lengths of yarn or string, approximately 1 foot - 18" in length
- Sheets of paper
- Glue bottles
- Coloring utensils, pencils, crayons, markers

Tasks

1. Discuss with students the idea of dropping the yarn onto the paper and how that would be a different way to start a project than simply drawing with a blank sheet of paper.
2. Demonstrate how the project will work
3. Drop the yarn
4. Demonstrate gluing it to paper, start by lifting one little part at a time and putting a drop of glue underneath it until the entire string will stay and keep its original line form.

5. Hold it up and discuss with the students what pattern, picture or scene they might create using this line as a starting point.
6. Hand out supplies to students, including glue bottles, yarn and paper.
7. Ask them to drop the yarn onto their sheet of paper, they can do this between 1 and 5 times getting a sense for how it works.
8. They then glue down the yarn in the same manner demonstrated by the teacher.
9. Using crayons, markers, or colored pencils, the students then create an image either abstract or not with their yarn line as a starting point.

Assessment Options

Discussion Questions

- What types of shapes did the yarn make? (notice it will not naturally make shapes with angles such as squares or triangles)
- Did anybody find it hard to see something to create in their starting line?
- Is it harder or easier to draw a picture when you have a specific line/shape you need so start with.
- Do you think it would be possible to drop the yarn onto the paper several times and have it fall in the same pattern twice?

Modifications/Adaptations

Some students may have difficulty gluing their yarn down. Other students, parents, or the teacher may help with this.

For a different effect, students could use charcoal or only one color and see how this changes the project. The students could be instructed to create specifically an abstract or representative image depending on the teacher's preference.

Project: Basic Weaving

Exhibition Link: *The Mysterious Content of Softness*

Grade Level: 3-8

Time: 1 hour

Overview/Rationale

Through this project, students will learn the basic process of weaving, incorporating pattern into their warp and weft, each finishing with a final woven piece approximately 6 inches in length. If incorporating directly into the exhibition, students can relate their work to that of Jeremy Chase Sanders – who assigns a color to each letter of the alphabet and weaves patterns that relay imbedded “codes”. Kids can each choose a word, 3,5, 7 or 9 letters in length, assign a color to each letter and weave their “code” into their fabric.

Objectives

Students will identify warp and weft.

Students will demonstrate basic principles of weaving.

Students will incorporate pattern and repetition.

This project also works towards the following Washington State Essential Academic Learning Standards for the arts:

1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.

1.3 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.

1.3 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary

2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.

2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.

2.4 Apply a responding process to an arts presentation: engage actively and purposefully, describe what is seen and/or heard, analyze how the elements are arranged and organized, interpret based on descriptive properties, evaluate using supportive evidence and criteria.

Materials

- Cardboard/Wood basic looms (found easily online, inexpensive class packs of 24)
- Multiple colors of yarn
- Patience

Tasks

- Give each student a loom.
- Explain how the artist uses “codes” in his weaving. Demonstrate the technique on the board with a simple word such as “cat”. Give each letter a color and have the students help you in explaining what pattern the weaving would take.
- Discuss warp and weft and how the pattern will be apparent in each.

- Have students choose their own word and decide on a color to use for their “code”. Ideally, 3,5, or 7 letters. (younger grades might benefit from first drawing their code using markers so they can more easily remember which color they should use.)
- Show students how to set up the loom. Start by measuring how tall the loom is and cutting the colored yarn (using pieces that match the code). Tie these together so they form one long piece. Trim the excess. Then follow the loom directions to set it up, wrapping the yarn around the pegs. (weaving is most easily done using odd numbers)
- Once this is set up they can use a different color to weave over and under the pieces on the loom. They continue back and forth until the entire piece is woven.

Assessment Options

Discuss the code words used in the pieces. As kids do so have them use appropriate weaving terms.

Modifications/Adaptations

Incorporating a specific series of colors into the project adds a deal of complication. Younger grades may wish to ignore this element and focus on the weaving project.

This project would also be fun letting the kids explore the looms and figure out different ways they can incorporate words or ideas into the pattern of the weave.

Project: Felt “Paintings”

Exhibition Link: *The Mysterious Content of Softness*

Grade Level: 5-12

Time: 1 hour or more depending on detail

Overview/Rationale

At first glance of from far away, James Gobels works in *The Mysterious Content of Softness* appear as paintings. Given he is primarily a painter and teaches painting, this may not come as a surprise. Visitors are often surprised to see that when they look closer, his works are made of felt and fabric. The art remains two-dimensional as the felt is not layered on top of other pieces, but precisely cut and joined (marqueted) in a similar fashion to how woodworkers or inlay separate pieces of wood. With this project students will gain a better understanding and appreciation for Gobel’s work by working in a similar method.

Objectives

Students will incorporate color and shapes into a composition.

Students will build motor skills and dexterity with accurate cutting of fabric

This project also works towards the following Washington State Essential Academic Learning Standards for the arts:

1. The Student understands and applies arts knowledge and skills.

1.4 Understand and apply arts styles from various artists, cultures, and times.

1.3 Understand arts concepts and vocabulary

2. The student demonstrates thinking skills using artistic processes.

2.1 Apply a creative process in the arts: conceptualize the context or purpose, gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms, and/or principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self evaluation, refine work based on feedback, present work to others.

2.5 Apply a responding process to an arts presentation: engage actively and purposefully, describe what is seen and/or heard, analyze how the elements are arranged and organized, interpret based on descriptive properties, evaluate using supportive evidence and criteria.

Materials

Felt in various sizes and colors, including sheets and scraps

Surface to glue on

Glue

Yarn

Sharp fabric scissors

Tasks

- Demonstrate/Explain the procedure and the idea behind the project. Introduce the term marquetry and how that can be applied to fabric.
- Have students come up with a drawing/sketch that they will recreate in felt. This can be completely independent, following a class

theme, or however the teacher decides. Simpler is easier. As an alternative, they could skip the drawing and create a design using construction paper which will give them a better sense of how much detail to incorporate.

- Once students have their image ready they can begin cutting pieces of felt to join together. They then lay them on their surface (cardboard/panel etc.)
- When the pieces are all ready they can glue them down and use yarn to run through the seams to create borders.

Assessment Options

Use a rubric to gauge the success of their creation based on cleanliness of lines, craftsmanship, and adherence to theme/idea.

Have students present and discuss their pieces including any challenges they encountered.

Ask if they have a new appreciation for the craftsmanship of James Gobel after exploring the process.

Adaptations/Modifications

As an alternative to gluing, students could forego the backing entirely and sew the felt pieces together.

This would create a neat texture at the seams and allow for the pieces to either be sewn together like a large mosaic or hung like a banner. They would also have an identical view on the reverse side.

FEEDBACK FORMS

The Museum strives to provide an enriching educational experience for students and teachers. We welcome your positive feedback as well as constructive suggestions so we can continue to offer strong extension opportunities for classrooms and make our programs and exhibitions accessible and easily integrated into class settings.

Please fill out one of the included feedback forms and mail/fax it to the Museum, c/o Education Curator. You can also send an email to patrickm@bellevuearts.org.

EDUCATION GUIDE FEEDBACK

Thank you for your interest in Bellevue Arts Museum. We appreciate your feedback. Please mail or fax this form to Education Curator at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA, 98004. 425-637-1799 (fax)

Education Guide

Used: _____

Teacher Name

(optional): _____

Class used with:

Date:

Did your class tour the museum?

Yes ____ No ____

1. Please comment on the education guide's usefulness to your class.

2. Did you use or adapt any of the suggested assessment options from this guide?

3. Please comment on the organization of the education guide.

4. Do you feel this exhibition and education guide provided opportunities for higher-level thinking?

5. Please offer any other comments or suggestions.

GROUP TOUR EVALUATION

Bellevue Arts Museum thanks you for your participation in a docent-led exhibition tour. Please complete the following questionnaire in order to help us evaluate and improve our tours.

Your Name (optional)

Group Name (optional)

Docent's Name (optional)

Tour Date

How did you hear about our exhibitions?

What factor/factors influenced your decision to visit Bellevue Arts Museum?

What did you/the group like best about the tour?

What did you/the group like least about the tour?

Please Circle:

Ease of Scheduling

Difficult ----- Easy
1 2 3 4 5

Friendliness of Museum Staff

Not at all ----- Extremely
1 2 3 4 5

How did you enjoy your tour?

Not at all ----- Extremely
1 2 3 4 5

How beneficial was your tour?

Not at all ----- Extremely
1 2 3 4 5

Please share any other insights or suggestions you have.

If you are interested in receiving information regarding future educational opportunities at Bellevue Arts Museum, please provide your email below.

FOR STUDENTS

FIBER TERMS RELEVANT TO EXHIBITION

bullion stitch: a common embroidery stitch often used to create accents, traditionally used to work silver and gold thread into the surface of brocades

crank-knit: using a handheld machine with a crank, yarn is fed through the machine, that, when cranked, weaves the yarn into a tube

crocheting: a weaving process similar to knitting, but using one needle instead of two. Word originates from the French word for “hook”

embroidery: a decorative process used to create patterning on fabric by sewing fine thread details into the fabric

knitting: a weaving process in which two needles are used to create an intricate network of knots that result in a loose, often coarse, woven fabric

lyocell: a cellulose fabric obtained by an organic solvent spinning process; classified as a sub-category of rayon

organza: organza is a thin, plain weave, sheer fabric traditionally made from silk. Currently organza is often woven with synthetic filament fibers such as polyester or nylon

pile: the raised surface or nap of a fabric, which is made of upright loops or strands of yarn

seed stitch: creates a reversible pattern common on two-side items like scarves

velvet: a woven cloth, often from silk with a distinct look and feel resulting from the evenly distributed threads and its short, dense pile. A similar fabric, velveteen resembles velvet in touch and appearance, but tends to be made from cotton

warp/weft: two components of weaving; warp is the thread that the weaver passes a weaving shuttle through; weft is the thread passing through the warp
weaving: the process of making fabric by interlacing a series of warp yarns with weft yarns at right angles

Looking Closer



Lacey Jane Roberts, New York
We Couldn't Get In. We Couldn't Get Out., 2006-2007
Hand-woven wire, crank-knit yarn, steel poles,
assorted hardware
Courtesy of the artist
Photos: Nora Atkinson

Use the images to the left to think about and answer the following questions. (or consider these questions when you are visiting the museum)

- What is the purpose of a fence?
- What does the artist accomplish by crafting a “menacing” barbed wire fence out of pink yarn?
- What are 5 adjectives you would use to describe this piece? (without using the word pink)
- How does the fence being in a state of disarray (torn in places, frayed, some holes, etc.) affect its meaning or your impression of it?
- What do you think of the piece’s title?
- How does this piece explore, challenge, or present culture and gender roles?
- What are some other “fences” that exist in today’s world?

Looking Closer



Angela Ellsworth, Arizona
Seer Bonnets: A Continuing Offense, 2010
Pearl corsage pins, fabric, steel, oak
Courtesy of the artist and Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
Photos: Nora Atkinson

Use the images to the left to think about and answer the following questions.

- What type of person would have worn such a bonnet?
 - Do some basic internet searching on Lorenzo Snow and the Edmunds Act. To what *Continuing Offense* might the artist be referring in today's culture? How is this similar to her ancestor's situation in the 1880s?
 - How does her choice of materials (pins) affect the piece?
 - Is it possible to have discussion about the *legality* of issues such as polygamy and same-sex marriage without incorporating one's morality or personal beliefs into the discussion?
-