



Threads artists



	Heather Johnson
	André Lee
	China Marks
	Pamela Matsuda-Dunn
Jen Bervin	Heidi Neilson & Chris Petrone
Inge Bruggeman	Tara O'Brien
Macy Chadwick & Lisa Hasegawa	Iviva Olenick
Rosemarie Chiarlone	Yani Pecanins
Patricia Dahlman	Catya Plate
Andrea Dezsö	John Risseuw
Ipek Duben	Donna Ruff
Tiffany Dugan	Meda Rives & Veda Rives
Elsi Vassdal Ellis	Stephen Sidelinger
Jonathan Fetter-Vorm	Robbin Ami Silverberg
Dianna Frid	Edyth Skinner
Ximena Pérez Grobet	Tamar Stone
Tanya Hartman	Dana Velan
Candace Hicks	Elise Wiener
Yoko Inoue	Anne Wilson & Shawn Decker
Vandana Jain	

Threads:

INTERWEAVING TEXTU[R]AL MEANING

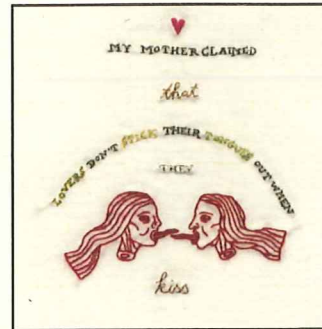
Executive Director of the Center for Book Arts. This exhibition brings together 35 works of art; many are multipart, and anywhere from 3 to 13 pieces of each complete series are exhibited in this presentation. The amount of work in this exhibition is considerable given the Center's size. Over 400 works of art were reviewed, and it was no easy task to limit the exhibition to a number that would provide for a cohesive yet expansive visual interpretation of the exhibition's concept.

The impetus for the exhibition came from an artist talk held in February 2008 at the Museum of Art and Design, with artists Jen Bervin, Andrea Dezsö, and Tamar Stone, moderated by Sarah Nicholls, Programs Manager at the Center for Book Arts. All three of these artists are featured in this exhibition and each, in her own manner, can anchor one of three general terms or formal aspects of the exhibition. Although the work varies in content and overlaps formally, Samplers, Stitches, and Swatches are three general headings used in this essay to discuss the work in the exhibition.

SAMPLERS

"A (needlework) sampler is a piece of embroidery produced as a demonstration or test of skill in needlework. It often includes the alphabet, figures, motifs, decorative borders and sometimes the name of the person who embroidered it and the date. The word sampler is derived from the Latin 'exemplum'- an example." ^{WIKIPEDIA} Typically, samplers were used for expressions and platitudes with moral meaning.

This year's annual exhibition of artist members is complemented by artists invited by co-curators Lois Morrison, artist/educator, and Alexander Campos,



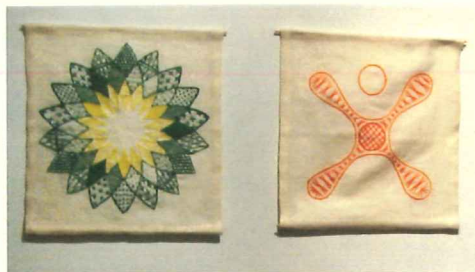
LESSONS FROM MY MOTHER SERIES,
2009

By using this definition, several works in the exhibition fall within this formal aspect. **Andrea Dezsö** is represented here by five pieces from her series **Lessons From My Mother**, which consists of 50 embroidered moral sayings and superstitions told to her by her mother with corresponding imagery. These poignant and, at times, comical, cautionary statements reinforced moral and ethical beliefs that can be seen as outdated or illogical but create an historical documentation of Dezsö's Romanian folk heritage.

In a similar vein, the work of **Catya Plate** deals not with folklore but with mythology. Her series, **Clothespin Freaks Portrait Gallery**, consist of oval-shaped embroidered portraits on fabric, depicting god-like characters that can be seen as protectors of body parts and organs such as the windpipe, foot, kidney, brain, pelvis, etc. In an ironic way, these so-called freaks, having a sacred quality to them, similar to patron saints, are actually more of a memorial or tribute, like a headstone. For example, the dates "16638-16792," embroidered at the bottom in "Kidney Spotter," can be seen as demarcating the dates this particular freak lived. These portraits are both icon and memorial, bridging our desires (hopes) and losses (fears).



CLOTHESPIN FREAK PORTRAIT GALLERY
Brain Grabber, 2008-2009



THE LOGO ALPHABET, 2006

The artist **Vandana Jain** has been recontextualizing corporate logos for several years, as a strategy for social and consumer commentary. For her presentation in this exhibition she has created a series of samplers titled **The Logo Alphabet** in which she has embroidered corporate logos to replace the letters of the Roman alphabet, such as the AT&T logo for the letter A and the Girl Scouts logo for the letter G. The witty use of logos as letters reflects our collective understanding of corporate identity. Their corporate prowess to create universal branding is apparent and we, as individuals, should be more cognizant of its implication.

Although not quite samplers, **Crossing**, the series of work by **Ipek Duben**, consists of intimate photoprint on synthetic silk handkerchiefs with embroidered text. They deal with the morally and ethically daunting issue of the displacement of peoples due to political strife. These documentary images are powerful, urging the viewer to take a socially responsible stance.



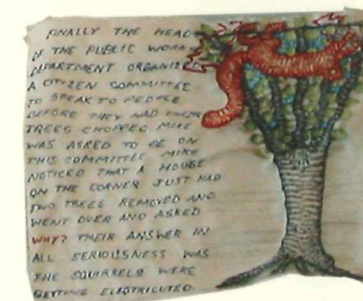
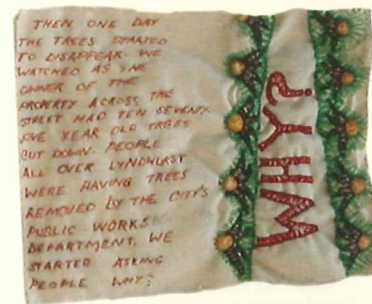
CROSSING SERIES, 2008



WERE I SO BESOTTED SERIES, 2007-2008

In the series **Were I So Besotted**, **Iviva Olenick's** hand-embroidered dating blog consisting of panels on canvas, humor and wit are used to create brief vignettes of the dating experience. Her interest is to counter the pace of digital modes of communication our society favors. Embroidery has provided her with a time-consuming artistic approach to 'blog' her observations and experiences of dating.

Using sampler-like panels **Patricia Dahlman** has created short stories, combining both fictional and non-fictional events, stemming from various sources including personal thoughts, political events, and images from news sources. In her piece **Why**, which consists of 6 embroidered panels, she presents a brief comical narrative of her life in the neighborhood, complete with unfortunate mishaps.



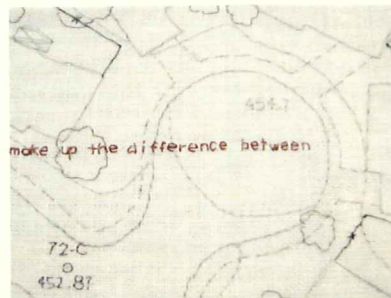
WHY?, 2005

Tanya Hartman has combined numerous sources to create her **Prayer Paddles**, a series of sculptural books, inspired by feather fans from the Western Andes, Medieval manuscript illumination, hand crosses from an Orthodox Christian Church, and the journals of Henri Nouwen. "These three-dimensional hand-held, embellished, painted sculptures celebrate the immediacy and privacy of oft-repeated invocations," explains Hartman. "The miniature 'cells' (sections of the books-paddles) filled with marks and text refer to the body, as no mediation on spirit can exist without consideration of the meaning of flesh."



PRAYER PADDLES #1-4, 2009

DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GOING,
BUT I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN,
2005-2006

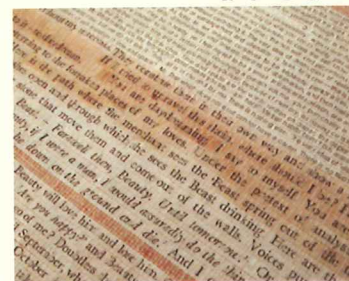


Heather Johnson's large-scale sampler, actually more of a tapestry or map-like piece, **Don't Know Where I'm Going, but I Know Where I've Been**, is a narrative of her personal journeys. The piece provides us with an intimate glimpse of her fleeting memories, suggesting the fragility of lapsed time and of mundane occurrences that at the end are actually consequential.

Another piece which is not actually a sampler but more of a talit, the prayer shawl worn in the synagogue, is by **Donna Ruff**. **The Fable** combines two diametrically opposing texts: that of the iconic experimental figure Jean Cocteau and that of the spiritual pluralist Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. Ruff interwove these texts randomly to see how these two opposing thoughts unite to create a universal cohesiveness or a new language on the idea of "self" and how we communicate or understand our place within a larger sphere.

STITCHES

Although the entire exhibition is about stitches - how thread is incorporated as a form and/or content vehicle - the following works use thread predominately as a pattern making tool, as an interpretive symbol/metaphor, or as a vehicle to heighten awareness of a visual element.



THE FABLE, 2004

The poet and writer **Jen Bervin** is being featured in this exhibition with a new work titled **The Desert**. In this elaborately produced work featuring the words of John Van Dyke, Bervin and a team of assistants have machine sewn across the pages of the book with a pale blue thread creating a hypnotic rhythm echoing metaphorically the majestic terrain of the American wilderness of Van Dyke's prose. These delicate flowing pages are bound in hand-punched covers by artist and poet Susan Mills.

between the divide and the low basin of the Colorado desert. For days I have been watching them change color at sunset -- watching the canyons shift into great slashes of blue and

THE DESERT, 2008