

In the Making:

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for Tracy Krumm

Gordon Parks Gallery

[Gallery Info](#)

Reconciliations



Metropolitan State University Gordon Parks Gallery presents ***Reconciliations***. This exhibit features the sculptural work of Tracy Krumm of Saint Paul. Describing her work, Krumm said, “For over a decade, I have been engaged with an ongoing body of work that investigates relationships between labor, gender, duality, time and culture. My personal connections to place and community—connections that constantly develop, shift and are often transient and fleeting—inform the results. I embrace traditionally “domestic” and gender-specific techniques in my creative practice, including crochet and blacksmithing. As working processes, these universal means of cultural production bear the mark of history and connect me to generations of makers.”

Oct 9th
to
Nov 6th

*Gordon Parks
Gallery*

Reception is from 5-7:30 PM on Thursday, October 8th. This event includes a gallery talk from the artist from 7-7:30 PM.

Gallery Hours

Mon-Thur, 11am-7pm

Fri-Sat, 11am-4pm

Closed Sundays

The gallery is located in the Library and Learning Center, 645 East 7th Street, at Metropolitan State University's Saint Paul Campus.



Regarding the exhibition, Erica Rasmussen, gallery director, said, “Krumm’s latest sculptural works may be her most compelling works yet. Beyond her impeccable craftsmanship, her artwork speaks of complimentary forces and elements; masculinity and femininity, industrial and domestic, flexibility and fragility, and familiarity and foreignness. Her new works, incorporating manipulated metals and hand-blown glass, are powerful and poetic.”





Textiles



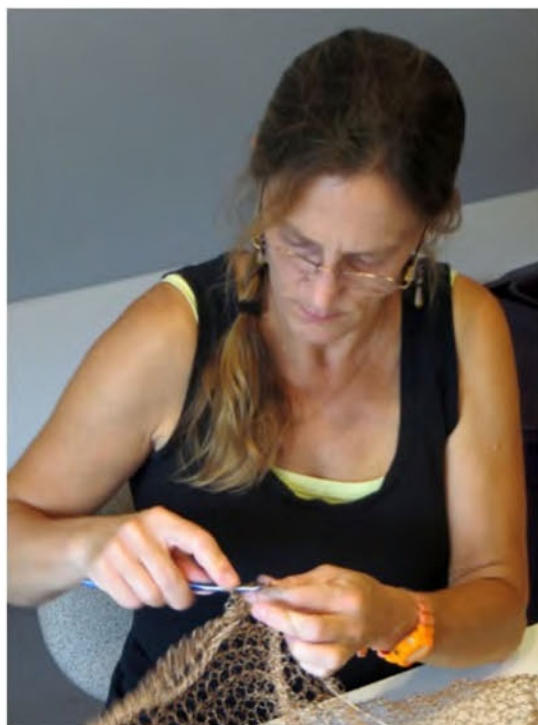
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TRACY KRUMM

ARTIST



Tracy Krumm, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Newsletter

Subscribe to get our weekly "In Conversation With" delivered straight to your inbox.



Tracy Krumm uses the art of crochet, not using yarn, but metal. Her work breaks away from traditional stereotypes of crochet as feminine and metalwork as masculine by skillfully combining the two aspects to create wonderful new pieces of sculpture.

Zoneone Arts is delighted to bring Tracy Krumm to you...

Childhood experiences passed on by Grandmothers have influenced the direction of your artwork, please comment?

By teaching me to crochet, tat, embroider and sew, my grandmothers introduced me to the legacy of women's work. These activities bonded us across the generation gap and introduced me to a world of creative practices that embraced beauty, labour and connections between cultures--and women--all over the world.

You have a definite connection between combining math and the natural sciences. Can you discuss this?

My interest in ecology and environmental studies has always been a huge influence on my artistic practice. My love of math and other linear and non-linear systems gave me an immediate connection to textile-specific practices. The fact that the very nature of textile structures and surface design are rooted in pattern and sequence made textile studies a viable approach to making art when I first began to be interested in the idea of being an artist as a profession as opposed to just a pastime. The natural sciences and my particular love of botany provided me with a background to understand the essential nature of the materials I was attracted to. Being able to analyse things from an academic standpoint, both scientifically and culturally, has influenced my art making practice far more than the history of art or the work of other artists.



'Squared 9 Patched'

A combination of need and serendipity happened simultaneously during graduate school. I found a spool of wire in a free box in front of a science lab. It immediately solved a problem of how to unite the found materials I was working in a way that felt more physically substantial than using a fibre-based material. After experimenting further, I realized metal—soft, annealed metals of all types—could be used to construct textiles with qualities and characteristics similar to fibre-based textiles. But they had this edge, this potential, to do something different in terms of structure and texture and colour. My excitement in discovering this love for metal is still with me—that's why I continue to use it.



"Squared 9 Patched Detail"

Your first exhibition was in 1988 at the "Young Americans". Since then you have been involved in over 150 exhibitions; can you discuss 2 or 3 highlights and how they influenced your work?

"Young Americans" at the (former) American Craft Museum was a huge show for me because of the tremendous exposure. It really allowed me to start my career as a studio artist. My work has changed significantly from that period—it was 2-dimensional mixed media based in weaving and papermaking at that point. The next big "aha" moment that set me on the trajectory leading me to where I am now was a show at "Plan B", a hipster renegade art space in Santa Fe. There were several teams of local artists invited to do installations for a show called "Airships and Submersibles" and this exposure evolved into a long relationship with Linda Durham Contemporary Art in Santa Fe. Around the same time, I was selected to participate in the Betonac Prize, which opened in Belgium and toured Europe, so that got me over to Europe for the first time to scope out the contemporary art scene. Lately, it has been a move back to Minnesota after teaching college for 10 years—where winters are snowy and cold and where I now control my days instead of students and administrators— and recent travel to Peru and Hawaii that have provided the physical, spiritual and cultural extremes that seem to fuel my work. Combining this with the fact that I have been lucky to have continued commercial success keeps me productive in the studio.



Installation



Installation

How difficult has it been to have your work accepted in mainstream galleries?

I mentioned my relationship with Linda Durham in Santa Fe. She was a huge supporter of my work and for over a decade, her gallery was pivotal in placing my work in a contemporary fine art context. I was lucky to have her and a number of other excellent contemporary art dealers take my work to significant art fairs in the US and Europe. My current gallery relationship with Andrea Schwartz in San Francisco has been essential in keeping my work where it needs to be. I have put enormous trust and faith in my dealers and then stepped back and let them work their magic. Having the right dealer at the right time is super crucial—and does not always happen.



'Draped (Screwed)'

You have received two grants from the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe. Can you discuss your thoughts on current Folk Art?

What constitutes folk art could be up for debate; to me it has always meant simply work made folks engaged in cultural production. We can discuss intention, training and utilitarianism as factors; it is generally work that is driven by the human hand, channelling creative energy. This means everyone can be a participant. My projects at the museum in Santa Fe allowed anyone who wanted to contribute to a several installations that could not have been realized by me alone.

The sheer amount of work meant many participants were needed and the processes used had to be simple to ensure participation by everyone, no matter their abilities. This act of making as a community tied us to cultures all over the world that rely on shared values and community engagement to get work done. Creativity is a powerful force because it lives in everyone.

How important is it that the craft of crochet lives on?

Like so many other important craft processes, the language of crochet has connected so many generations of people and so many different cultures for the past 150 years or more that I can't imagine it will ever disappear. Cultures all over the world engage with it as a practice for making objects of both utility and beauty, and artists around the world choose it for its ability to create structure in a certain way and for its ability signify particular conceptual content. I cannot imagine a world where there is not a discussion about the both the hand and technology and where these two things meet and don't meet. Crochet and other hand constructed textile practices will always be part of this conversation.



'Strapped (funnel)'

Can you discuss how crafts are defined by the generation that produces them?

Every generation has to define things in terms of itself or it won't be understood if it isn't in the right context. This is what keeps things fresh and alive. We are not always seeing things take on a radical physical transformation, as all craft processes seem to have some defining essences that resonate around the world and withstand the tests of time. As someone who has been involved in discussions about craft for over 30 years as student, teacher, production weaver and professional artist, I have seen the reinvention of the wheel over and over. Folks are still crocheting, forging and stitching "just like in the olden days" but every generation has new reasons for doing it. The crafts could be seen as benchmarks that are constantly being related to current social conditions and the relationship of every generation to what craft is becomes part of its history. It is a constant learning process for all of us involved and the field gets broader every day. You really can pick where you want to be in the discussion, whenever and wherever--there is no right or wrong place to be.



'Steel Chains(Carrick)'

Your work is all about connection. Can you discuss this relationship in your work to 1 or 2 particular pieces?

Ideas about connection are both physical and conceptual parts of my work.



'Tapper (Anchor)' Detail

The joining of materials is often the visual focal point of a work. This crossing or momentary joining of some sort of duality exists in everything I do. It is the point of intersection and accommodation that I love to play with, where strength and weakness come together and you don't know which is which.

In "Taper (Anchor)", the metal armature is encased in the crochet. The connection of the materials has an interplay that is totally significant to the structural integrity of the sculpture. It's not just decorative, it's essential and it's highly calculated.



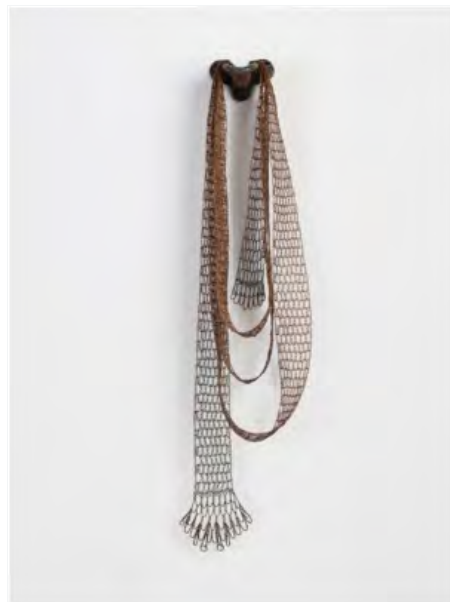
'Tapper'

Discuss how you use shadows in your work?

Shadows give the work an extra dimension that can either attract or distract. I try to keep the shadows to a minimum in my individual portfolio photographs. But in an exhibition, shadows can add an extra layer of depth and intrigue to the work. They can be used as a non-permanent drawing, record or impression of the work and can expand the boundaries and complexity of the work. Of course, if that is not part of my intention in an installation, then they are just a nuisance. It all depends.

Discuss the importance of hanging space for your work?

My work has an aspect of flexibility built into it. Every piece becomes a part of something greater that comes together to activate space in a certain way. Each space dictates the nature of how a group of work can come together to be displayed. The pieces have to play off each other in a way that makes them all worthy of being there. I often fabricate multiple armatures or hanging devices to accommodate whether a piece needs to be on the wall, hanging in space or freestanding. Many pieces can be shortened or lengthened to some extent without losing integrity. I get to make this call each time I do an installation and it helps keep the work fresh for me.



'Strip (wrapped)'

Take both a 2D and 3D piece that you have enjoyed working on and discuss?

I think the pieces that have an unexpected resolution are always the most satisfying to work on. The 3D piece "Lure (Pouch)" came from taking two other unsuccessful pieces apart and working off them to create a new, hybrid form that was much more dynamic.



'Lure (Pouch)'

The same thing happened with the 2D piece, "Plaited". It came together as I took apart a larger net from an older curtain-type piece, crocheted it back together and then started to crochet a series of strips to weave through it. The hand labour involved makes me not want to waste any of the material so I recycle my own work. I also love combining process, like plaiting and weaving, into my work. And I love to work using multiple elements, since I can finish several of these every day, which is gratifying. Then when I have a pile of them, they can come together to make something bigger and better—something I might not have been able to conceive without the parts to the whole in front of me.



'Plaited'

Often crochet conjures up small pieces made by Grannies, whereas your work is large and sculptural. Can you expand on this?

Personally, I love the image of the small pieces made by grannies. It is so nostalgic these days. Who makes a doily anymore when you can buy one at either the discount or the antique store for \$2? Now there's a cultural contrast! I think it is partly this desire to seek out compelling contrasts that led me to make work on a large scale and partly, it takes me a long time to figure out what I am doing so I have to embrace this thinking-through-making sensibility. I am labouring away, making material, not always knowing what it is going to be until the pile is quite large and then the reality of what it needs to be comes together.

Can you explain your involvement with the Cultural Exchange through Visual arts and the US Department of State?

The US State Department's Art in Embassies maintains an on-line artist registry, where over a decade ago I submitted images for consideration. My first contact with them was back in the 1990's when we were still sending out slides and my work was still two-dimensional. They have excellent curators who are constantly looking for new work for loan to their embassy exhibitions. I was fortunate enough to have work selected for the new American embassy in Djibouti and to have the work purchased permanently for the collection.



'Table (Husks)' Detail: The US State Department's Art in Embassies

You work in your studio full time now. Can you explain how being able to give your time fully to your art has given growth to your work, inspirationally and in new directions?

There has been a lot more time to think, to fret and to sift out bad ideas. I do not have to approach my work with the desperation of time constraints. You make decisions very differently when you have more time. I don't know if this is good or bad, it just is and takes some getting used to. I spend more time thinking about whether or not the work I am doing is worthwhile and if it is true to my nature. I have dabbled in a lot of other materials and processes in the recent past, but none of them has suited me yet. Maybe as my lifestyle continues to change, something that appears to be a more radical shift will click. For now, I am trying to take more time appreciating my surroundings to soak in new inspiration and to establish some meaningful relationships with my new community in the Twin Cities. It doesn't get any easier as you get older. There is a lot more weight and effort involved in everything I do right now.



Tracy Krumm, Blacksmithing

Everyone loves to see inside an artist studio. Can you show yours and explain how you have had to adapt things for storage and your specialist needs?

My studio has always been pretty spartan and I am not a huge stockpiler, as I have moved so many times in my life. I have always been extremely organized, as my studio usually doubles as some other type of living space. Everything has its place and gets packed away in a plastic tub when it is not being used. I tend to have several piles on my worktable at a time, as I usually work on several pieces at once. And fabrication equipment always lives in the garage. I try to keep it simple. Think "pile of wire and crochet hook in a tote bag" and I am good to go!



Tracy Krumm, in the studio

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Tracy Krumm, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Interview by Deborah Blakeley, April, 2014



Think a colleague or friend could benefit from this interview?

Knowledge is one of the biggest assets in any business. So why not forward this on to your friends and colleagues so they too can start taking advantage of the insightful information the artist has given?



If you enjoyed this interview, I suggest you read our interview with ceramic artist [Mikyoung Jung](#).

Tanya Hartman, Tracy Krumm offer contrasting but compatible visions at Sherry Leedy

June 5

BY NEIL THRUN

Special to The Star

On exhibit

"Tanya Hartman: We Write Ourselves Anew" and "Tracy Krumm: In the Making" continue at Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art, 2004 Baltimore Ave. through June 29. Hours are 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday & by appointment. For more information, call 816-221-2626 or go to www.SherryLeedy.com.

While no specific themes connect Tanya Hartman's beaded shields and prayer paddles to Tracy Krumm's crocheted metal wire sculptures, their shows at Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art complement each other in subject and tone. Krumm's exhibit, "In the Making," features large curtain structures of metal wire, crocheted and woven together. Found objects such as metal hooks, giant screws and strainers create supporting structures for each piece. In all the works there is a patina of copper, wood and rust, with glimmers of shiny silver here and there. But each sculpture is based on negative space, the empty air between the strands of wire.

In one large piece, "Wall Curtain (Saw Blade)," three layered sheets of crocheted wire hang from an enormous, nine-foot-long saw blade. Suspended from the aged rusted saw, the wire curtain becomes a skeleton, as if it may have been an armature for cloth or paper that has weathered away with time.

A statement at the exhibition describes Krumm's artwork as an "unlikely pairing of the traditionally feminine art of crochet and the masculine metalwork of blacksmithing." This is an apt description of the work, which combines utilitarian objects such as bolts and handles with more decorative forms. The elegance of the weaving, combined with the aged objects, gives Krumm's work the paradoxical feeling of being new and antique.

Tanya Hartman's "We Write Ourselves Anew" comprises multimedia sculptures made of beads, fabric, paint, text, bones, wood and other materials. Hartman calls these sculptures prayer paddles and shields. All of the sculptures have intricate surfaces, a wild terrain of beading and embroidery accented by small bits of printed text and paint; no surface is left unadorned.

Hartman models her prayer paddles after the fans used by Mexican shamans when performing healing rituals to reunite a sad person's soul with his or her body. On each of her paddles, prayers spiral around the decorations, most beginning with the phrase "Dear Lord God, Please..."

While Hartman's shields have a similar visual style, they tell different stories, those of Luai Deng Akoon. Born in south Sudan, Akoon was recruited into an armed group as a child soldier. "Many People Died That Night" is a large shield with multiple handles, with a beaded pattern of orange and white triangles. In the center of the shield, a list of names reads "Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Aunt, Uncle, Friend, Teacher, Neighbor."

"Secrets and Outtakes," a triptych of shields, contains stories so private and painful that Akoon is not willing to share them, and the text is obscured with old metal springs and scraps of metal. Words stick out here and there: "jawbone," "corpse," "ripped." No definite narrative is clear, only the implications of dark events.



A third project by Hartman, titled “What Was Beautiful Today,” is made up of 365 pages of text that have been erased and written over. Each text represents a day in a year. Take Day 10, for instance: “What was beautiful today? Today, the sun shone in swathes that sequined like silver swells on an earthen sea.”

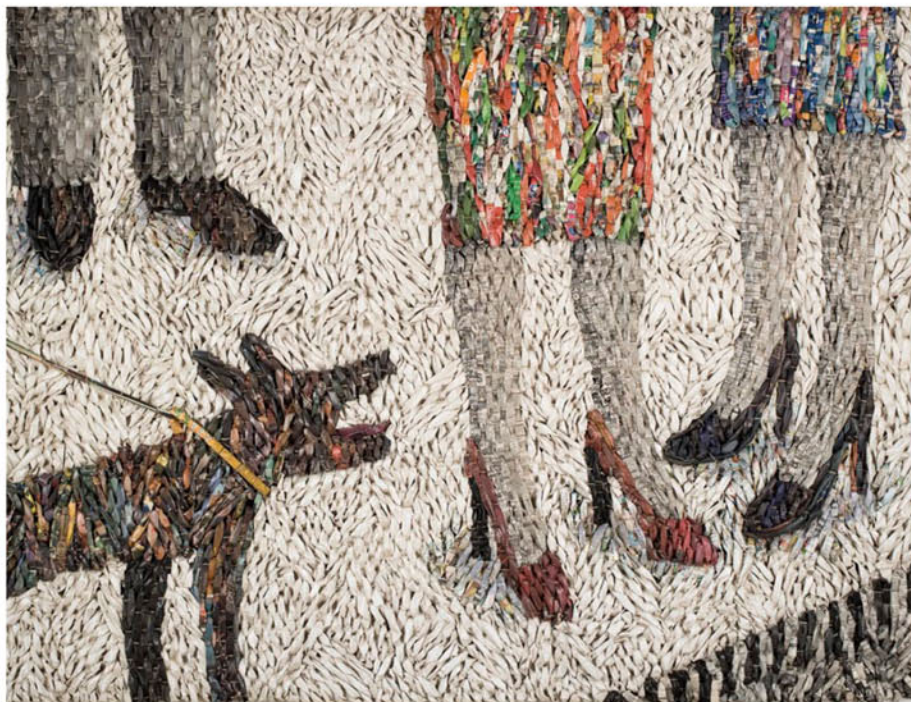
Yet not all days reflect such simple pleasures. Others reflect feelings of loss and trauma; some celebrate friendship, pets or lovers.

At some point, this excessive disclosure of information becomes awkward and uncomfortable. Some of the stories are so personal that reading them, one feels intrusive and overburdened with detail. “We Write Ourselves Anew” creates a sense of anxiety, of being flooded in another person’s memories.

Luckily, you can always stand back and allow the text to become illegible as the words sink into the beaded detailing. Krumm’s formalist exploration of metalwork and fiber art offers a pleasant contrast to the spiritual and emotional artworks of Hartman. Both artists’ works are strong enough to stand alone.

Sleight of Hand

LEVEL 6, NORTH BUILDING | ONGOING



New on view in the Neusteter Textile Gallery are sixteen contemporary works that surprise the eye and challenge our powers of perception. From pop art to present day, these sculptures and images span more than thirty years of exceptional inventiveness.

“None of these works reveals itself completely at first glance,” says curator Alice Zrebiec. “Every piece deserves a second—or third—look to fully appreciate its creative originality.”

Some of the featured artists use time honored textile techniques—embroidery, quilting, weaving, netting, crochet, coiling, and ikat—however, they use these techniques in unique and unexpected ways. Others have devised new methods

to realize their vision. Zrebiec calls the artists “alchemists” for their ability to change materials as diverse as cotton, newspaper, sand, and gold leaf into astonishing works of textile art.

Magdalena Abakanowicz’s *Standing Figure* and Norma Minkowitz’s *Legs I* explore the human form with surprising materials and techniques. Gugger Petter captures a fleeting street scene with what appears to be thick layers of paint, but is actually woven newspaper. Carol Shinn’s embroideries evoke and mirror the textures of nature, both in close-up study and panoramic views. *Notas 2* by Olga de Amaral is a visual metamorphosis of woven strips of cotton and linen into a shimmering illusion, through the application of gesso, parchment, gold leaf, and paint.

SURPRISING MATERIALS

Painter Gugger Petter weaves tubes of newspaper into a canvas of slashing brushstrokes.

Gugger Petter, *Dog Barking at Two Women*, 2008. Neusteter Textile Collection: Funds from Mary Dean Reed and Fortune Morrison, by exchange.

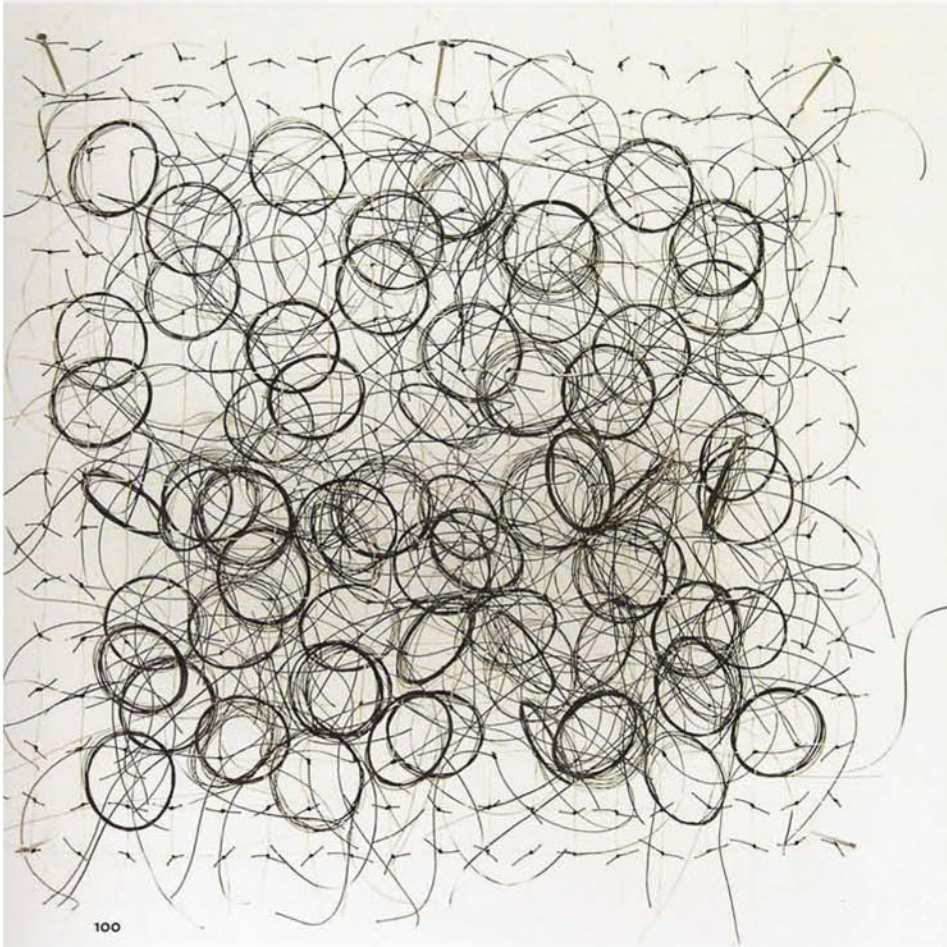


ARTISTIC ALTERATIONS

Tracy Krumm transforms found industrial objects through the addition of crocheted metal thread.

Tracy Krumm, *Specimen: Giant Needle and Specimen: Spool of Lace*, 1999. Neusteter Textile Collection: Funds from various donors, by exchange.

See the power and beauty of creativity unleashed in these and other works by Polly Barton, Lia Cook, Carol Eckert, Arlette Rose Gosiewski, Cindy Hickok, Kay Khan, Tracy Krumm, Jane Mathews, and Rebecca Medel.



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100. Linda Green, *Buoyancy*, 2009. 'Drawing' directly with knotted wire and monofilament, the artist here expresses her interest in chance versus order and the illusion of depth and translucency.

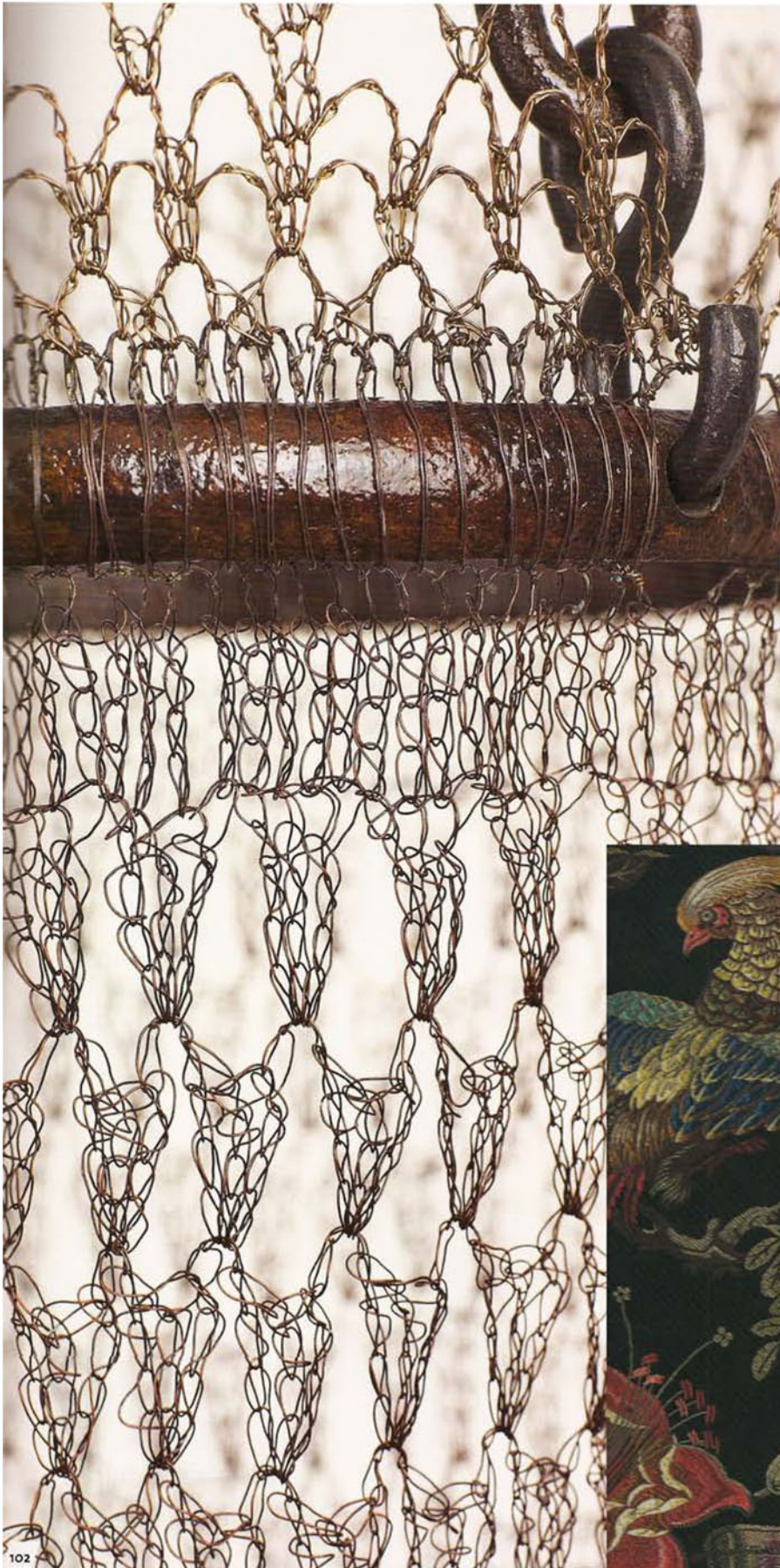
101. Tracy Krumm, *Lure (Pouch)*, 2011. Crocheted nickel, forged steel and found objects are given a resin patina to create an interplay of delicacy and strength.

102. Tracy Krumm, *Double Chain (Sleeve)* (detail), c. 2009. Creating intricate pattern and texture with crocheted copper wire, and incorporating forged steel and found objects, the completed work was treated with a patina resin.

103. Flora Sutton, *Vinculos (Ties)*, 2005. Argentinian artist Sutton uses her own techniques to manipulate wire and iron to form a sculpture standing 150 cm (59 in.) high.



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High Fiber—Women to Watch 2012 On view through January 6, 2013

High Fiber is the third installment in NMWA's biennial *Women to Watch* series, which focuses on artists from the states and countries in which the museum has outreach committees. Committees participating in *Women to Watch 2012* met with curators in their regions to create shortlists of artists working with fibers, and NMWA selected the exhibition's artists from this group. Seven artists are featured this year: Ligia Bouton, Debra Folz, Louise Halsey, Tracy Krumm, Beili Liu, Rachael Matthews, and Laure Tixier.



Tracy Krumm (Greater Kansas City):
Inspired by science's systems and sequencing, Tracy Krumm crochets fine-gauge wire into organically-shaped pods or broad panels resembling domestic textiles. Her cheekily titled *Draped (Screwed)* (2010) might be a blanket or billowing curtain. Krumm's evocative works blur distinctions between visual—and cultural—categories. Suspended from steel and wood armatures and moving just slightly with a breeze, Krumm's quasi-textiles appear simultaneously feminine and masculine, scientific and historical, hard and soft, heavy and light.



Beili Liu (Texas):
Working intuitively, Beili Liu "plays" with materials, letting their inherent properties guide her creative process. To create *Toil* (2008), Liu trimmed the edges of thin strips of silk organza with a lit incense cone. She then oiled the fabric into cones that twist and curve. Liu's meticulous hand-work transfers energy to each element, resulting in an array of animated forms sprouting from the gallery wall surface. The tension embodied in these delicate but peculiar forms mirror the unease Liu sometimes perceives between her Eastern origins and Western influences.

Visual arts

John Bonick and Tracy Krumm: Visually distinct creations of painter, sculptor joined by passion for science, relationships

By **Nirmala Nataraj**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

John Bonick's labyrinthine abstract paintings bring to mind networks of neurons. Tracy Krumm's sculptures juxtapose traditionally gendered arts and crafts against industrial objects. Their new two-person exhibition at the Andrea Schwartz Gallery may seem to speak to disparate sets of aesthetic and philosophical themes.

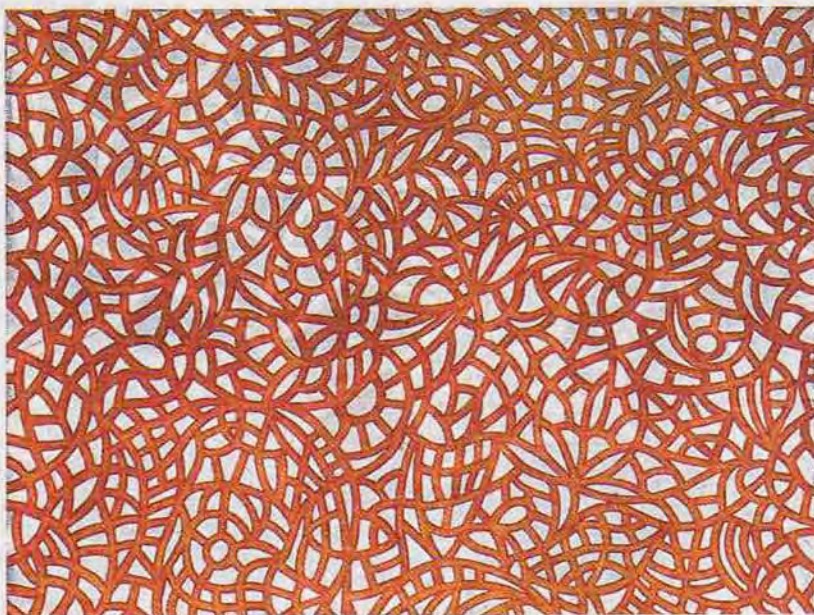
But look closely: The artists' engagement with science, interconnectedness and the process of creating make viewing their work more seamless than you might think.

"Tracy's woven and crocheted materials echo the interconnectedness that I'm thinking about when I paint," Bonick says. "Entanglement through and through."

Bonick's visual lexicon is beguiling in its spareness. In many of his works, the suggestion of chaos is inherent. But as the paintings develop, "an order emerges," he says. "Other elements that excite me are vibrations, the emanation of light in some of the channels, forms in the negative space and gracefulness of the lines. ... I want the work to have motion."

While Bonick's work is also invested in entanglement theory and quantum physics, it isn't distant or analytical. Entanglement theory "implies a connection between things and people that is inseparable. When one is affected or altered, all other elements in the system are altered."

Krumm's work is also about connections. Her interest in craft is based in 1960s urban culture and her relationships with her grandmothers, who were experts in the arts of sewing, embroidery and crochet. But Krumm's later interest in math and science also has influenced her process of making art.



Andrea Schwartz Gallery

John Bonick's "Entanglement 4" (detail), mixed media on panel, seeks to portray an inseparable connection between people and things.

Through April 29. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 1-5 p.m. Sat. Andrea Schwartz Gallery, 525 Second St., S.F. (415) 495-2090. www.asgallery.com.

Specifically, Krumm takes the gendered processes of crochet and blacksmithing, combining them with forged steel and patina chemistry to honor a complex history of "making, technical proficiency, science. ... I get to play with art and craft and science and history all at once, focusing on whatever aspect I want to at any given time.

"The work is always about balance and accommodation for me," she says. "There is the static and the flexible, the heavy and light, the delicate and almost ephemeral, and then the solid and the weighty."

Krumm says she thinks of her art the same way "an artist might think of a painting: playing with formal

issues, but with the twist of being made of a textile construction."

The sculptures "Lure (Seine)" and "Lure (Pouch)" present organic forms that emerge from the same tubular structure but grow into two separate, complex shapes representative of the masculine and the feminine — references to Krumm's engagement with duality and dichotomy. When Krumm and Bonick were given the opportunity to show together, "it was a no-brainer. ... He paints the way I think," Krumm says.

"There is a fixating aspect to our work that speaks of labor, and meditation and complexity, in ways that overlap and merge," she adds. "His work really feels to me like an alternative representation of a similar way of thinking and sifting through information."

E-mail comments to 96hours@sfgate.com.

Big Fiber: Human Tools



Part of *Big Fiber/Human Tools I*, installed on Museum Hill, viewed from the parking lot. Photo courtesy the Museum of International Folk Art, DCA, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Tracy Krumm

For more than twenty years, Tracy Krumm's work has been exhibited internationally at numerous venues. She is currently a special assistant professor at the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, Missouri. Several summers ago, she completed two large-scale textile-based installations, *Hand/Crochet* and *Finger/Knit* as part of *Big Fiber: Human Tools* for the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Aurelia Gomez

When artist Tracy Krumm developed a site-specific collaborative artwork with the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, Aurelia Gomez, the museum's director of education, interviewed her for *SchoolArts*.

Aurelia Gomez: How can you summarize your work?

Tracy Krumm: My work incorporates the histories of both sculpture and craft. It includes the traditions of women's work and the history of metal arts. It is a juxtaposition of gender identified processes, crochet, blacksmithing, and a synthesis of process, technique, and materials.

AG: What are your inspirations?

TK: Environment, always. Particularly the natural environment; and because I work with found objects, my work

always has an association with place. There's always a reference to history and place and use, in both the materials I use, and the pieces when they are finished.

AG: What is the *Big Fiber/Human Tools II* project?

TK: This was a project that taught the public to use textile techniques to create giant, site-specific public art pieces that were installed on Milner Plaza, at Museum Hill in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in conjunction with the exhibition *Needles and Pins: Textiles and Tools* at the Museum of International Folk Art. We created two installations using flagging tape to finger crochet, and a rubberized plastic lacing to finger knit structures that were suspended from and tied to architectural structures on Milner Plaza.

The next year, we made interlacing and knotting structures out of flagging tape that were wrapped around

and attached to more architectural elements. The main thrust of the project was to demonstrate how textile production is reliant on the physical use of the human body. Creating large-scale textiles helps people to understand the elements and process of textile construction in a dramatic way.

Getting people to use their hands as the primary tools of the creative project is a major goal. On another level, the pieces were a metaphor for the interlacing of cultures and histories and are a highly visible part of the global community here in Santa Fe. Participants made a visible contribution to a community-based project that symbolizes human interaction and creative spirit. ☺

Aurelia Gomez is the director of education at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. aurelia.gomez@state.nm.us

WEB LINK

users.lmi.net/tkrumm