

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sasha Ali
Manager, Exhibitions & Communications
sasha@cafam.org | 323.937.4230 x25

MATERIAL AS METAPHOR

May 28 - August 20, 2017

Group presentation of experimental fiber installations and sculptures by eleven West Coast artists

LOS ANGELES - The Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) presents *Material as Metaphor*, a group exhibition of thirty-one large-scale, abstract works by eleven contemporary West Coast artists who experiment with the intersections of fiber art and sculpture. Using materials such as vinyl, industrial felt, wire, cotton canvas, and nylon stockings, each presented work reveals the artist's intimacy and intentionality with their medium and process. The exhibition title is taken from a 1982 essay by Bauhaus artist and teacher Anni Albers, who said "What I am trying to get across is that material is a means of communication," urging artists to learn the language of their chosen materials. The exhibition features site-specific installations by Lloyd Hamrol and Lisa C Soto, as well as wall works and standalone sculptures by Joel Allen, Miyoshi Barosh, Phyllis Green, Mary Little, Christy Matson, Victoria May, Senga Nengudi, Kay Whitney, and May Wilson. *Material as Metaphor* is on view from May 28 through September 4, 2017.

Relying on processes that include cutting, stitching, draping, weaving, and knotting, each work's materiality explores ideas such as connectivity, labor, human imperfection, or memory. "This exhibition celebrates the extended boundaries of the art world where classifications and aesthetics are stretched through an emphasis on materials, techniques, and processes that crisscross our definitions of craft and contemporary art, freeing makers to experiment with various materials and methods," says CAFAM executive director Suzanne Isken.

Bay Area artist Victoria May contrasts the softness of fake fur, blankets, and hand-sewn silk rope with steel pins, rubber, and hardware. With *Studies in Convulsion* (2014), she reshapes and stitches a partial inner tube found on the road to embody the cycle of production, from raw material to refinement and back to decay. Los Angeles-based Kay Whitney creates large sculptures such as *Skyhook* (2016-17) from industrial felt and plywood, emphasizing the slim boundary between both materials' natural origins and their eventual artificiality. May Wilson studied sculpture but eventually moved on to textile as an alternative material. Her materials include felt, vinyl, nylon strapping, fire hoses, concrete, and other specialized industrial textiles. Wilson's two- and three-legged knotted structures recall human qualities that incite our empathy and emotional identification.

Weaver Christy Matson works with natural materials like paper, cotton, linen, wool, and natural dye, preferring to use leftovers from textile mills. Influenced by color-field painting, geometric abstraction, and the quality of light in Southern California, Matson uses the jacquard loom-known as the first iteration of the computer-to create organic patterns that confound our understanding of digital technology. Furniture maker Mary Little's recent work involves constructing abstract wall pieces that utilize the inherent structure of cotton artist canvas to create three-dimensional pattern, form, and shadow inspired by the beautiful and varied landscape of the north of Ireland, where she was born and raised.

Sculptor Phyllis Green is inspired by her travels to India and the study of ancient writings that describe how humans can become enlightened. The *Mundaka Upanishad* advises



Senga Nengudi, *RSVP Reverie A*, nylon pantyhose, sand, mesh screen, 2011. Collection of Lauren and AC Hudgins



May Wilson, *Slunk*, vinyl, carbon fiber, steel strapping, 2017. Courtesy of the artist



Miyoshi Barosh, *Rainbow of Tears*, found afghans and polyester fiberfill, 2015. Courtesy of the artist



Victoria May, *Large Fetish*, used inner tubes, thread, 2014. Courtesy of the artist

that the first step toward enlightenment is for individuals to approach a learned teacher with wood (fuel) on their heads. As a solution, she has constructed performative art objects from wood, leather, and cloth that assist her with the task of presenting wood to her guru. Senga Nengudi began working with pantyhose because it was affordable, portable, and she liked its association with the elasticity of the human body. Nengudi says that her use of pantyhose alludes to female anatomy, maternity, change, human vulnerability, and the movement of the body through space.

Lisa C. Soto uses copper, fishing line, bullet casing and, sound to create intersecting forms that reflect interconnectivity between people and events. Soto's site-specific installation *The shortest distance between two points...* (2016-2017) uses bullet casing that are suspended in space via an intersecting web of string whose trajectories recall time standing still, questioning whether the inevitable can be changed. Lloyd Hamrol constructs large and small-scale sculptures made of industrial felt, what he considers the simplest and most ordinary material to work with. His site-specific piece *Cascade* is made from large, circular units of burnt umber-colored industrial felt that rely on gravity and architecture to maintain their structure and integrity.

Miyoshi Barosh relies on traditional craft techniques to create the large-scale wall work *Rainbow of Tears*. Made from discarded afghans found in thrift shops throughout Los Angeles, her materials symbolize unrequited love and devotion, selfless labor, and useless attempts to cheer others up despite the reality of a harsh world. Joel Allen's *Hooked on Svelte* is a series of hanging sculptures utilizing fiber and metalwork that can be recombined to form site-specific installations. The work is about the repetitive, physical labor of the artist's process.

An opening reception for *Material as Metaphor* takes place on Saturday, May 27 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. The reception is free for CAFAM members and open to the public for a \$12 entry fee.

This exhibition is sponsored by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition, including CraftNight on the first Thursday of the month from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. and CraftLab family workshops on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Abstract Felt Sculptures with Lloyd Hamrol A CraftLab Family Workshop

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with an essay by Steven Nelson, director of the African Studies Center and professor of African and African American art history at UCLA. It will be available in the CAFAM Shop or at cafamshop.org.

Exhibition Walkthrough with Suzanne Isken

Sunday, July 16 | 3 p.m.

Free

Soft-Sculpture Workshop with Victoria May

Saturday, August 12 | 12:00-5:30 p.m.

Registration required at workshops@cafam.org



Christy Matson, *Birds of Paradise*, paper, alpaca, cashmere, wool, linen, cotton, 2016. Courtesy of the artist

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1973, the **Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art - all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, and seniors; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.