



# MindOverMatter

*reworking women's work*

October 11, 2002  
through May 4, 2003

Director's Gallery  
Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe

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Seong Chun - Olga de Amaral - Nan Masland Erickson - John Garrett  
Teri Greeves - Kay Khan - Tracy Krumm - Sabra Moore - Stacey Neff  
Stuart Netsky - Elaine Reichel - Jane Sauer - Amy Westphal



Since the Renaissance, craft has been depicted as art's subordinate. Significantly, many of the practitioners of crafts, particularly fiber arts such as quilting, weaving, knitting, crochet and embroidery, have been women. Thus "women's work," like craft, often has been relegated to a lesser status.

Among the strategies used in the feminist art movement of the 1970s was to revalue women's domestic handicrafts as legitimate art forms. Artists such as Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago have used quilting, needlework or macramé to expand the vocabulary of art. Their efforts to raise consciousness resulted in a cross-fertilization of art and craft, "high art" and "low art." This feminist reworking of women's work set the stage for artists today to further explore the possibilities of their chosen medium.

Many of the stereotypes we have today of women's work in the arts emerged in the 19th century. Industrialism gave rise to a middle class and as men left the home for the workplace, there was a gender-based separation of public and private roles. There emerged a "cult of domesticity," which idealized women as "the angel in the house."<sup>1</sup> Their labors, including needlework and crafts, concentrated on morality and the creation of a cheerful domestic space.

Even as the notion of domesticity had gained footing, there arose a trend to dismantle negative preconceptions of craft. The Arts & Crafts Movement was rooted in the 19th-century reaction against the Industrial Revolution, during which machines replaced the hand of the artist. It emphasized a renewed appreciation of individual craftsmanship, design and functionality.

The Bauhaus school, whose effect was felt in the United States, continued craft's trajectory within the arts in the early 20th century. Founder Walter Gropius called for an end to "the class distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist."<sup>2</sup> He also proclaimed the equality of "the beautiful and the strong gender"<sup>3</sup> (i.e., women and men). Nonetheless, in

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**Tracy Krumm**, *Shroud: Half Circle*, 1999, crocheted copper wire, found steel object, 63 x 18 1/2 x 7". Collection of the Museum of New Mexico, Museum of Fine Arts. Museum purchase with funds donated from the Collectors' Club. Photo by Blair Clark.

practice, women's work in these craft movements consisted primarily of textiles.

Despite these influential international movements, craft today still struggles for equal standing in the arts. Many contemporary artists continue to revisit craft and women's work, some in order to resist once entrenched categories and others in order to experiment with diverse materials and processes. Innovative approaches to techniques such as quilting, crochet, embroidery, basketry, glassblowing, beadworking, weaving, knitting and blacksmithing produce art that breaks new ground while remaining steeped in historically gender-based stereotypes.

The legacy of feminism and multiculturalism is to bring to the center that which was once marginalized. By reworking women's work, the artists in this exhibition continue a decades-long effort to eliminate the hierarchy that privileges men's work over women's work. And through their choice of materials and processes, they resume a century-long endeavor to blur the boundaries between art and craft.

—Laura M. Addison, Curator of Contemporary Art

<sup>1</sup> The term "the angel in the house," describing the Victorian ideal of womanhood, derives from Coventry Patmore's 19th-century epic poem (1845–62) by the same name.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Sigrid Wortmann Weltge, *Women's Work: Textile Art from the Bauhaus* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1993), 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.



**Stacey Neff**, *Moon Pod*, 2002, blown glass forms, epoxy resin, fiberglass, steel, pigment, 73 x 41 x 35".  
Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Herb Lotz.

**Teri Greeves**, *Gkoy-Goo: The Story of My People*, 2000, brain-tanned deer hide, cut glass beads, brass & nickel studs, birch wood, 32 x 17 x 16".  
Courtesy of the artist.

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Wednesday, October 16, 12:15 pm

Gallery Talk with Laura Addison

By museum admission

### Artist talks on Free Friday Evenings

Friday, October 25, 5:30 pm

Slide Talk by Teri Greeves (Kiowa)

Friday, November 8, 5:30 pm

Gallery Talk with John Garrett  
and Kay Khan

Friday, March 7, 5:30 pm

Gallery Talk with Sabra Moore

Friday, March 28, 5:30 pm

Gallery Talk with Tracy Krumm,  
Stacey Neff and Amy Westphal

Friday, April 11, 5:30 pm

Gallery Talk with Jane Sauer

Free Friday Evenings are partially funded by the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax. Public programming generously supported by the Friends of Contemporary Art.



John Garrett, *Black Star Quilt* (detail), 1999, aluminum, paint, wire, beads, 56 x 52". Courtesy of LewAllen Contemporary.

Cover: (Top) Jane Sauer, *Re/Generate*, 2001, waxed linen, pigment, wire, 39 x 18 x 17". Courtesy of Thirteen Moons Gallery.

Cover: (Bottom) Kay Khan, *Empathy*, 2002, cotton and silk quilted, stitched, constructed, 30 1/2 x 13 x 13". Courtesy of LewAllen Contemporary.  
Photo by Wendy McEahern.