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Debra Smith - *Shifting Territory*

September 5 - October 18, 2014

Opening Reception - Friday, September 5, 5-9 PM

In her newest body of work *Shifting Territory*, Smith focuses on gestural motions and the graphic aspects in her work. The foundation of the series comes from her collection of vintage kimono fabric and a striped dead stock yardage originally intended for men's suit lining. Smith found this striped silk 20 years ago in the Garment District of New York City. She was drawn to this particular fabric because she felt it looked like a drawing before she ever made her first cut. She works with fabric as if a painter would work with paint, creating gestural and graphic abstract works while the use of vintage textiles brings it's own history to the work.



"About to embark on a movement to more color in my work I was gifted the opportunity to use a larger studio while preparing for this show. With a physical distance now literally possible between me, the sewing machine and the wall, I found myself unable to see. I think trying to find clarity was part of the catalyst to limit the palette to black and white for this exhibition. To explore the bold gestures with weight and scale and the subtle nuances the fabric can create from an intimate distance or a larger expanse of space."

By meticulously fusing two layers of her pieced fabric Smith captures the translucent quality of the kimono and silk. As graphic patterns and seams emerge within the piece viewers are allowed an intimate gaze into the notion of duality and reconceived medium. As Smith

evolves within her practice she continues to redefine her textile work from that of simple bits of fabric and thread to a series of textile-based drawings propelling her towards new explorations.

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Textile artist Debra Smith embodies a balanced duality of craftwork and fine art. As a third-generation weaver she creates exquisite Sakiori scarves woven by hand from precious kimono fabric. As a graduate of both the Kansas City Art Institute (BFA in fibers) and the Fashion Institute of Technology (Associates in Applied Science) Smith approaches fabric as poetic language and reinterprets the painterly through her meditative process of cutting and piecing her artwork.

Debra Smith was born in Kansas City in 1971 and raised in Hannibal, Missouri. Pursuing her interest in fashion and textiles, Debra Smith studied at the Italian Academy of Fashion & Design; Lorenzo de Medici in Florence Italy before receiving her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute with a major in Fiber in 1993 and an Associate Degree in Applied Science from the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2002.

Breaking all stereotypes associated with textiles, from ideas of craft to that of “women’s work” Smith’s pieced images have a strong language that is much more similar to that of painting. In 2012 Smith was honored as one of the Women to Watch 2012: Focus on Fiber & Textiles from The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC

Her work has been shown internationally over the past two decades, including solo & group exhibitions: Spring Revival, Markel Fine Art, NYC (2013), Release of Time, Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art (2012), In-between Spaces/ New work, Roswell Museum & Art Center, Roswell, NM (2010), Looking to The Left, Julie Saul Gallery, NYC (2008), Sense of Presence, Davidson Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2004), Celestial Navigation, Vancouver, BC (2002)

After living in Brooklyn, NY, for over a decade, Smith returned to her native Midwestern roots in 2004. She now lives in Kansas City, where she continues to create art from vintage textiles.

Gallery Hours: 9-5 Tuesday through Friday, 12-5 Saturday

Press Contact

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