



## WARP AND WEFT

SEPTEMBER 6 - OCTOBER 31, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 6-9 PM

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**ARTISTS:** Alicia McCarthy, Jim Melchert, Joshua Rampage, Michelle Grabner, Nathan Lynch, Rebekah Goldstein, Terri Friedman

*“Weave lasting sure, weave day and night the weft, the warp, incessant weave, tire not...  
For great campaigns of peace the same the wiry threads to weave,  
We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.”*

*Walt Whitman*

The ancient expression “warp and weft” refers to the threads that run lengthwise and crosswise in a woven fabric. As with many textiles terms, the expression is also used metaphorically: warp and weft is the underlying structure upon which something is built. In our September exhibition *Warp and Weft*, we are presenting a group of artists — some from our history and some new to the program — whose practices consider the underlying structures and how to build upon them.

Weaving is the opposite of dividing, labeling, and marginalizing. It starts with the assumption that every thread, every piece of yarn or wicker, is necessary for the creation and integrity of the whole. Pull one thread out, and the construction will begin to unravel. The artists in this exhibition do not all use weaving in their work, but their projects show a dedication to crafting multifaceted structures that are gestalt in nature.

**Alicia McCarthy** has long used weaving as a structural form within her paintings. She uses recurring motifs on found wood or panel, often weaving paint line over line to embody the interconnected moments of human interaction that together make up her identity. The social connotation of McCarthy’s weaves imply that her colors, like individuals, influence each other and together combine to form something greater. In McCarthy’s work, abstract forms become a metaphor for belief.

**Jim Melchert** (1930-2023) was one of the most influential Bay Area artists of the last century. Over his fifty year career, he cast a remarkably long shadow of grace and influence. We are honored to exhibit his 2003-2004 *Feathers of A Phoenix (Blue)*, a large-scale multipanel piece never before seen by the public. Similar works from this series are in the collection of the di Rosa. Melchert was part of a generation of artists that made ceramics a contemporary art form. Maria Porges wrote, “a powerful concept that has guided Melchert’s explorations over the past four decades is the Japanese tradition of Kintsugi, a process of mending something broken.” This mending can be seen as a form of resistance against the pressure of our consumerist society. In his work, we see an acceptance of

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change as an aspect of life. According to Melchert, “when clay is broken, the gift it gives you is discovering the interior structure. It’s like someone who has just made a first move in chess — it’s a challenge... you move, then the other person makes a move. Whatever I do, the tile comes back with a response.”

**Joshua Rampage** studied at the University of Indiana and received a degree in graphic design. It was during his time at U.I. that he developed a passion for typography. This interest has inspired the series of paintings shown in *Warp and Weft*. “These abstractions are derived from literal secrets. Our secrets reflect us and frame how we interact with each other.”

**Michelle Grabner** has crafted the art world’s most diverse career spanning over 30 years. She is a professor at the Art Institute of Chicago and the first artist to ever be invited to curate the Whitney Biennial. In this exhibition, we present a large-scale gingham painting by the artist. Grabner’s gingham paintings were made as a series of oil on burlap works, some monumental in scale. Referencing the fabric most associated with midwestern American tablecloths, Grabner’s gingham paintings ruminate on the unseen labor of domesticity. What denim was for the American male — a way to align with a gender and class politic — gingham was for American women. Her work makes a powerful case for the familial associations and intelligence embodied by the blankets and textiles often associated with so-called women’s work. These handmade textiles are crucial to understanding art and political history. Grabner also considers “gingham and its relationship to the cliché, and about how it migrates through economic classes.” In their sophisticated layering of meanings, Grabner’s paintings remind us of the complexity of craft practices, themselves often handed down generation by generation.

**Nathan Lynch** was raised in Pasco, Washington, an agricultural community in the shadow of Hanford Nuclear Power Plant. His concerns for political conflict and environmental upheaval are filtered through notions of absurdity, hand fabrication, and the dramatic devices of storytelling. “I think a lot of my work has to do with Americans and their well-intentioned efforts going awry. A lot of these sculptures look like they were inflated and then collapsed. Something about the unlimited aspiration of humans to make things better is endlessly amusing to me.” Lynch is the Chair of the Ceramics Program at the California College of the Arts.

**Rebekah Goldstein** makes paintings that explore depictions of space, the human figure, and built environments. Goldstein’s works are fluid abstract forms where shapes and colors interlink in cycles that ebb and flow referencing architecture, the body, and objects. Her paintings shift between shaped and rectangular canvases. Her abstract paintings and sculptures explore the translation between image and object and are inspired by architecture, Russian Constructivist fashion design, Cubist still lifes, and an unabashed love of color.

**Terri Friedman**’s monumental woven works are well known. She is in the vanguard of artists using textiles in contemporary art. “The process of weaving is unforgiving, mathematical, and imperfect. There is no painting over. It is like a digital printer, generated from the bottom to the top until an image is formed. Like many weavers, my process is not organic. After drawing, painting, picking palettes for warp and weft (the vertical and horizontal threads), measuring, and laying them out on grid paper, I am ready to warp my loom. Though there is room for spontaneity, each warp thread and each section of the painted image is mapped out on paper before I begin. I like the very basic and straightforward technology of a loom. It is ageless.”