

Extra|ordinary

fiber artists rethinking art and everyday life

The Cube at Beco, Kansas City, MO: May 23-July 9

(Opening reception: Friday, June 3rd)

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The exhibition **Extra/ordinary: fiber artists rethinking art and everyday life** spotlights the work of contemporary artists interested in critically approaching the history and meanings of fiber arts as they relate to politics, pop culture, sexuality, and identity issues. In media ranging from embroidery to installation, the artists of **Extra/ordinary** recognize the potential of fiber arts to transform the ordinary into something surprising, subversive, and poignant.

Since the Industrial Revolution began blurring the lines between industry and handicraft, as well as the upper- and lower-classes, artists have subsequently taken great pleasure in using such developments to similarly dissolve the centuries-old barriers that once separated the *avant-garde* and mass culture, masterpiece and kitsch, art and everyday life. In the process, artists have not only recognized the meaningful role of “the ordinary” in their art practices, but asked audiences to recognize their own ordinary surroundings and actions as meaningful—revealing the *extraordinary* potential of the ordinary.

From swaddling to shroud, fiber arts literally surround us from the cradle to the grave—and, as such, are arguably those most taken for granted even as they contain tremendous meaning. While they have been denigrated as “domestic” and personal, their role in everything from sumptuary laws to labor struggles reminds us that fiber arts are also both public and political.

Extra/ordinary builds on this history of fiber arts. Participating artists include Ingrid Goldbloom Bloch, Orly Cogan, Wanda Ewing, Michelle Fried, Bean Gildorf, Jenny Hart, Maggy Rozycki Hiltner, Wendy Huhn, Whitney Lee, Lauren McEntire, Allyson Mitchell, Mark Newport, Erica Spitzer Rasmussen, Ann-Marie Rounkle, and Two Girls Working: Tiffany Ludwig + Renee Piechocki.

Extra/ordinary will be on view as part of the Thirteenth International Surface Design Association Conference, *Uncovering the Surface*. Exhibition curator Maria Elena Buszek is Assistant Professor of Art History at the Kansas City Art Institute, where she teaches courses on Modern and contemporary art and theory. Her writing on art and popular culture has appeared in such journals as *Art in America*, *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies*, and *Woman's Art Journal*. Dr. Buszek is also a regular contributor to *Review* and the popular feminist 'zine, *Bust: The Voice of the New Girl Order*.