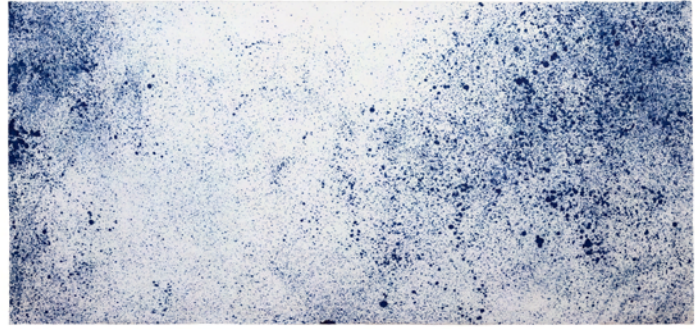


Anne Wilson

If We Asked about the Sky

July 10 - August 15, 2020

To ensure the safety and security of visitors to our gallery and in accordance with the City of Chicago's guidelines, a limited number of visitors will be allowed into the gallery at the same time. Reservations can be made through sofia@rhoffmangallery.com or Tock (www.exploretock.com).



Anne Wilson, *If We Asked about the Sky*, 2020.

Rhona Hoffman is honored to present “If We Asked about the Sky”, the gallery’s fifth solo exhibition with Chicago-based artist Anne Wilson. Oscillating between the macro- and microcosmic, Wilson’s new textile-based works set the immediacy of human labor and encounter against the infinitude of space and time. In a moment of unprecedented global transformation, the exhibition offers an opportunity to “meditate on living in and through loss,” as the artist describes.

The exhibition is anchored by Wilson’s suite of 21 *Material Drawings* (2018-20). Each work begins with the chance operation of throwing ink onto a fragment of white damask cloth; through capillary action, the ink absorbs into the fibers of the cloth, expanding outward to form circular shapes with irregular fractal-like edges. Wilson then develops the results of her immediate gestures with a deliberate, slow stitch of hand embroidery with silk thread and hair. The image associations shift between everyday phenomena—a pin prick, a spill, or a splatter—and a celestial idiom, evoking planets, craters, and galaxy clusters. “The work proposes both smallness and vastness,” Wilson says, “and inhabits a space of contemplation between the mortal world and a celestial universe that is infinite and unknowable.”

Also on view is *Absorb/Reflect* (2020), a floor installation of embroidered gold roundels and mourning garlands made from black ribbon. The golden forms face upward and evoke the light and constancy of the sun, while the black garlands are meant as objects of meditation on loss, offering a way to remember, transferring the care of a maker to another person. Wilson first began to make the mourning garlands in the late 1980s for friends who had lost loved ones during the AIDs epidemic. A portion of the sales proceeds from the garlands will be donated to Doctors Without Borders.

The exhibition takes its title from a work that is installed on the far wall of the gallery entrance—a large, tapestry-like damask tablecloth transformed into a sprawling map of blue ink and embroidered hair. “If We Asked about the Sky,” it asks us, what could we learn about our experiences on earth?

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Anne Wilson's (b. Detroit) multi-media art practice addresses issues of history, memory, and domestic and social ritual. Trained in an interdisciplinary fiber context and influenced by feminism and post-minimalism in the 1970s, Wilson asserts the relevance of fiber and textile materials in a contemporary, conceptual art practice. She has expanded her practice into installation, social practice, and performance during the past decade. For *Local Industry* at the Knoxville Museum of Art, Wilson brought together 2,100 volunteers and 79 experienced weavers to create a community weaving.

Wilson earned a BFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and an MFA at the California College of the Arts in Oakland, California. She also attended the University of Michigan's School of Art in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Wilson's artwork embraces conceptual strategies and handwork using everyday materials like table linen, bed sheets, human hair, lace, thread, glass, and wire. Recent group and solo exhibitions include FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Ohio (2018); *Pathmakers*, Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2015); *Thread Lines* (performance commission), The Drawing Center, New York (2014); *Fiber: Sculpture 1960-Present*, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts (2014); The Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, Hangzhou, China (2013); *Cotton: Global Threads*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, England (2012); *Local Industry* (2011) and *Wind/Rewind/Weave* (2010) at the Knoxville Museum of Art, Tennessee; *Hand+Made: The Performative Impulse in Art and Craft*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas (2010); and *Out of the Ordinary*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England (2007-08), among others. Her work is found in permanent collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art-Chicago, the Detroit Institute of the Arts, Foundation Toms Pauli, Lausanne, Switzerland, and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan. She is a Professor in the Fiber and Material Studies Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.