



Warp & Riff: Unraveling Rugs as Raw Material

September 12 - October 24, 2015

Opening Reception:
Saturday, September 12th, 12 - 2pm

McClain Gallery is pleased to showcase in their west annex gallery, a group exhibition focused on selected international contemporary artists who appropriate rugs and vintage Oriental carpets as subject and/or material. The show runs concurrently with New York-based artist Bo Joseph's solo exhibition in the main gallery; Joseph co-curated the show with McClain Gallery Director Erin Siudzinski.

This exhibition reflects on the formal intrigue and contextual potential that rugs and carpets provide: they are traditionally made from living/natural material; they range from ornately decorative to minimalists in design; they are physical and textural, with varied absorbency, density, color; time and use is recorded in their wear. The commonly-Islamic or -Buddhist iconography is at once ideological language and abstraction; they parry secular and religious meanings with functional, decorative and ritual applications.

Applying "Duchampian" values and wide ranging methods, these artists engage, revere, augment, surmount, exploit and make something new from this powerfully associative subject that has inspired visual artists for centuries.

From the late Alfred DeCredico, who exhibited with McClain Gallery for many years and was Bo Joseph's mentor, is a large multi-panel painting over a 16th-17th century Indian carpet. While Andisheh Avini's abstractions made with ink on carpet nod to art historical references, his Iranian heritage and collective notions of memory. Two silkscreen on wax works by Irish artist Ruairiadh O'Connell explore the relationship between materials and narrative potential of abstraction and patterning. Other artists include Michael Oatman, Bo Joseph, Antonio Santin and Nevet Yitzhak.

Concurrent with the exhibition *Warp & Riff*, McClain Gallery is happy to announce a collaboration with Carol Piper Rugs: a pop-up installation organized by Ryan Reitmeyer that complements and contextualizes the themes of the show, as well as connecting to the works in the exhibition materially. The presence of vintage tribal and contemporary rugs also serves to acknowledge the

role of craft and handwork throughout aspects of production and inspiration, as well as enrich the ongoing conversation between decorative and fine art.

Bo Joseph became engrossed by tribal rugs as a student at the Rhode Island School of Design, from 1988 to 1992, first encountering them in the context of his late professor Alfred DeCredico's home and studio. After studying these "charged objects that are at once sculpture, painting and drawing," Joseph collected Baluch, Tibetan and Chinese rugs for many years, and counts tribal rugs among the most important influences on his own work. Joseph's work incorporates forms from diverse cultures and periods that carry an archetypal or universal charge capable of transcending their original context. He utilizes elaborate methods to embrace the transient nature of meaning, and to examine how beliefs and perception charge the experience of "reality," and affect how we compile collective knowledge. Bo Joseph will be present for both opening receptions on Saturday, September 12 from 12 - 2 pm.