



NEWS

El Camino College | Public Relations & Marketing Department
16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90506
Contact: Ann M. Garten, Director, Community Relations
Telephone: (310) 660-3406 | E-Mail: agarten@elcamino.edu

For Immediate Release

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El Camino College Art Gallery to Present: *unCommon Threads*

The El Camino College Art Gallery will present *unCommon Threads*, featuring garment works by Marshall Astor, Leslie Batty, Susan Connell, Joyce Dallal, Lauren Kasmer, Victoria May, Russell McMillin, Toti O'Brien, Rachel Siegel, Suzanne Siegel, Robin Valle, and Nancy Youdelman from March 31 through April 29. The El Camino College Art Gallery is located on campus, 16007 Crenshaw Boulevard, near Torrance. The exhibit's curator is Susanna Meiers.

unCommon threads is a gathering of 12 Southern California artists, who tell cultural and personal tales using garments and their structures as the framework. Some report the consequences of particular actions while others deconstruct and examine myths and mores.

An artist's reception is scheduled for 7 to 9 p.m. March 31, with *A Homesite Clothing Exchange* premiering that evening, in addition to showings from 1 to 3 p.m. April 5, and 1 to 3 p.m. April 28. Joyce Dallal and Lauren Kasmer collaborate in *A Homesite Clothing Exchange*, where the public is invited to barter or exchange a wearable item. Each participant is asked to write a short tag explaining why they are trading his or her item and why this particular item was selected from the racks and display units that comprise the installation.

Other artists and their works include:

Leslie Batty's paintings explore the ways in which many societal systems seek to construct and constrain our ideas, playing upon the ironies of how we invent ourselves within the context of history and culture.

The lace and gossamer of Susan Connell's images in acrylic on linen, weave tales of ghostly joys and sorrows. *Fallen Bird* depicts the grief for a life unlived, a torso dressed in delicate 19th century tatting.

The handbags and deconstructed-dress pattern pieces of Dawn Ertl are made almost entirely of plastic bags with printed logos. Ertl examines the relationship of producer, consumer and disposer, striving to create of use and longevity from products designed for limited lifespan and disposal.

Victoria May uses fabric and stitching as the basis for mixed media sculptures, reflecting a meticulous craft ethic. She incorporates evocative materials – human hair, leaves and sand within the folds of transparent garments as vehicles for a metaphor of human conditions.

Compelling ceramic armor in the guise of lingerie is the subject of *Power, Culture, Icons*, by Russell McMillin. Herein the artist reflects on the human search for self-awareness in relationship to acquisition of power.

Michael Lewis Miller draws upon early American history for the cultural roots of his performance-sculpture *Pharmacognosy*. From his ongoing series, *Psycho Physical Prosthetic Wardrobe*, in which handcrafted furniture pieces double as garments and expressions of psychological states, this traveling apothecary cabinet supplies medicine and magic.

Tightly Bound, a video by Rachel J. Siegel, utilizes her memory as a 7-year-old girl, playing dress-up with a pair of Chinese bound-foot slippers. These tiny slippers become the vehicle for cross-cultural examination of the history of women's beauty/torture rituals.

Suzanne Siegel assembles and arranges items of personal clothing from departed relatives and friends, creating artworks that are simultaneously personal and universal. *Desire and Despair*, made from women's slips, are adorned with objects ranging from razor blades to flowers.

Fairfax Ladies by the late Robin Valle are large-format Cibachrome images of dresses gleaned from thrift stores in the Fairfax area of Los Angeles where she lived. Valle was a pioneer in the area of digital photography and was an ECC faculty member until she passed away in 2008.

Nancy Youdelman creates sculpture using both found objects and bronze. She transforms actual clothing with discards such as used buttons, anonymous photos, forgotten correspondence, leaves, and dried flowers.

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