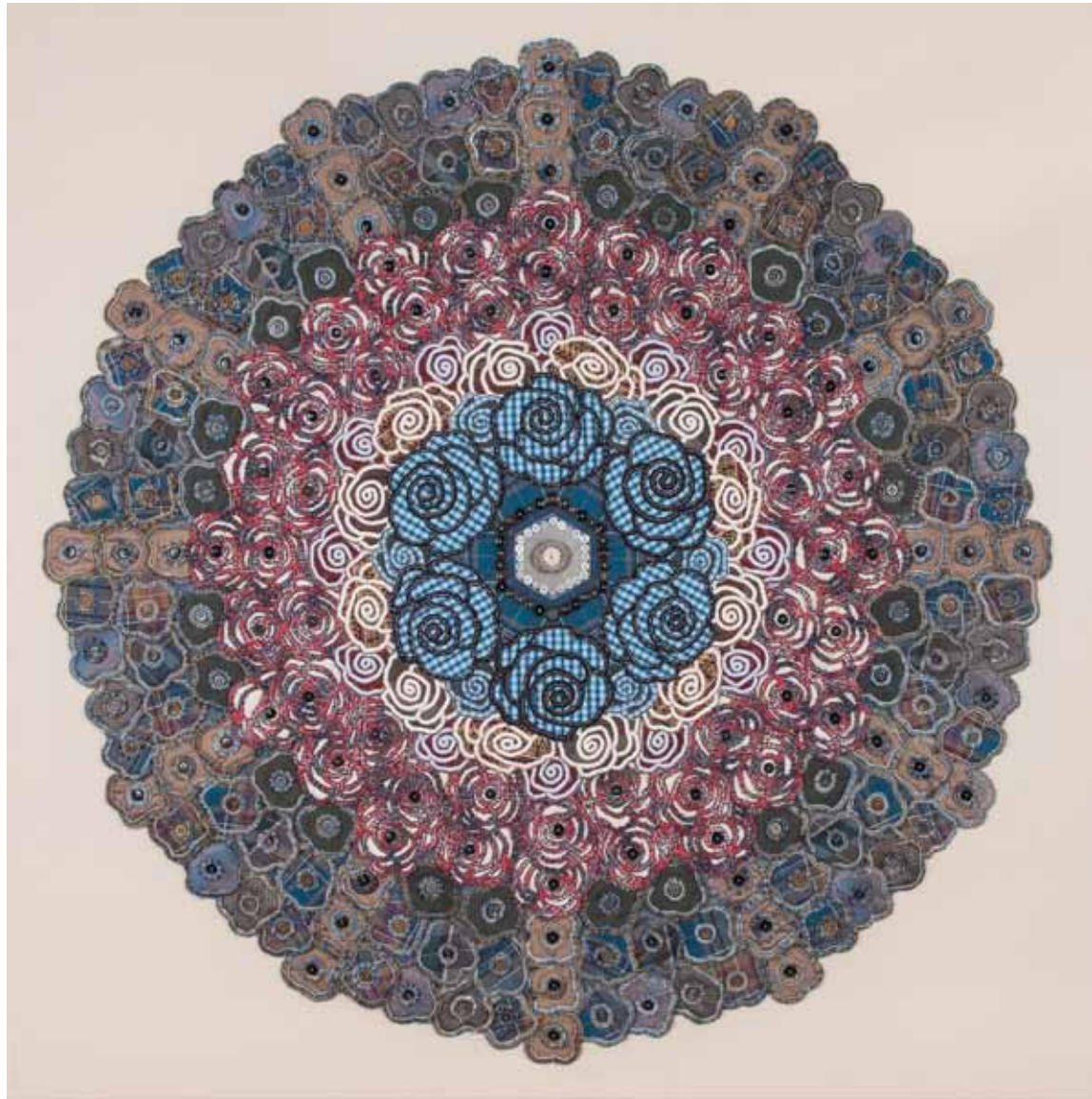




DONNA SHARRETT *Love Songs*





*Ramble On*, 2014  
My father's clothing, guitar-strings, watch face, blue jeans seams,  
buttons, synthetic hair & thread  
50 x 50 inches

# DONNA SHARRETT *Love Songs*

THIS CATALOG ACCOMPANIES THE EXHIBITION  
*Donna Sharrett: Love Songs*  
January 8 - February 7, 2015  
Pavel Zoubok Gallery  
531 W 26th St, New York, NY 10001  
[pavelzoubok.com](http://pavelzoubok.com)

## Riffing on Love Songs

### Dara Meyers-Kingsley

Donna Sharrett’s *Love Songs* are intricate, mind-bending assemblages of fabric, jewelry, guitar strings, rose petals, synthetic hair and dirt that defy easy classification. Look closely at these “arrangements,” as the artist calls them, and you are transported into a swirling vortex of personal and cultural reference, moving visually in and out of a whirlpool of pinned or stitched fabric. Her wonderfully obsessive and profoundly engaging practice is both conceptually rooted in and drawn from time-honored traditions, welcoming layered references to musical, funereal and floral arrangements. The variety of needlework techniques employed, passed on to the artist by both her mother and grandmother, include hand sewing, quilting, embroidery, crochet and needle lace, but the assemblages go beyond traditional quilt, doily and sampler. They reference traditional “women’s work” but remain utterly contemporary.

The scale of Sharrett’s work is entirely human, the radius of the largest works dictated by the length of the artist’s arm. Sharrett explains, “I start at the center and work out, almost like the center disk of a flower surrounded by concentric rows of motifs, like sound waves.”

The geometry of Gothic rose windows, Buddhist mandalas (Sanskrit for “circle”) and natural patterns inspire Sharrett’s assemblages, while the numeral six governs their structure. Six holds a sacred meaning honoring the artist’s late brother, a rock musician, and corresponds to the number of strings on a guitar. All her titles are sampled from rock songs and, since 2002, employ guitar strings, sometimes twisted like strands of DNA.

Her preoccupation with carefully counted and repeated elements finds its source in the handling of rosary beads, a material often found in Sharrett’s work. Repeating the same stitch over and over brings the artist into a kind of meditative communion with her materials, not unlike a trance. Yet Sharrett is not actively religious and insists her works should not be seen as devotional. They are, however, imbued with the importance of memory and the concept of *memento mori*, the Latin phrase that translates to “remember that you must die.” Works such as *Just Breathe* include dirt as a material reference to the Biblical phrase “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” which speaks to the impermanence of life.

Yet Sharrett’s assemblages are not mournful. They exude fortitude and resilience in their rigor and inherent beauty and manifest the mortality that binds us to each other.

Myriad references to the eternal and the infinite can be found in this body of work. Formally, circular patterns on square substrates connect to the Buddhist belief that the infinite is contained in the finite. Sharrett expands on the notion of infinity by inserting smaller circles in the form of rosary beads, wedding rings, bone beads, guitar string ball-ends and jewelry beads, and by using necklaces and guitar strings twisted into circles. The circular form also represents ritualized dedication, lifelong commitment and the promise of unending love. Following these formal references, the newest material to enter the work is wedding apparel: an entire wedding dress skirt in *Just Breathe*, pieces of bridesmaids’ dresses in *A Song For You*, and the hem of a bridal dress in *Dancing Barefoot*.

Flowers also appear with some frequency in motifs on fabric and in the patterns created from overlapping and interlocking circles and spirals. Sharrett recognizes that flowers and other natural materials like roses and human hair have been loaded signifiers of both love and death. Victorian hair lace memorial jewelry and lockets containing women’s hair, for example, were given to soldiers enlisted to fight in the Civil War. Sharrett cuts just enough fabric away to allow the viewer to see the patterns below, the cutting itself another reference to loss. But in losing one thing, another is revealed. This layering makes for active engagement when we look at the work, moving the eye from foreground to background and back again, acting as a metaphor for loss and renewal through love and memory.

Thematically, Sharrett’s work evokes life as it is lived and remembered—a notion of lineage that is not always linear and narrative but sometimes acts more like a spiral, a growing flower that rises from the earth and whose seeds scatter to become the next crop. Every work in the show can be seen as a collaboration between the artist and her many friends and acquaintances who have donated belongings or heirlooms. One particularly poignant arrangement, *Ramble On*, contains clothing fragments, such as denim, neckties and shirting, from

the artist’s recently deceased father. There are also works in this exhibition that include the thread from the American & Efrid mill in Mount Holly, NC, where the artist’s mother worked. The buttonhole stitch is used to honor her mother, who always said that “a handmade buttonhole is a sign of a well-made garment.” That Sharrett’s materials and techniques come with personal history imbues the work with memory and embeds references to lives previously lived; their integration into the artwork is a kind of renaissance.

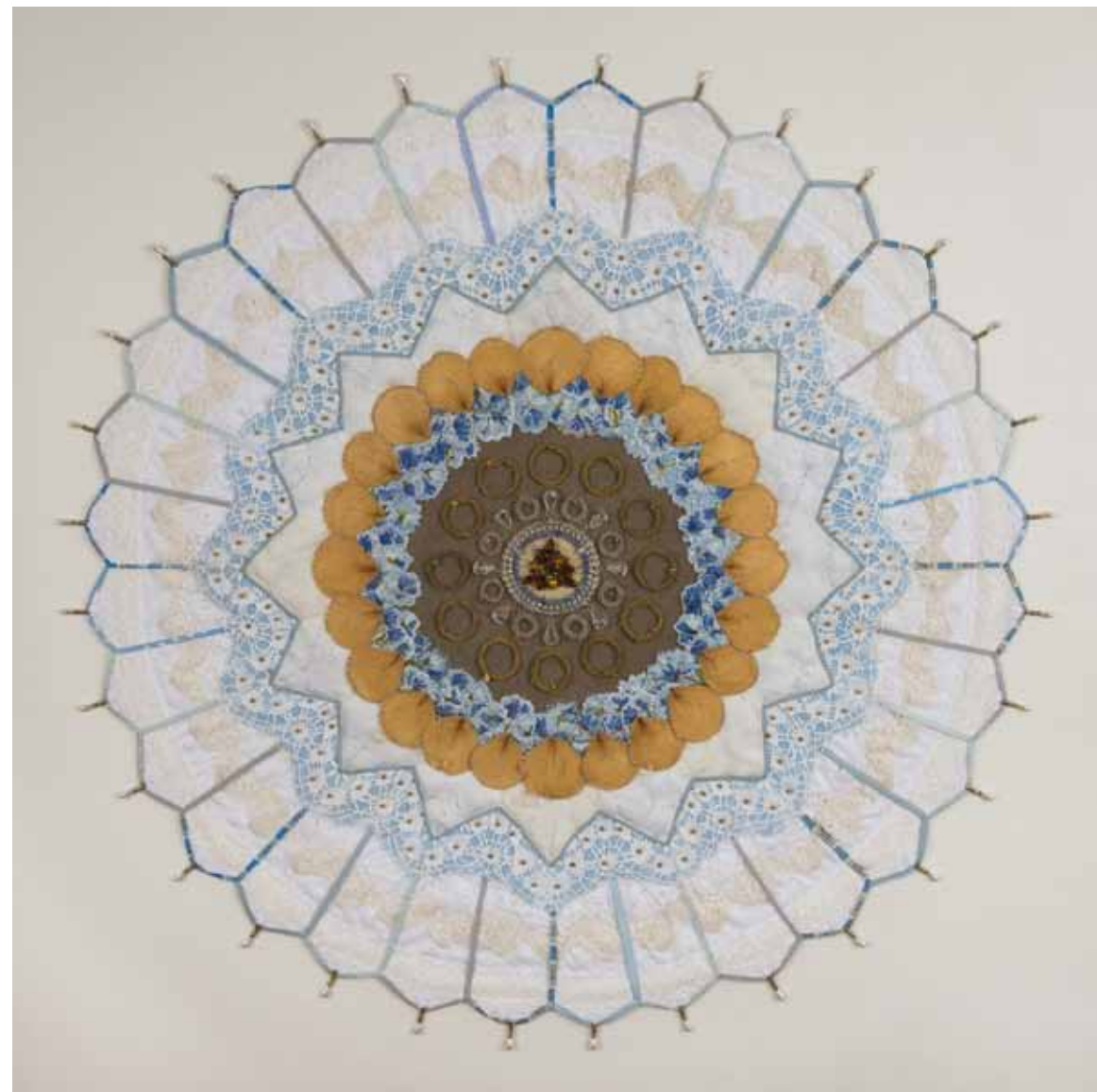
Personal history and cultural history are literally stitched together with thread in Donna Sharrett’s work. Sharrett is proud to be among what she calls “the venerable needlework sorority that joins women throughout history and is found in every culture, where knowledge of stitches and patterns are taught in intimate gatherings and are passed from one generation to the next.”

Sharrett builds her celebratory and mournful works to honor love and memory, transcending the everyday with materials and titles that carry potent meaning. They offer places for our own memories. Where were you when you first heard “Michelle”, “Ramble On”, “A Song for You”, “Lovesong”?

*Dara Meyers-Kingsley is an independent curator specializing in contemporary site-specific exhibitions. Her previous art exhibitions have been shown at The Brooklyn Museum, the New Museum, MCA Chicago, LA MOCA, The Andy Warhol Museum and the Mattress Factory, in Pittsburgh, PA. Ms. Meyers-Kingsley is also the Director of the Muse Scholar Program, an honors program for undergraduate visual, performing and media artists at Hunter College.*

*Ms. Meyers-Kingsley curated the group exhibition SAMPLING for Pavel Zoubok Gallery to be held concurrently with Sharrett’s LOVE SONGS exhibition. The show includes drawing, photography, sculpture, installation and video that are in conversation with themes, materials and processes found in Sharrett’s work. The 12 artists included are David Baskin, Langdon Graves, Elana Herzog, Lisa Hoke, Nene Humphrey, Kysa Johnson, Nina Katchadourian, Sheila Pepe, Armita Raafat, Dario Robleto, Diane Samuels and Paul Villinski.*





*A Song for You, 2012*

Bride's maid dress, doll's clothes, jewelry, rose petals, needlework, handkerchiefs, quilt, lace, guitar-string & ball-ends, dirt, hat pins, synthetic hair & thread  
36 x 36 inches



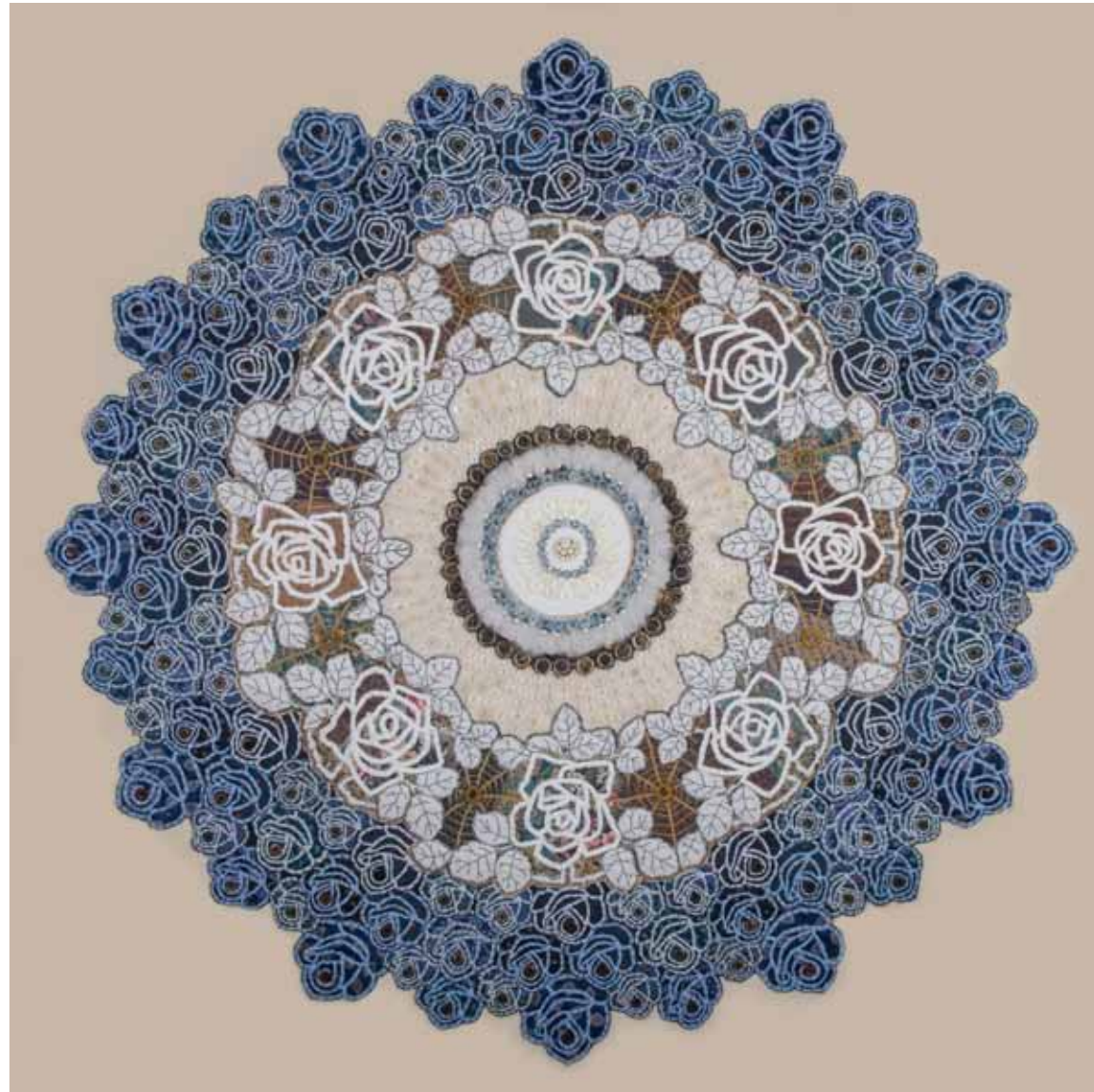


*Guinnevere*, 2013  
Neck ties, jewelry, guitar-string, buttons & thread  
6 x 6 inches



*Michelle*, 2013  
Neck ties, jewelry, guitar-string, guitar-string ball-ends, buttons & thread  
6 x 6 inches





*Dancing Barefoot*, 2014

Men's shirts, women's dresses, wedding dress hem, jewelry, blue jeans, neckties, guitar-strings, needlework, damask tablecloth, negligee edging, interfacing, buttons, bone beads, pins, synthetic hair & thread  
48 x 48 inches







*Jane Says, 2012*  
Neck ties, jewelry, guitar-strings & thread  
6 x 6 inches



*Ophelia, 2013*  
Neck ties, jewelry, guitar-strings & thread  
6 x 6 inches





*Love and Affection, 2013*

Neck ties, neck tie interfacing, upholstery fabric, jewelry, trimming, guitar-strings and ball-ends, dirt, bone beads, buttons, synthetic hair & thread  
36 x 36 inches





*Just Breathe, 2012*  
 Wedding gown, strips of bridesmaids dresses and doll's clothes, black velvet dress, jewelry,  
 rose petals, needlework, guitar strings, bone beads, dirt, beads & thread  
 36 x 36 inches







*Lovesong*, 2014  
 Men's shirt & suit, woman's blouse, upholstery fabric, jewelry, wig, trimming,  
 guitar-strings & ball-ends, buttons, synthetic hair, beads & thread  
 36 x 36 inches



# DONNA SHARRETT

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2015
- Love Songs, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2009
- Reverb, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2005
- Repertoire: New Works, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2003
- Arrangements, Cheryl Pelavin Fine Art, New York, NY.
- 2002
- Artists at Weir Farm: Donna Sharrett, Weir Farm Gallery, Wilton, CT.
- 2000
- Mementos, Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY.
- Rose Petals and Hair Lace Mementos,Cheryl Pelavin Fine Art, New York, NY.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014
- The Amusing Style, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2013
- Collage: The Alchemy of the Ordinary, McClain Gallery in conjunction with Pavel Zoubok Gallery, Houston, TX
- Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center, Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, ME;
- Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TX; Katonah Museum, Katonah, NY.
- Twenty-First Century Heirlooms, Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI.
- 2012
- Making Mends, Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.
- 2011
- Extreme Materials 2, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, NY.
- Flora and Fauna: MAD about Nature, Museum of Arts & Design, New York, NY.
- Material Witness: Hannelore Baron/Vanessa German/Donna Sharrett, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- Night Scented Stock, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2009
- Daughters of the Revolution, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- In Stitches, Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2008
- Permanently MAD: Revealing the Collection, The Museum of Arts & Design, New York, NY.
- 1968/2008: The Culture of Collage, Zoller Gallery at Penn State, University Park, PA.
- 2007
- Laced with History, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI.
- Luxe, Calme et Volupte, Marcia Wood Gallery, Atlanta, WI.
- 2005
- Collage. Nassau County Museum, Roslyn, NY.
- Collage: Signs & Surfaces, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York, NY.
- 2003
- Bangladesh, American Embassy, Art in Embassies, extended loan 2003–05.
- Pins and Needles, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI.
- 2002
- Hair Stories, Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York, NY.
- Residuum, Cheryl Pelavin Fine Art, New York, NY.
- 1999
- Objects of Desire, Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, NY.
- Wildflowers, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY.

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- Gomez, Edward M. “Weaving Memories of Mother, Talismanic and Tender.” *The New York Times*: Oct 12, 2000: p. E2. ill.
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- Martin, Lois. “The “Mementos” of Donna Sharrett.” *Surface Design*: Spring 2001: (cover ill.) p. 16–19. ill.
- Zeitz, Lisa. “What Remains of the Beautiful Days of Life.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt, GER): Jun 17, 2000: p. 62. ill.

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Fidelity Financial Services, Boston, MA
- Sprint, Overland Park, KS
- Hebrew Home for the Aged, New York, NY
- Vinson & Elkins, Houston, TX
- JP Morgan Chase, New York, NY
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ
- Museum of Contemporary Arts & Design, New York, NY
- United States Department of State, American Embassy - Valletta, Malta
- Pfizer, Inc., New York, NY

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2014
- Textile Art From Around the World. Dorothe Swinkels. Textile Link, The Netherlands.
- 2012
- Remix: Selections from the International Collage Center. Essays by Thomas Piche, Jr., Richard Rinehart and Pavel Zoubok.
- Exhibition Catalog, ill.
- 2011
- Night Scented Stock. Essays by Debra Singer and Gregory Volk. Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY. ill.
- Push:Stitchery: 30 Artists Explore the Boundaries of Stitched Art. Curated by Jamie Chalmers. Lark Crafts, New York. ill.
- 2010
- Assembling Narratives: Quilting Impulses in Contemporary Art. Essay by Donna Harkavy and Flavia S. Zuniga-West, The Dorsky Gallery, Long Island City, NY. ill.
- Encaustic Art: The Complete Guide to Creating Fine Art with Wax. Lissa Rankin. Watson-Guptill Publications, NY. ill.
- 2008
- MAD Book: Museum of Arts and Design Collections Handbook. Museum of Arts & Design, New York, NY. ill. 2006
- Threads of Memory. Essay by Margaret Mathews Berenson. The Dorsky Gallery, Long Island City, NY. ill.
- 2001
- Spirit Maps. Joanna Arettam. Red Wheel Publications, York Beach, ME. ill.
- 2000
- Donna Sharrett: Mementos. Essay by Thomas Piche. Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY. ill.

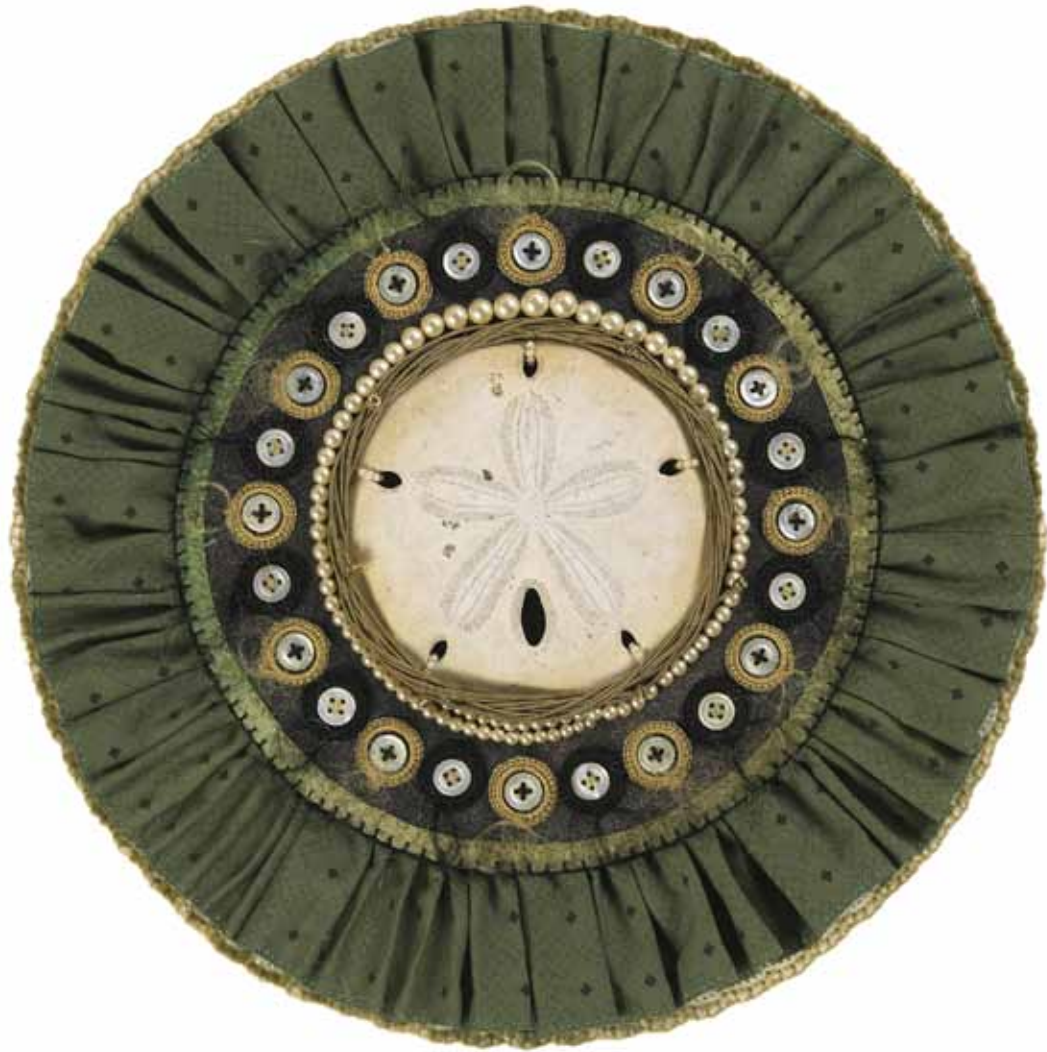
## GRANTS/AWARDS

- 2003
- New York Foundation for the Arts Artists’ Fellowship, New York, NY.
- Smack Mellon Artists Studio Residency, Brooklyn, NY.
- 2001
- Weir Farm Trust Artist in Residency, Wilton, CT.
- 1999
- New York Foundation for the Arts Artists’ Fellowship, New York, NY.
- 1998
- Millay Colony for the Arts Residency, Austerlitz, NY.
- 1997
- Artist in the Marketplace, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY.

## EDUCATION

- School of Visual Arts, New York, NY.





*Seventeen*, 2013

Sand dollar, sand, pearl necklace, shell buttons, doll's hair, fabric, lace, ribbon, guitar-strings, rings, beads, thread. HARPER'S MAGAZINE COMMISSION.

12 x 12 inches

## All works were created with the following donations

**Guitar, Harp & Violin Strings** Gifts of: Jackie Alexander, Louise Beach/Brian Skarstad/Skarstad Violins, Paul Bloomstrom, Elizabeth Callen, Jessa Callen, Philippe Charles, Mike Corso, Tom Crandall, Larry Deming, Nekia Caprice Fox, Abby Gardner, Fred Gillen Jr., Tim Grajek, Lara Herscovitch, Jake Jones, Shane Konen, Nicholas Mann, Bill Massof, Rob Moore, Christopher Pappas, Scot Sharrett, Rod Teets, Brad Travis, Peter van Alstine, Jack van der Mark, Mark Wasserman, Tracey Wilson, Jenna Young

**Natural Materials** *Dirt, Roses* Gifts of: Bette Alexander, Nancy Curcio & Nicholas Mann, Melissa Green, Jennifer Johnson, Ken Kamber, Ronnie Kamber, Marion Wilson, Pavel Zoubok

**Fabrics & Notions** *Buttons, Clothing, Doll's clothes, Hankies, Lace, Neckties, Safety & Straight Pins, Table Linens, Thread, Ties, Quilt* Gifts of: Jorge Arango & James Tissof, Louise Belevich, Margaret Mathews Berenson, Nancy Curcio, Sylvia Curcio, Bruce & Dite Garrison, Edward M. Gomez, Donna Harkavy, Jennifer Hill, Ken Kamber, Dara Meyers-Kingsley, Mirijana Kocho, Kim Levin, Lisa Mann, Lucy Mann, Julie & Jim O'Shea, Suzie Ross, Dayle Vander Sande, Walter Sharrett, Meagan Shein, Susan Singer, Elisabeth Sinsabaugh, Vanessa Smith, Maritta Tapanainen, Phyl Zekauskas.

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## Song Titles

*Alison*, 1977, Elvis Costello; *Angie*, 1973, Mick Jagger/Keith Richards; *A Song for You*, 1969, Leon Russell; *Beth*, 1976, Kiss; *Dancing Barefoot*, 1979, Patti Smith and Ivan Kral; *Destiny*, 2001, Henry Binns and Sam Hardaker, *For You*, 1973, Bruce Springsteen; *Gloria*, 1964, Van Morrison; *Guinnevere*, 1969, David Crosby; *Jane Says*, 1987, Jane's Addiction; *Jessica*, 1973, Dickey Betts; *Just Breathe*, 2009, Pearl Jam; *Love and Affection*, 1976, Joan Armatrading; *Lovesong*, 1989, Robert Smith, Lol Lolhurst, Purl Thompson, Roger O'Donnell, Boris Williams; *Michelle*, 1965, Paul McCartney/John Lennon; *Nothing Else Matters*, 1992, Metallica; *Ophelia*, 1975, Robbie Robinson; *Ramble On*, 1969, Jimmy Page/Robert Plant; *Sail Away*, 1998, David Gray; *Seventeen*, 1955, Boyd Bennett; *Sexy Sadie*, 1968, John Lennon; *Sweet Jane*, 1970; Lou Reed, *Victoria*, 1969, Ray Davies; *Wild Thing*, 1965, Chip Taylor

CATALOGUE DESIGN Amy Mees

PHOTOGRAPHY Margaret Fox

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**PAVEL ZOUBOK GALLERY**