“PROJECT SERIES 47: KRYSTEN CUNNINGHAM RET, SCUTCH, HECKLE”
PRESENTED BY THE
POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

“Project Series 47: Krysten Cunningham Ret, Scutch, Heckle” will be on view October 31 through December 22, 2013, at the Pomona College Museum of Art. The exhibition is the 47th in the Museum’s Project Series and represents the first solo museum exhibition of the Los Angeles-based artist. For “Ret, Scutch, Heckle,” the artist presents new abstract sculptures and drawings that continue to develop her wide-ranging investigations into art, craft, metaphysics, perception and social justice.

“Krysten Cunningham Ret, Scutch, Heckle” will have a public reception on Thursday, October 31, 2013, from 7-9 p.m. On Thursday, November 21, 2013, Cunningham will present an artist workshop, “Sensing Your World Line in the Fabric of Space/Time,” with Physics Professor Dwight Whitaker during the Pomona College Museum of Art’s Art After Hours event.

Using hand-dyed yarn, fabric, steel, plaster, rope, wood and plastics, Cunningham combines formal concerns of color, line, scale and space with specific art-historical allusions to hard-edge Minimalism, Russian Constructivism, craft-oriented Feminist art, socially-engaged Conceptual art and Native American textile patterns. In addition, her practice is marked by a scrupulous focus on craft and the handmade, an intellectual exploration of the principles of physics, and an awareness of the body’s connections to space and architecture. Cunningham’s work resonates with artistic, political and social issues, and the psychologically charged relationship between emotion and the intellect.

The title, “Ret, Scutch, Heckle,” reflects Cunningham’s multi-layered interests in the interconnected origins of materials, processes and language. These now obscure words come from Northern European textile processing in the 14th through 16th centuries. The describe the treatment of flax plant fibers into linen suitable for domestic use and the textile trade. The use of these terms suggests Cunningham’s complex understanding of materials and their histories. The words also allude to the respect she grants to material things of all kinds, the multitude of processes involved in labor and craft, and, perhaps most importantly, an acknowledgment of labor and craft through a respect for “working, making, doing.”
Cunningham’s socially engaged and formally aesthetic work stems from multiple sources, including her liberal upbringing on a commune, her undergraduate studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico, her graduate studies in the dynamic studio art department at the University of California, Los Angeles, and her work as a research engineer in the physics department at UCLA. In addition, Cunningham’s practice fits into a broader context of artists who question traditional notions of art’s role in society by creating works that require the participation of the viewer. By coaxing our interaction, artists like Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, and Rirkrit Tiravanija, encourage us to become emotionally, psychologically and physically absorbed in their work. The merging of art and life as exemplified by “situations to be lived” in the work of these artists connects to Cunningham’s interest in collective effort, craft-making communities and an intimacy between maker and the object that often expands into social action.

Underlying all these interconnected layers of Cunningham’s work, in particular her interest in a democratic approach to art, is an exploration and engagement with abstraction. For the artist, abstract art has the potential to generate new conversations through time and changing contexts. Abstraction allows one to explore the psychic conditions of human experience, and thus provides each individual their own access to and interpretation of the unique object. Cunningham’s work ultimately succeeds because it combines a personal vision of the contemporary world and human experience with formal and creative innovations.

The exhibition of Krysten Cunningham’s work is the 47th exhibition in the Pomona College Museum of Art’s Project Series and is co-curated by Rebecca McGrew and Hannah Pivo. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition and includes an essay by Pivo and an introduction by McGrew.

About Pomona College Museum of Art
The Project Series, organized by Museum Senior Curator Rebecca McGrew, presents Southern California artists in focused exhibitions. A catalogue accompanies each exhibition. The Project Series is supported in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont. The Museum is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, from noon to 5 p.m., and Thursday, from noon to 11 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit the museum’s Website: www.pomona.edu/museum.

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IMAGES AVAILABLE
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