

smooth, round rock - sharing in a slowed down world, never having to explain why we need that time. Sadness: the fragility of the tissue of paper and gladness for the resilience of the human tissue to heal its wounds.

" It would be superficial to say the work has an Eastern, Oriental, or Japanese aesthetic about it. You and I both know that we are prairie girls and I have had the same said about my work. It is true that the aesthetic is there in the materials and in the simplicity - and of course, I love those qualities. But there is an element of personal expression and mood that is coming through in your work. One doesn't really feel these in the superficial traits of Japanese materials. I guess, content is what I'm talking about. And intention, which is very strong. I couldn't say what it might mean to you personally, but I feel the presence of someone being very intentional about what they're doing. Coupled with the sensitive use of materials, again I ask, "What is this thing I'm looking at?" You are defying categorization - always a good thing, no?"

Margaret May



Totemic Numens, 36 photo litho prints on rice paper suspended on cotton twine with miniature clothespins. 66 inch x 56 inch

Notes:

ⁱ M.C. Richards: *Imagine Inventing Yellow: New and selected Poems*, Barrington, N.Y.: Station Hill 1991; as quoted in: {creativity} *Where The Divine And Human Meet*; Matthew Fox; Jeremy P. Tarcher; Putnam; NY, 2002

biographies:

Margaret May is a Calgary artist and educator. She graduated from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, MVA, 1975, and is a Faculty member at the Alberta College Of Art & Design, Calgary. She has exhibited regionally, nationally and internationally.

Patti Dawkins graduated from the Drawing Program at the Alberta College of Art and Design in 1989 and then worked as the Printmaking Technician at the College for 14 years. In 2004 she completed a Self-Directed Residency at the Banff Centre and has received two Project Grants from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

The exhibition entitled *Paper and Silk* features works produced by Patti Dawkins in her 2004 Banff Centre residency. This first solo exhibition follows an active interdisciplinary practice, which includes, calligraphy, drawing, printmaking, photography, installation and documentary video.



Numens, 18 photo litho prints on silk fabric wall mounted with 36 1/4" rare-earth magnets 47 inch x 116 inch



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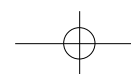
PAPER AND SILK PATIO DAWNS

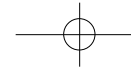
March 25 - April 23, 2005

Reception: Friday, March 25 at 8 pm
First Thursday: March 3, until 7 pm



the Stride Gallery





Paper and Silk

“Gold lustre swimmers and copper red fish
angel nibbling at the shore
and our clay feet walking on water.”ⁱ

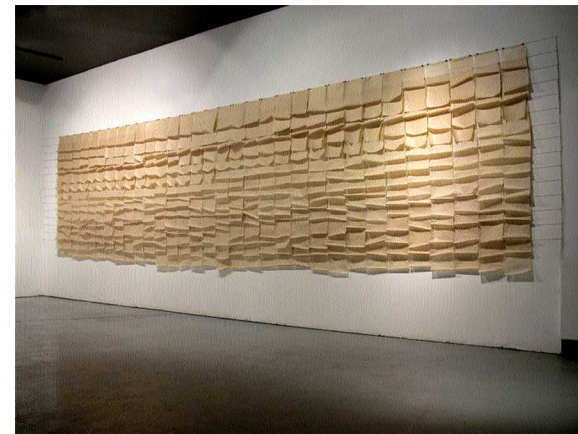
When Patti asked me to write something for her, of course, I said, “Yes.” After all, I thought I knew her so well. “We are so alike,” I thought. “We speak the same language,” I thought. We were both born in the Year of the Rabbit and are the same type in the Myers-Briggs personality typology. As much as someone can call a person friend, this is my relationship with Patti. I found however, as much as a person may reserve, honor, and keep private her personal relationship to her art — my *trickster* friend Patti, has been keeping things from me!
I always wondered at the source of that *lovely companionable silence* between us ...

I first offered my comments on the images I viewed of her works of paper, on paper, and on silk, by E-mail in March 2004:

“Hi Patti,
... The paper piece. This piece really affected me because to me it says: “Promise.” Besides the beauty of the light and shadow play on the paper and the way the piece must wrap around your peripheral vision, (which I could only imagine) the piece has that wonderful Bountiful feeling of infinite possibilities. What could one do with all that blank paper? I think the answer would practically be - nothing. It’s beautiful the way it is. However, it also seems receptive, ready to receive the impressions that the viewer might imbue it with. I wish I had seen it in situ because I think there is a sound aspect or an implied sound aspect. I imagine a rustling of paper as people walk by, reminiscent of dried leaves. I think it takes audacity to do what you did.”

Simplicity combined with subtlety is of utmost value in the presentation of these works. These qualities belie the complexities of thought process, which the artist lives with. The question of process is a big part of the work, however; from my observation, process is a “way in” for the artist to free the way for expressions of intellect and intuition. Patti would probably not admit to the complexity and subtlety and personal content that I see. But careful detective work and years of

friendship reveal a multitude of related concepts and content. Some (try all!) of this must necessarily remain private. I certainly don’t want to come in with my muddy boots and stomp all over the carefully guarded secrets. I feel it appropriate to reveal some of my thoughts only through allusion.



Promise, 500 sheets of Handmade Gampi Paper suspended on cotton twine with miniature clothespins. 6 ft x 25 ft

Paper

Promise - is five hundred sheets of Gampi paper, a whole ream. Originally destined to support printed imagery. Work. The intuitive process: valuing the subtleties of light, density, and individuality persuaded the artist to focus on the feeling of accumulation, repetition, and tactility. Doing the washing. The value of repetitious work. Immersion into a laborious, physical, seemingly endless process of hard work and discipline. When that *flow* is achieved, she is loath to break it.

Experience - is perhaps the quality that is most easily observed through Patti’s work. As we look at the pieces presented, through the qualities of process and materiality, we can get a sense of going through the experience of making the pieces. Through the satisfying subtleties of image, carrier of image, density, light and colour, we can intuit those qualities the artist values and brings forth to us.

Memory - when a fellow artist states that they draw on memories for the content, inspiration and source of their art making - where is this taking us? To the memories that we shared together? It is doubtful. Looking at the work, one might conjure a

memory of a pebble dropping into still water in one moment and in another moment one might imagine a cacophony of sounds in a Thai market - a place dripping with iridescent silks.

When Patti alludes to issues of health and mortality, one might remember a sadder time, or one might imagine the endurance of 10 days of solitary, steady papermaking with each sheet of delicate Gampi paper piling up in a satisfying stack - as light as moments in time.

Concerning Patti’s personality - a friend thinks of strength and flexibility and sees that in the natural fibers of Gampi and silk. I remember discussions and shared agreements - both of us preferring art that is: “only what it is and nothing more,” and paradoxically: “much more than it is.” And of our raucous discussions where either friend may say: “after all this work - this seems so little!” And immediately flipping sides and saying: “Oh! This is all way too much!”

Such pleasure to see that friend stand firmly grounded with piles of wispy offerings laden in her arms.



Promise (detail)

Silk

The warp and weft of the silk are of different colors. It is such a simple strategy in the making of the silk, recognized as intrinsic to the iridescent quality and open to many usages. Reflections: the Rorschach-like images create a blotch, which undulates, creating corresponding iridescent undulations in the silk ground. *Reflection, reflection, reflection.* The reflection in the water of the landscapes. The reflection of light on the fabric. The reflective nature of the intuitive artist. Reflecting on memories, time and process.

I remember Patti’s waist length shimmering red blonde hair. I remember a person so disciplined as to read every word in a book and to read that book through to the last word. And that person spending much time with the art works of others, willing to work, to wait for the Art to work upon her. And hoping, and creating works of her own which require us to slow down a little, to work at it, and to give. Our kinship — two friends salivating over the beauty of a new etching felt, a sample of a new paper, the perfection of a

