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New exhibitions at Granary Arts

By Staff | May 18, 2022



Jane Roberts DeGroff, Gifts of the Sanpete Land, Detail, 2022

Granary Arts is pleased to present new exhibitions:

Material Witness / Jorge Rojas

Material Witness is a mid-career retrospective of Jorge Rojas's abstract work drawing on over fifteen years of experimentation with materials and media. This exhibition presents an overview of 2D and 3D works from 2003 to the present, highlighting two periods of time when he lived in New York City—from 1993-1997 and again from 2002-2009. Importantly, these periods reflect the artist's engagement with Minimalism, post-Minimalism, Color Field painting, Process Art, and Concrete Art—while infusing these influences with his Mexican roots and understanding of Mesoamerican art, materials, and cosmovision.

Rojas first left his native Mexico with his family when he was six, and his frequent wandering since has shaped his universal visual language as well as his experimental approach to materials and art. The Zen emphasis on purity of form plays a significant role in his work and results in patterns and grids that involve color, geometry, and through repetition generate rhythms, harmonies, and vibrations.

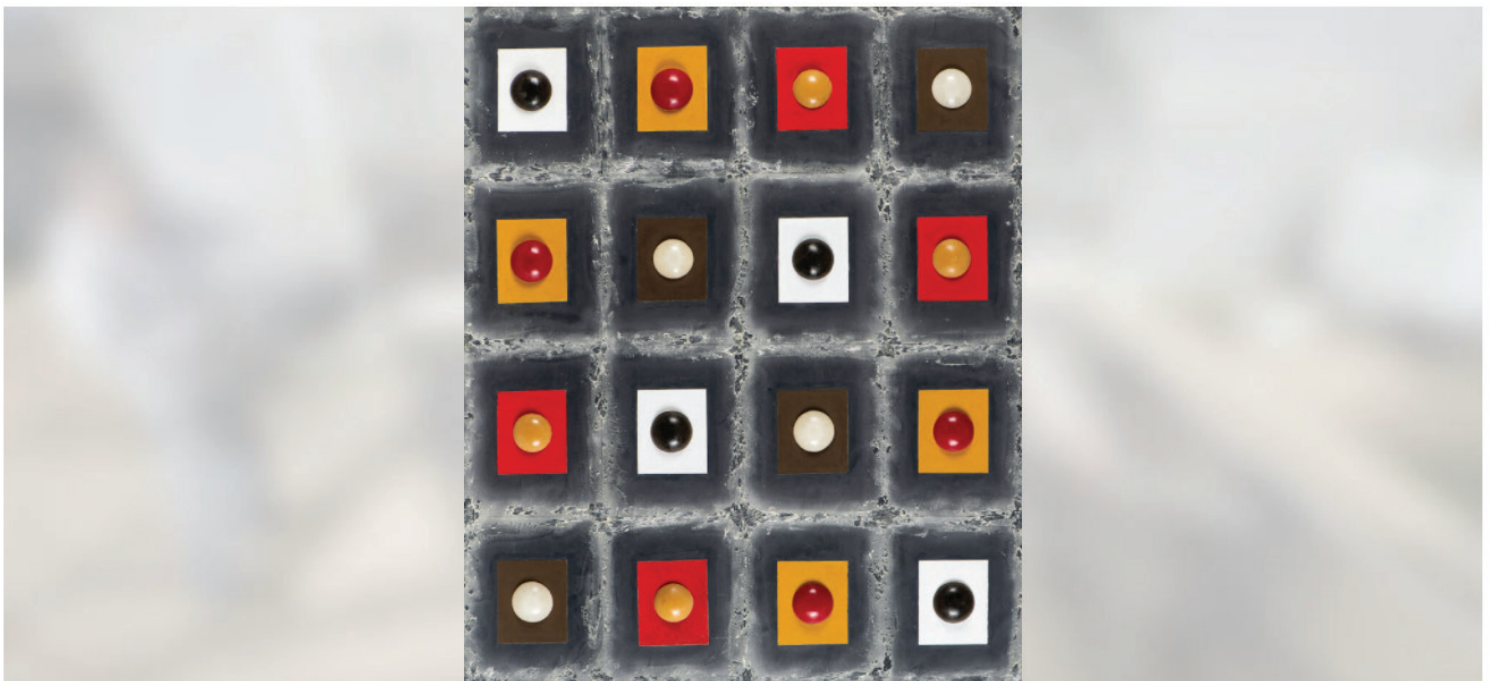
Working fluidly between painting and sculpture, Rojas uses tactile and sensory elements—including wax, layers of paint, sound, and found materials—to deconstruct materiality and discover new meanings. Every-day objects and materials like sandpaper, record sleeves, and sink strainers are transformed into sculptural objects as he uses techniques of assemblage to create new forms. Rojas says, “I begin a piece with a feeling rather than an idea. It is in the act of making that meaning is revealed.”

About the Artist

Jorge Rojas (b. 1968, Cuautla, Morelos, Mexico; lives and works in Salt Lake City, UT) is a multidisciplinary artist, independent curator, and art educator. Rojas studied Art at the University of Utah and at Bellas Artes in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. His work and curatorial projects have been exhibited nationally and internationally in galleries and museums including White Box, Museo del Barrio, and Queens Museum of Art in New York; New World Museum and Project Row Houses in Houston; Diaspora Vibe Gallery in Miami; MACLA in San Jose; Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, and Woodbury Art Museum in Salt Lake City; Ex Convento del Carmen, Guadalajara; and FOFA Gallery at Concordia University, Montreal. His work is included in numerous private and public collections including The Mexican Museum, San Francisco; Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton; and Salt Lake County. He has received grants and fellowships from National Performance Network, Experimental Television Center, West Chicago City Museum, Vermont Studio Center, Project Row Houses, Salt Lake Arts Council, and the Taft Nicholson Center. Rojas was named one of Utah’s Most Influential Artists in 2019 by Artists of Utah /15 Bytes and his art is included in the 2020 Immigrant Artist Biennial out of NYC. From 2015 to 2021, Rojas served as director of learning and engagement at Utah Museum of Fine Arts, where he oversaw education, community engagement, and adult programming initiatives for the Museum. Rojas is actively involved in the Salt Lake community as an artist, educator, curator, and is a passionate advocate for advancing racial and cultural justice through the arts.

Chiasma / Laura Sharp Wilson, curated by Scotti Hill

Chiasma explores the duality at the core of Laura Sharp Wilson’s work—organic elements in both human and botanical form as well as the visual tensions of converging patterns, chains, and bound knots. In biology, “chiasma” is the process through which paired chromosomes remain united throughout the first phase of meiosis before genetic material is exchanged.



Jorge Rojas, Quantum Grid, 2021

This exhibition explores the chronology of Wilson's process from her in-depth study of textile design, to later apprenticeships in the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia, to her present practice. While Laura is known for her multimedia artistic process that ranges from public art, installation, and performance art, Chiasma highlights selections of her signature acrylic paintings on mulberry paper alongside never-before-exhibited works to tease the connections made throughout the artist's multifaceted career.

About the Artist

Laura Sharp Wilson is a multimedia artist whose practice is focused primarily on painting, but also includes, sculpture, outdoor installation, public art, curation, and performance art. Wilson received a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University and an MFA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She also studied surface pattern design at North Carolina State University and served as an apprentice at the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia. In 2018 she was a resident at the Golden Foundation in New Berlin, New York. Wilson was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1965 and grew up in northern New Jersey and New York city, she currently lives and works in Salt Lake City, Utah.

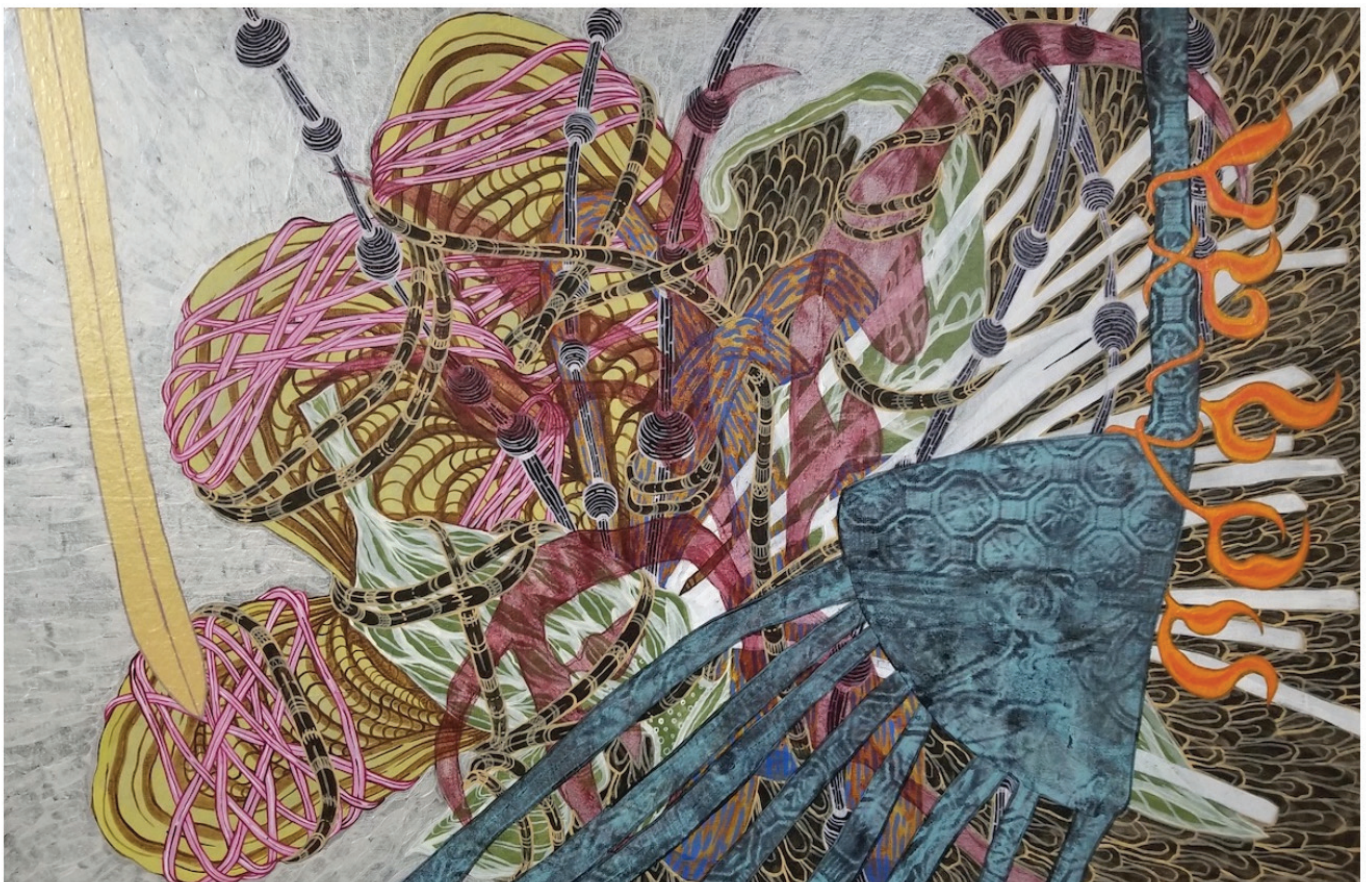
About the Curator

Scotti Hill (she/her) is a Utah-based art critic, curator, and lawyer. In addition to teaching art history at Westminster College, she is a regular contributor to 15 Bytes: Utah's Art Magazine and Southwest Contemporary and has written for Hyperallergic, Deseret News, New Art Examiner, and the Center for Art Law.

Gifts of the Sanpete Land / Jane Roberts DeGross

In creating her work, Jane Roberts DeGross uses the traditional Japanese dyeing technique, shibori along with locally harvested pigments from juniper, sagebrush, curly dock seeds, and organic indigo.

Gifts of the Sanpete Land is a wall hanging representing elements of life and land in Sanpete Valley. Gleaned from the beauty and natural resources of the region, sheep were created using the shibori techniques stitching and capping, trees were created using guntai and karamatsu stitching, the patterns on the side panels were created with stitching and binding, and the shibori panels at the top represent the beautiful mountains of the Sanpete Valley.



Laura Sharp Wilson, Middle Aged Hot Rod, 2021

The panels along the bottom were created using arashi shibori, representing the tall grasses that once grew on the high elevation watersheds of the Wasatch Plateau in the late 1800s. At that time, the area was severely overgrazed by sheep eventually causing catastrophic flooding in the towns of Manti and Ephraim. As a result, the residents of Sanpete petitioned the federal government to create a reserve area for research and study. The scientific practice of range management officially began in Sanpete County, and in 1912 the Great Basin Research Station (now known as Great Basin Station) was established in Ephraim Canyon for the study of range and forest management.

An integral aspect of Jane Roberts DeGroff's work as a textile artist includes foraging in the landscape to collect plant matter. When collecting material from the plants, she strives to do it in such a way that no one would notice she had been there. This activity not only yields dyestuff, but is a reminder of her continual dependence on and connection with the earth – a sustaining belief that we have a responsibility to consider the needs of the land, and our gratitude for its generosity is an essential element in caring for it.

About the Artist

Jane Roberts DeGroff is a textile artist who specializes in shibori techniques and natural dyes. She grew up on a dairy farm near the small town of Etna Wyoming and attended Brigham Young University where she received a BFA. After college, Jane stayed in Utah and a longing for a rural life eventually brought her, with her husband and five children, to Spring City.

Nearly a decade ago Jane discovered shibori and began teaching herself the ancient art of manual resist dyeing. She is passionate about creating patterns and images on cloth by manipulating fabric in a variety of ways to create resists before dyeing. Jane uses natural dyes on silk and cotton, including dyes made from plants harvested near her home.