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News

‘It has all the capacity to move somebody’: fibre art celebrated in pop-up New York show

The exhibition, staged in the historic South Street Seaport district, brings textile works to an 18th-century warehouse

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Sara Jimenez's textile columns, *At what point does the world unfold?* (2022)
Steven Molina Contreras

A pop-up exhibition in Manhattan's historic South Street Seaport district is showcasing textile art and the innovations in the medium. *The Golden Thread* features more than 100 fibre works by 61 artists, including ten site-specific projects. The show is being staged by BravinLee Programs, a gallery based in Chelsea.

“Fibre art is really just quite beautiful,” says the gallery’s co-founder John Lee. “There’s almost a biological reaction to seeing something that’s beautiful and intricate and sometimes colourful. It has all the capacity to move somebody, like a beautiful painting is something that you just almost biologically respond to. It also has a kind of flexibility as a medium to integrate itself into an architecture.”

Highlights in the show include a pair of textile column installations by Sara Jimenez, made out of beads, paints, sequins and ceramics that are each 6ft across and 37ft long, along with a series of embroidered portraits by Alexandria Deters, including of mobsters like Charles “Lucky” Luciano, who co-operated with the US government during the Second World War to prevent Axis intelligence agents from infiltrating the South Street Seaport. Orly Cogan’s *Confections (bake sale)* (around 2006-23) features a table covered in a variety of desserts all entirely made from crochet, knitting and other fibre-based methods.

The show is staged in 207 Front Street, one of the oldest buildings in the Seaport, and the opening marks the first time that the 18th-century warehouse has been open to the public, according to the organisers. “You look at the space and it’s very heavy and dark and wooden and rough and crumbling, and it seemed like a natural contrast with fibre art and all the different aspects of it,” says Karin Bravin, the gallery’s co-founder.

The pair only began work on the exhibition in February, and had artists selecting areas of the space and beginning work on site-specific installations within a matter of days. “Art galleries have the kind of agility to accomplish things in very short periods of time,” Lee says. “We were able to do it and it didn’t feel rushed, even though it would probably take a museum two or three years to do what we did in two months.”

BravinLee has been producing public art and artist collaborations—like their well-known Artist Rug Program—for more than a decade. *The Golden Thread* exhibition will run until 12 May, having opened just before Frieze New York to capitalise on the city “becoming the hub of all the best collectors, critics and curators in the world” this week, Bravin says.

- [*The Golden Thread: A Fiber Art Show*](#), 207 Front Street, New York until 12 May

