

FAMA textile artists commemorate the right to vote for women

BY ADRIANA HERRERA *SPECIAL / EL NUEVO HERALD*

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Fiber Arts Miami Association (FAMA) has organized a timely exhibition of yarn-based work to celebrate the accomplishments of those courageous women pioneers, and to recognize the need to reignite the movement. BY FAMA + THE CAMP GALLERY

“I am a tissue. I am all women. Our mothers, grandmothers, even going back to the first woman.

Their stories are woven into me, making the fabric of who I am, but not just the fabric of myself. I am durable and I fall apart. I unfold in folds to the past and travel to what I once was and what I will be”. This text by Amy Gelb about the work she created for the *Forty Women Pulling at The Threads of Social Discourse* exhibition (40 Women Drawing the Strings of Social Discourse) in The Contemporary Art Modern Project,

CAMP Gallery, contains the spirit of her own textile work, but also that of the Miami Fiber Artists Association, FAMA, which was released to the public with that exhibition curated by Aurora Molina, as part of a series of projects on the centennial of the triumph of the suffragette movement in the United States.



'I Wear Her Memory Like a Crown: WE TOOK THE VOTE', 2020, by Amy Gelb. Mixed media, Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP

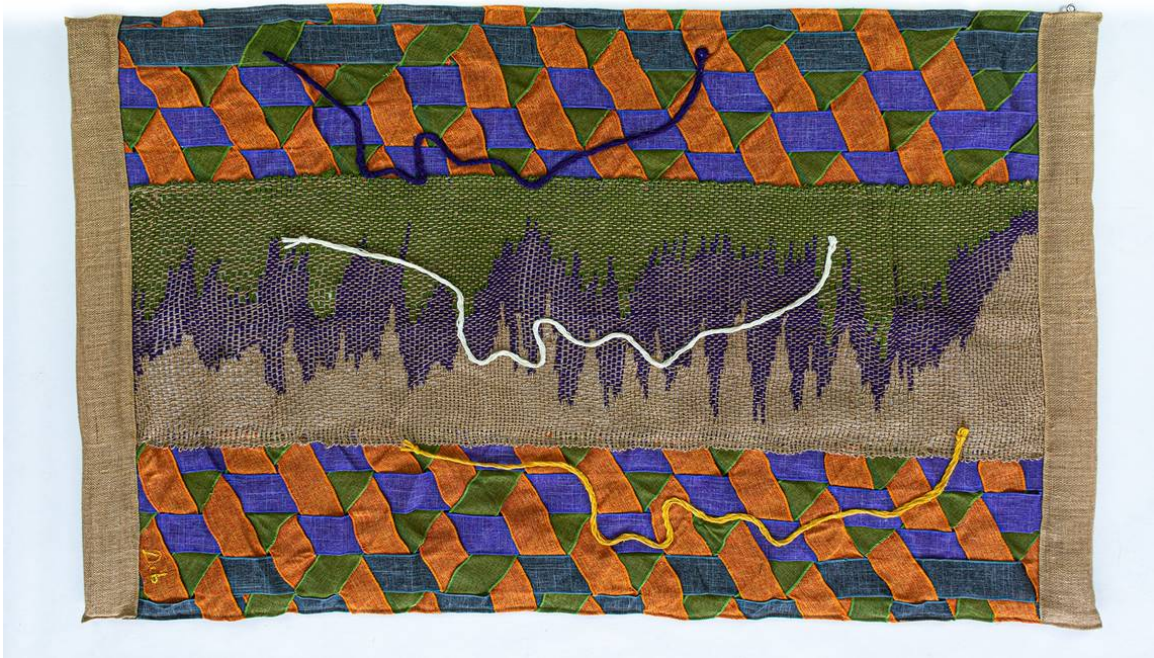
In Gelb's work, *I Wear Her Memory Like a Crown*, the portrait of her great-grandmother and a close-up of her own eye appear: "She came from Russia and became a citizen at the end of the 1930s, so she was the first woman in the family to vote". Gelb transfers the glazing technique to photographs that he prints on fabric and embroiders by hand. Other photos of the ancestral tree include maternity scenes invoking "stories inherited from our matriarchs that are part of the collective female consciousness."

FAMA interweaves fragments of dispersed memory: it emerged in the middle of the confinement time, when local artists Aurora Molina, Alina Rodríguez and Evelyn Politzer, who had previously met in a virtual experience of textile workshops successfully developed by the first two in the domestic sphere, decided to partner to "build community through textiles and weave a Miami together."



Regina Jestrow in front of her work 'Suffrage Quilt', 2020, Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP

They set out to "use the art of fiber to expand appreciation of our history and heritage, and as an instrument of resistance." A few months after its Foundation, FAMA has more than 40 artists and other members of the local community and has just received an Ellies Award from Oolite Art for the artistic and educational proposal presented by Politzer. She participated in the inaugural exhibition with a light, floating woven work that alludes to the links with women of the past, present and future. "The threads were woven freely, organically, one by one," he explains. "Their interconnections represent the idea that we can only move forward if we stick together: in society as in fabric, the threads are intertwined."



'Equality, a Work in Progress', 2020, by Debra Rosental. Jute twine and ribbons, 60 x 40 inches. Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP

FAMA conceived the idea of making a call for works in the format of flags - 40 x 60 inches - to subvert its association with military signs and build a symbolic fabric with the works of 40 artists, in the manner of "peaceful banners". Together, they built a common story emerged from collective experience: the invocation of memory, the instigation to action and the empowerment of women. On the quilted flag that Laura Villareal sewed with fragments of multiple textiles, a powerful phrase sewn in thick black fiber - "I am Worthy" (I am worthy) - crosses and unifies the map of the United States. On her own flag, Aurora Molina embroiders the portraits of women fighters such as Elizabeth Cady, Susan B

Anthony, Harriet Tubman and Marie Louise Baldwin, although the last two were not accepted by the Suffrage Movement because they were, respectively, an African American and a Native American. Embroidering them together repairs history. In *Inequality, A Work In Progress* Debra Rosenthal uses a jute tape system to evoke various timelines, as "African American women were not allowed to vote until 1965."



Evelyn Politzer with her work 'Past, Present and Future Connections', 2020. Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP

On her geometric textile banner, *Suffrage Quilt*, Regina Jestrow embroidered on white in delicate yellow the names of women such as the abolitionist Lucy Stone. Karla Kantorovich sewed together texts and

photographs of suffragettes representing the layers of time and the action of unifying. In *Los Walkers*, Lisu Vega transferred to canvas the images of the exhausted faces of a Venezuelan immigrant with her son, in the incessant search for a place to stop.

Pip Brant surrounded with embroidered red dragons the poem that Inez Milholland wrote in her first march: "Advancing through the darkness / Advancing out of terror / Leaving the night behind / Advancing into the light." The work of María Lino instigates to "weave our own life" and Marlene Kohn to weave a word "flag of courage". Silvana Soriano used her clothes to sew the portrait of four women, each with a different skin color, prompted to participate "as if there were no tomorrow." The works of Susan Feliciano, Colette Mello, Mary Ruden and Silvia Yapur evoke the colors of the suffrage movement - yellow, white and purple - in flags that interweave the personal and the collective in different ways.



'Out of Error', 2020, by Pip Brandt. Mixed media on canvas: stains, embroidery floss, silk-screen dye, 40 x 60 inches. Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP

Yolanda Sánchez, who created a work that she wisely titled in two languages: “The Body is a Fiesta”, combines transparency and the superposition of fabrics (and identities) and reminds us in the text of the catalog that Alice Paul embroidered a star on the flag of the National Women's Party "every time a state ratified the 19th amendment." He highlighted the participation of artists of eleven nationalities with works that interweave multiple cultural perspectives, different levels of significance and a polyphonic concert of women's voices. "The word *metissage*- he wrote - refers to the weaving of a cloth with different fibers ". In a substitute way, FAMA's mission is to interweave visions. Virtually visiting the works inspired by the commemoration of the right to vote for women is to participate in ways to mend the memory and weave tomorrow.

“Women Pulling at the Threads of Social Discourse” organized by FAMA and CAMP. <https://www.fiberartists-miamiassociation.com/>

'Breaking Borders: Mapping of a Suffragette', 2020, by Laura Villareal. Naturally dyed fabrics, yarn, wool, and transferred image on cotton, 40 × 60 inches. COURTESY / FAMA AND CAMP





'Breaking Borders: Mapping of a Suffragette', 2020, by Laura. Naturally dyed fabrics, yarn, wool, 40 x 60 inches. COURTESY / FAMA AND CAMP



'I Wear Her Memory Like a Crown: WE TOOK THE VOTE', 2020, by Amy Gelb. Mixed media, Courtesy / FAMA and CAMP



"I go to prepare a place for you", 2020, by Aurora Molina. Bees Wax on raw canvas, velvet fabric and cotton thread, 40 x 60 inches. COURTESY / FAMA AND CAMP



"Past, Present and Future Connections", 2020, by Evelyn Politzer, Mixed fibers, 40 x 60 inches. COURTESY / FAMA AND CAMP



'Regina Jestrow: Suffrage Quilt, 2020, by Regina Jestrow, Mixed fibers, 40 x 60 inches. COURTESY / FAMA AND CAMP

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