



Seton Hall University's
Walsh Library Gallery
presents

Text in Textile
The Varied Work of Fanny Violet

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The Women's Resource Center

The Department of Art and Music

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and The Department of Modern Languages

Co-curated by Dejay Byrd, Quashelle Curtis & Michael Mulryan

Faculty Coordinator: Petra Chu

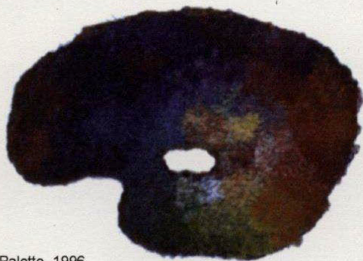
Gallery Director: Jo Ann Cotz

Text in Textile

The Varied Work of Fanny Vioulet

sewing...weaving...stitching...knitting...crocheting...

Through the ages and across cultures, needlework has been a labor of love-or of obligation, for women. Fanny Vioulet, a French artist known for her works on fabric, has taken the medium of needle and thread (traditionally known as "women's work") and infused them with references to the past and present to create whimsical works with feminist undertones. The fabrics, colors and techniques used all have a long "herstory" which Vioulet has



Palette, 1996

exploited to create new and personal meaning. Whether she utilizes antique whites or saturated color schemes, Vioulet's method of sewing narratives and meticulously descriptive texts into her ceremonial objects brings to mind the nimble, weathered hands of grandmothers and great-grandmothers working feverishly on silks, wools, laces, and cottons. However, the stories imbedded in

Vioulet's work speak truths about the trials and tribulations of womanhood that women of the past could not divulge.

Even as the feminist movement swept across Europe and the United States in the 1970's, the use of fabric as high art was still considered taboo by most art historians. But woman artists such as Faith Ringgold, Miriam Schapiro, Annette Messenger and others challenged the art establishment by creating work which used textile as an artistic and decidedly feminist medium. In this tradition, Vioulet tackles the male-dominated history of art in pieces such as *Palette* and *Les Cartes Postales Brodees* (Embroidered Postcards), which satirically question the objectification of women and the exploitation of art in museum shops. Other work such as *Triptych*, are more abstract with hundreds of names of colors from the famous DMC catalogue-a seamstress' Bible in Europe.

Fanny Vioulet has created a vast visual archive. *Ariadne's Journal*, with collected bits and scraps of thread and lint from her past homes, is very personal; but other works make reference to 19th-century Europe, when anatomy, physiology and Biblical authority were repeatedly invoked to reinforce the ideal of modest and pure womanhood that evolved during Queen Victoria's

reign. The *Bridal Veil*, which was created at the time of Viollet's own wedding, has stitched in it the items that a woman of the Victorian age would make for her trousseau, the bride's gift of innumerable household linens to her groom.

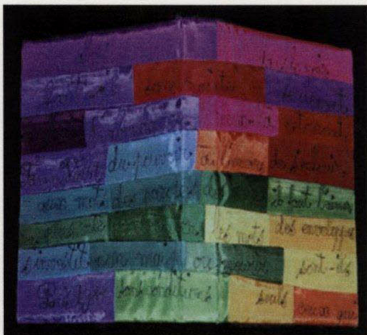


Biblioptere, 1995

Viollet juxtaposes the airy lightness of the wedding veil with the burdensome weight of expectations placed on the woman's shoulders. Biblical texts found in *C'est pourquoi la terre est ronde* (That's Why the Earth is Round) and *Song of Songs* are aesthetically used to further separate the reality of womanhood from the myths of femininity and expectations imposed by society. While

they examine issues of power and the place of women in society, Viollet's works are inherently beautiful. Indeed, there is a striking contrast between their frequently seductive form and their bold iconography, which takes its cues not only from her own-but from a collective women's memory.

Text in Textile at Seton Hall's Walsh Library Gallery is Fanny Viollet's premiere exhibition on the East Coast. Her work has also been widely shown in galleries across Europe, Japan and the West Coast of the U.S.



Reliure, 1983

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the members of the University community who have sponsored, funded and helped with the exhibition. Additional thanks to Eva Gale, TLTC-Media Services and The Friends of the Hermitage, Ho-ho-kus, N.J.

Walsh Library Gallery is part of the University Libraries, Dr. Arthur Hafner, Dean. Gallery Hours are Monday-Friday 10:30am-4:30pm. Call 973-275-2033 for more information, special events and group tours. Seton Hall University Library is located at 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, N.J. 07079. Visit our web site at <http://library.shu.edu/gallery>.

Selected Exhibition Checklist

- Adrienne's Journal*, 1985
Pieces of wool, thread and string rolled into pellets
- Bookbinding (On the Writings of J. Prévert)*, 1983
Multi-colored taffeta embroidered with words taken from Prévert's book
- Alphabet Primer 666*, 1982
36 page book, paper pages in arch design, white canvas, and embroidered letters in red cotton
- Bridal Veil*, 1996
Hand sewn/machine embroidery on polyester and rayon
- Embroidered Postcards*, 1997
Hand and machine embroidery on commercial postcards
- Four Latches to be Lifted: A Poem by René Char*, 1985
Cotton handkerchief, machine embroidered in red thread
- Germain's Chemise*, 1995
White cotton shirt, cut in half and quilted with red rayon thread
- Palette*, 1996
Multicolored thread
- Memories I, II, III & IV*, 1985, 1986
Embroidery in red cotton thread on white cotton fabric
- Pay Attention to What Books Don't Tell You*, 1994
Embroidered book, bits of collected threads
- Sewing Book*, 1994
56 page book, embroidered linen
- Reliure*, 1983
Bookbinding, taffeta bands
- That's Why the Earth is Round*, 1998
White quilt with invisible thread; text is the beginning of the Book of Genesis
- The Beautiful Sleeper*, 1999
Woman's shirt, linen, colored thread
- The Chair*, 1997
Synthetic tissue, fabric w/simulated gold and colored thread
- The Image of the Letter (total of six pieces)*, 1993
Canvas, embroidered letters, violet ink
- Time Flies*, 1993
Oak leaves and vinyl
- Bookbinding*, 1997
Linen decorated with flowers
- The Dance*, 1995
Sewing machine embroidery. Red thread on tin foil.
- The Triptych*, 1996
Mixture of threads of different colors and water-soluble support.
- Bookbinding. On My Works, Annette Messager*, 1989
Bookbinding/cover knitted in black mohair wool
- Biblioptere*, 1995
Album consists of 20 pages. Cover was formed by a mechanical needle which followed a pre-established pattern/design
- Memories I, II, III, & IV (4 Pieces)*, 1985-86
Embroidery in red cotton thread, cross-stitch on white cotton fabric
- Fanny Viollot has Nothing to Prove*, 1985
Red thread sewn on vinyl and paper, torn around the stitches
- This Little Pink Book*, 1985
26 pages of old pink cloth decorated with a motif of little flowers woven in matching shades
- Bedroom # 10, The Bed*, 1991
Two white bed sheets and a bolster pillowcase embroidered with red thread
- Handkerchief Quotes, Red Thread Series (9 Pieces)* 1984
Cotton handkerchiefs, embroidered writing by hand in red thread
- Handkerchiefs: Quotes From Mallarme, Stéphane Mallarmé (5 pieces)*, 1994
Creme colored handkerchiefs with lace borders and quotes embroidered in gray and pink
- Recovered Handkerchief 1990-1997*
Cotton handkerchiefs, embroidered, hand-sewn writing
- Hommage to Alice*, 1980
Embroidery in red cotton on a white canvas
- The Authentic Fanny's 622*, 1992
Stitches (piquetures) in different colored threads (text and design)
- The Letter*, 1982
22 page book made out of white fabric, done in cross-stitch;
- Bookbinding On Méharées Théodore Monod*, 1995
Black fabric, sand and blue paper