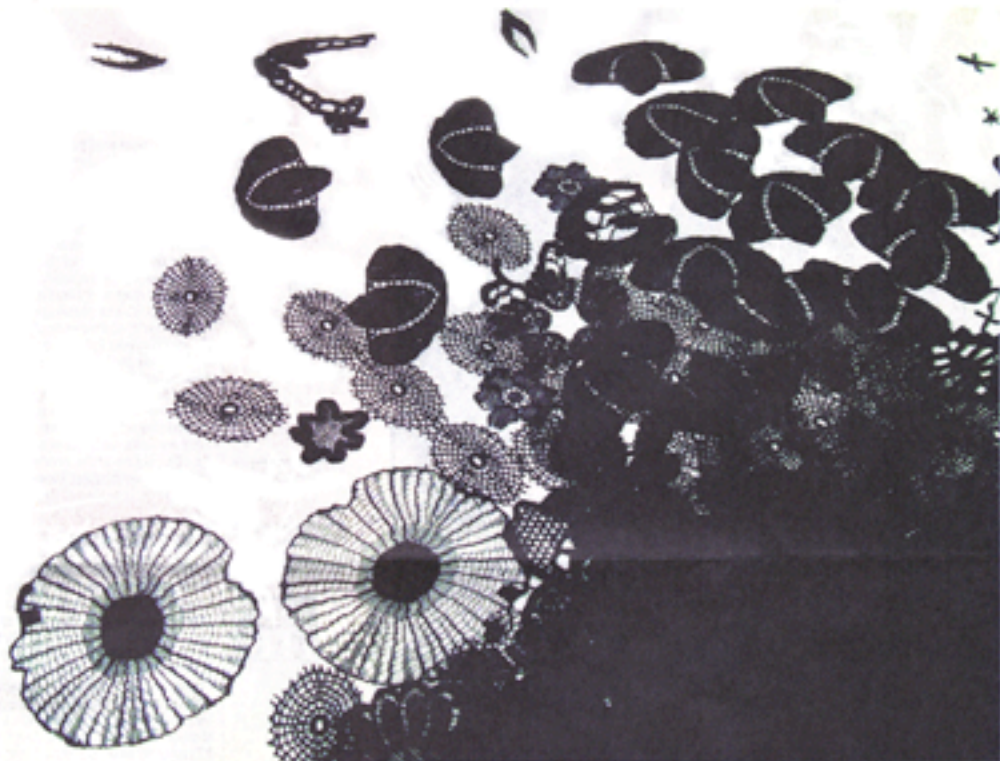


Flair and Flash, Not Frumpiness

An Exhibition Documents the Growing Influence of Knitting and Lace on Art



Top, Anne Wilson's work-in-progress "Topologies," with lace, thread, cloth, pins and painted wood support; above left, a detail from Freddie Robins's "Craft Kills," a comment on the post-9/11 ban on knitting needles in airplanes; and above right, Cal Lane's "5 Shovels."

Long viewed as the domain of grandmothers, needlework has undergone an image makeover in the last decade. Snowboarders, the old torchbearers of alt culture, have embraced crocheting, making beanies to

ART REVIEW

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wear on the slopes; coffeehouses and subways are filled with fashion-conscious types busily knitting or doing needlepoint. And contemporary artists like Andrea Zittel, Lisa Anne Auerbach, Orly Genger and Jim Drain and the Forcefield collective have given crafts a coolly conceptual edge.

Time then for an exhibition celebrating the unfrumpiness of craft, and, sigh, what bet-

Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting

Museum of Arts & Design

ter institution than one that recently went through its own makeover, changing its name from the American Craft Museum to the sexier Museum of Arts & Design?

The sorry news is that, despite its title, "Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting," with around 40 works by 27 artists, is not a benchmark for introducing such crafts' coolness or radicalism to a vast art audience. Rather than exploring transgressive takes on knitting, the exhibition, organized by David Revere McFadden, the museum's chief curator,

devotes most of its space to art that mimics the look or logic of knitting and lace and translates it into different materials.

In an essay in the show's catalog, Mr. McFadden does invoke interactive performances held in abandoned warehouses and the London Underground and people who knit sweaters for "oil-spill-damaged penguins to wear in Antarctica" — the kind of activities you might associate with radical or subversive practice.

But in choosing the work for the show, he cites somewhat dated textile and crafts-based artists like Sophie Taeuber, Sonia Delaunay, Judy Chicago and Magdalena Abakanowicz.

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