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MICHAEL SYLVAN ROBINSON



Identity Is... Installation at the Museum of Arts and Design in NYC Sylvan with Jordan Roth's Met Gala 2021 garment (2024). Photo Credit: Paul Takeuchi

by Barbara Pavan

Michael Sylvan Robinson's art and queer activism are expressed through the innovative use of textile collage and text-based art techniques. His process begins with the selection of textiles characterized by intricate patterns, which are then reassembled into complex textile collages, densely worked with machine and hand stitching, as well as bead applications.

Originally a costume designer and performance artist, Robinson's practice later evolved into a deep exploration of wearable art, two-dimensional works, sculptures, and installations. In these works, the dimensional aspect is heightened by meticulous surface details that invite the viewer to engage with a broader conceptual structure.

The sculptural garments and wearable art from his #urbanfey series serve as interventions of care, healing, and activism, addressing the challenging times in which we live.

Each piece is layered with imagery that is both queer and wild, yet deeply connected to the urban landscapes of the environment in which Robinson grew up. Hand-stenciled poetic text fragments printed on the garments express intentions, offer reflections on the fragility of the world, and evoke a call to remembrance and, at the same time, action.

He shared insights about his work in this fascinating interview.



Tessere storie © Isobel Blank, digital sketches for future visions, variable dimensions, 2025

WEAVING THE WORLD: WRITING, WEAVING, AND THE THREAD OF NARRATIVES

by Eleonora Giglione

Writing and weaving have always intertwined in a symbolic dialogue: both construct complex realities by interlacing diverse elements, whether words or threads. However, the textile metaphor is not merely literary; it has deep roots in mythology, history, and philosophy. Knots, nets, and weaves not only define the structure of a text but also connect to worldviews, politics, and the art of deception. Weaving, like writing, contains an element of ambiguity and artifice. A text, much like a woven fabric, is crafted with skill, strategy, and often with the intent to conceal meanings, deceive the eye, or create illusions.

Weaving is frequently linked to the revelation of truth hidden beneath a veil. The most famous reference is undoubtedly Schopenhauer's Veil of Maya, which obscures the true essence of reality from human sight. Penelope deceives the suitors with her weaving; the Gordian Knot is an enigma to be unraveled; Arachne challenges Minerva by weaving uncomfortable truths about the gods; Daedalus constructs a treacherous labyrinth, while Ariadne, with her thread, enables one to find the way. Like a textile, a text is upheld by the balance between order and chaos, between the illusion of form and the vertigo of the formless, guiding the reader along a thread that is both a constraint and an escape route.

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ANNE VON FREYBURG: IRONY AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE BETWEEN ORNAMENT AND IDENTITY

by Maria Rosaria Roseo



Anne von Freyburg, a Dutch artist born in 1979, initially trained as a fashion designer at ArtEZ in Arnhem, then completed a master's degree in Fine Art at Goldsmiths University in London, where she currently lives and works. Her artistic practice is intentionally situated between applied arts and fine arts, aiming to dissolve their hierarchies. Textile art, often relegated to a minor expression, becomes for her a critical tool to investigate aesthetics, gender, and visual culture. Through a practice she herself defines as "textile painting," she reinterprets Rococo works with fabrics, embroidery, and decorative materials, creating a visual language where Baroque beauty merges with pop irony and kitsch aesthetics.

Soft Blush (After Fragonard, The Progress of Love: The Reverie), 2025, Textile wall installation painting: acrylic ink, synthetic fabrics, PVC fabric, tapestry-fabric, sequin fabrics, hand-embroidery, polyester wedding and hand-dyed tassel fringes on canvas
220 cm high x 200 cm wide. Photo cr. Pasquale Viglione, copyright Anne von Freyburg

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