



# The Fabric Workshop and Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hard/Cover  
April 9 – September 26, 2021

Virtual Opening: Friday, April 9, 6:00pm



L to R: Viola Frey standing with *Homage*, 1986. Photo credit: Chris Felver. Woody de Othello, *Covering Face*, 2021, ceramic and glaze on tiled pedestal. Image courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery.

Philadelphia, PA, March 23, 2021 — The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is pleased to present *Hard/Cover*, on view from April 9 to September 26, 2021. A collaboration with Philadelphia's Clay Studio, the exhibition includes important artworks from past residents **Louise Bourgeois** (1911–2010), **Viola Frey** (1933–2004), **Toshiko Takaezu** (1922–2011), and **Betty Woodman** (1930–2018), as well as new works by five contemporary artists who have been invited to expand their practice with screenprinting. These artists include **Woody De Othello** (Oakland, CA), **Jane Irish** (Philadelphia, PA), **Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke** (Queens, NY), and **Shino Takeda** (Brooklyn, NY).

*Hard/Cover* looks closely at the relationship between time, process, and space in developing an interdisciplinary practice. Framed by celebrated works from past Artists-in-Residence working at FWM in the late 1980s and early '90s, as well as tableaux and scenes created by contemporary artists, the exhibition considers how changes in one's creative practice can open up new pathways of conveying integral ideas. For Frey, Takaezu, and Woodman, their collective shift away from utilitarian function toward aesthetic and emotive properties illustrated tension in a world that did not easily make room for female artists with a material-focused practice. Now, more than three decades later, artists such as De Othello, Irish, Barrow & Parke, and Takeda can employ interdisciplinary practices that move between function, pleasure, and critical discourse.

The opportunity to work with the professional artists at FWM can best be described as an invitation to collaborate and experiment, no matter the material or process. Over the past 40+ years, this invitation has materialized as new performances, material tests, community collaborations, sculptural works, and video pieces, to name a few. The premise of *Hard/Cover* stems from an investigation into some of the Workshop's earliest residencies, where celebrated artists benefited from three-week opportunities to discover screenprinting that would later inform their burgeoning contemporary art practices. With the support and insight of three foundations, selected works by Frey, Takaezu, and Woodman from the FWM Collection are complemented by pieces loaned directly from the artists' estates.

Working in collaboration with FWM, Viola Frey turned her hand to wallpaper with *Artist's Mind/Studio/World*, creating dynamic backdrops for her large sculptures. Betty Woodman, an artist included in the Pattern and Decoration movement, framed her ceramics with heavily decorative fabric, often with titles like "Door" or "Window." Employing both screenprinting and ceramics helped Woodman create the illusion of a space that suggests an architecture, but with elements which aren't quite functional. Toshiko Takaezu experimented with surface by translating her signature ceramic sculptures—rounded, closed forms called *Moons*—into fabric-based, screenprinted soft sculptures. Using her signature circular elements, Takaezu also experimented with clothing and wearable designs.

Inspired to see how an invitation to screenprint might translate to artists today, FWM invited five artists (including one artist collaborative) to work in their world-renowned print studios and incorporate the fabric, as well as their own works, into new installations. Woody De Othello's tableau of a living room features newly made curtains and ceramic works, and Jane Irish's opulent scene is reminiscent of an Egyptian den with ceramic potpourri vessels and banners overhead. Barrow & Parke approached the concept of the vessel metaphorically with an eye towards design and repetition—providing the backdrop for Louise Bourgeois' *Pregnant Woman*, a 2002 felt piece from the FWM Collection—while Shino Takeda took the invitation as an opportunity to shift from functional ceramic works to playing with scale and suspending new sculptures from the ceiling.

Both *Hard/Cover* and Elisabeth Kley's concurrent solo exhibition, *Minutes of Sand*, demonstrate FWM's renewed commitment to selected residencies focused solely on screenprinting similar to those foundational to the Workshop. The program's collaborative focus inspires the creation of new work, contributing to a permanent collection of some 5,000 artworks and an archive that preserves and illustrates the course of artistic production. Printmaking is integral to FWM's history and remains a vital part of its mission, now being reignited with a short-term residency program for a new cadre of artists.

#### About the Artists

The subject matter of **Woody De Othello** (Oakland, CA) spans household objects, bodily features, and the natural world. Everyday artifacts of the domestic—tables, chairs, television remotes, telephone receivers, lamps, air purifiers, et cetera—are anthropomorphized in glazed ceramic, bronze, wood, and glass. Othello's sense of humor manifests across his work in visual puns and cartoonish figuration. Recent exhibitions include *Woody De Othello: Breathing Room*, a solo exhibition at the San Jose Museum of Art, CA, and *Living Room*, Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

**Jane Irish's** (Philadelphia, PA) paintings create confrontations and coexistences between realms of history that rarely collide—such as ornamentation and political protest, art and warfare, poetry and architecture. Alongside her prolific painting practice, Irish creates ceramic vases that further explore questions of beauty and violence and the construction of historical meaning through decorative patterns and traditional forms. Irish has been the recipient of a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and a Painting Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Since beginning to work together in 2008, **Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke** (Queens, NY) have shared a practice fusing textile production, computer coding and modernist design. For their intricate textile-painting hybrids combining geometric abstractions in pastel hues on woven fabric, layered compositions are underpinned by scientific theories and conceptual ideas. Recent solo exhibitions include *Future*

*Homemakers of America* at JDJ | The Ice House in Garrison, NY, and *Analemma* at Premio Matteo Olivero in Saluzzo, Italy.

Influenced by her upbringing in Japan and her current home in New York, **Shino Takeda's** (Brooklyn, NY) ceramics embody her sensory experience of sight, touch, taste, sound, and smell. Most of her pieces are hand built using the coil method and working with several different clay bodies. Takeda's work is renowned in the design world; her 2019 exhibition, *Diary*, at JDJ | The Ice House marked her debut gallery exhibition. Her previous collaboration with Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke was also featured at NADA Miami 2019.

Both *Hard/Cover* and *Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand* (March 5, 2021 – August 15, 2021) were made possible with generous support from The Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, Girlfriend Fund, Harry Hu, Rob Hayes, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Jessica Silverman Gallery, Maja Paumgarten and John Parker, The Woodman Family Foundation, Flavor Paper, and Canada Gallery.

#### About the Clay Studio

The Clay Studio inspires curiosity and discovery around the art and craft of clay, drawing together students, artists, and an engaged public into a welcoming community. Every day, in their classrooms, studios, galleries, and neighborhoods, they deepen the connection between people and clay with the highest quality programs and exhibitions. Founded in 1974, The Clay Studio continues in the belief that shared creativity, so fundamental to humanity, is a critical force for good.

#### About the Fabric Workshop and Museum

Founded in 1977, FWM both makes and presents, encouraging artists to experiment with new materials and new media in a veritable living laboratory. Through its renowned Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program, FWM collaborates with artists to expand their practices, while documenting the course of artistic production from inspiration to realization. FWM presents large-scale exhibitions, installations, and performative work, utilizing innovative fiber and other media. Today, FWM is the only US institution devoted to creating work in textile and new media in collaboration with some of the most significant artists of our time.

Major support of FWM is provided by the Marion Boulton "Kippy" Stroud Foundation. FWM receives state art funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support is provided by The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Agnes Gund, and the Board of Directors and Members of The Fabric Workshop and Museum.

###

**NOTE TO MEDIA: A virtual opening for *Hard/Cover* will be held on Friday, April 9 at 6:00pm ET.** This event will also celebrate *Hard/Cover's* sister exhibition, *Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand*. The opening will feature a virtual tour of *Hard/Cover* and interviews with Woody De Othello, Jane Irish, Elisabeth Kley, Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke, and Shino Takeda. **Media are invited to stay on after the public program for a VIP Q&A with the artists.** To RSVP, please email Abby Addams at [abby@bluemedium.com](mailto:abby@bluemedium.com).

#### Media Contacts:

Abby Addams  
Blue Medium, Inc.  
Tel: +1-212-675-1800  
[abby@bluemedium.com](mailto:abby@bluemedium.com)

Philadelphia-based inquiries:  
Erin Sweeny  
FWM Communications  
Tel: 215-561-8888 x224  
[erin@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org](mailto:erin@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org)