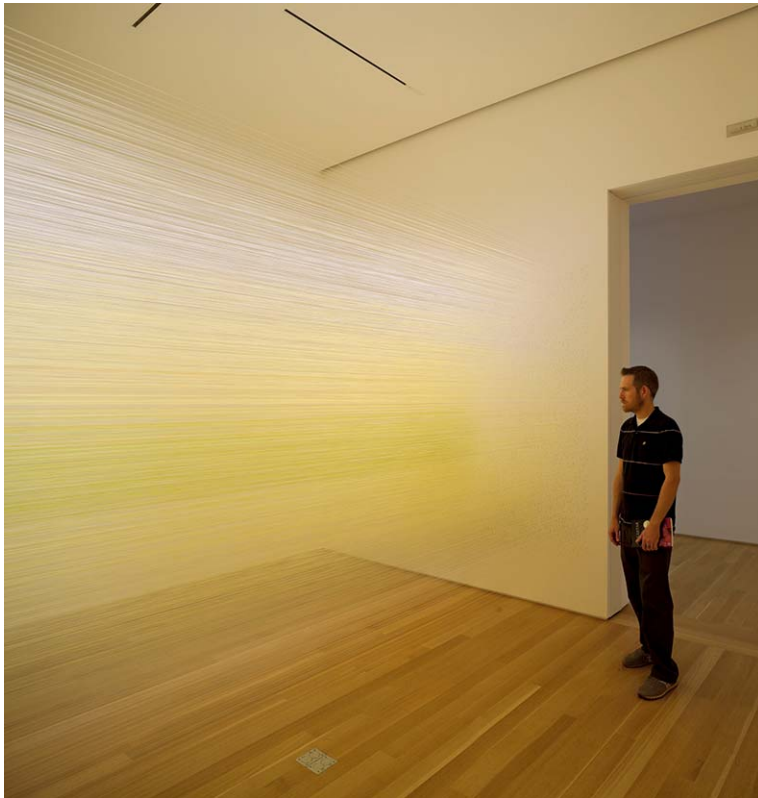


Yellow Thread of Inspiration Stars in Nerman's 'Museum Interrupted', by Alice Thorson in The Kansas City Star, 13 November, 2010



The Nerman Museum has a real winner with its new show, "Museum Interrupted," featuring ambitious installation works by Kansas City Art Institute alums Anne Lindberg, Rachel Hayes and Miles Neidinger. All three artists strike a balance between sculpture, architecture and the ineffable, working with light and luminosity, unconventional materials and the vocabulary of abstraction.

Since the exhibit opened Oct. 26, Lindberg's "Raume Yellow," a breathtaking installation fashioned from 24 miles of Egyptian cotton thread, has been the talk of the town. Lindberg, an artist who has numerous permanent installations around town and several East Coast shows under her belt, is ready for international prime time with this stunning new work.

Named for a German word, "raume," that has varying translations — including chamber, volume, space and universe — "Raume Yellow" is composed of 9,000 strands of thread stretched across the 14-foot-wide gallery and stapled to the wall on each side. The strands are mostly yellow, but the work includes sections of green and orange and white. The impression is of a three-dimensional Mark Rothko painting hovering in space.

The threads form a rectangle, measuring 7 feet high and 7 feet deep, but it reads as an immaterial presence. The flurry of staples visible on each wall provides a physical grounding, as well as evidence of all the labor involved. To realize the work and ensure the proper tension, Lindberg had a runner string the material back and forth between two people posted at each wall.

Lindberg, who is known for her large drawings featuring hundreds of hand-drawn parallel graphic lines, describes "Raume Yellow" as a "drawing in space." She said the idea for the work came to her while she was eating a yellow peach under a blue tent: "I was struck with how the yellow was behaving in the light (and decided) (that) I'm going to get yellow thread." Lindberg has worked with thread before, including a blue piece that dropped from the ceiling for the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Neb.

But yellow, which, she notes in her artist's statement, has "thousands of meanings," struck a chord and moved her to genius. "To me it's like the culmination of what she's been moving toward," said the museum's director, Bruce Hartman. The work's purity and rigor combined with radiant sensual allure provoke a sense of uplift bordering on a metaphysical high.

Each of the exhibit's three artists was given a gallery and spent two weeks creating a new work for this show. Like Lindberg, Miles Neidinger has outdone himself with his piece, "Everything We See Is Never Enough." It's a commentary, the artist says, on the "unquenchable thirst in our culture to consume."

Composed of masses of colored plastic straws, neon tape wrapped with yarn and webs of metallic twist ties, this visceral totem to glitz and excess suggests a Jabberwock spawned in a landfill. Three bristly "arms" stretch 14 feet to the ceiling; two of them emit spiky fountains of multicolored straws midway down. A mass of red jumbo straws spills from the suspended work's hammock-like center; on the other side, a blue puddle of yarn-wrapped tape burbles on the floor.

Despite its chaotic mien, the piece is wonderfully orchestrated. The curves of the thin multicolored straws play off the spiky angles of the bent red ones. The yarn and tape add crinkle, the glittering metallic twist ties, organized into webby cage-like passages, contribute a festive air. The piece has a dangerous beauty, analogous to the throwaway lifestyle it invokes.

Rachel Hayes has some formal and construction issues to sort out with her piece, "All Most All Ways," but her capacity for resonant multilayered symbols and references is as strong as ever. The 17-foot artwork resembles an inverted tent made from huge lengths of fabric. One side is white, the other is black, and both are pierced with rectangular cutouts inset with colored light gels.

Viewers can walk below the soaring panels of this V-shaped construction, which was inspired in part, the artist says, by Le Corbusier's iconic Notre Dame du Haut church in Ronchamp, France.

The magic of Hayes' piece comes from the colored reflections it casts on the walls. They recall the luminous cubism of Lionel Feininger, just as the color blocks of the panels hark to Piet Mondrian. All of these modernist references are generated by the sheltering feminine delta of her sewn fabric construction.

The piece also brings to mind the flickering shadows of Plato's Cave, but in this case, the shadows upstage the real object that casts them. Going forward, Hayes needs to more gracefully integrate the physical and ethereal elements of her constructions to make them as enticing as her play of ideas.