China Marks Constructed Fabric Drawings Explore ‘Human imperfectability’ at the Thompson Gallery

August 22, 2015, WESTON, MA – *China Marks—Nowhere Everywhere* is the first exhibition in a series of exhibits centering on Sir Thomas More’s nearly 500-year old literary classic, *Utopia*. The show is part of the three-part *Nowhere Everywhere* exhibition series acknowledging the book’s quincentennial and the rhetorical conceit it introduced that gave rise to a literary genre. Since its publication in 1516 and the introduction of More’s invented word, "utopia"—a “non-place” and a “nowhere”—writers, artists and philosophers have re-imagined society to examine imaginary, unprecedented, impossible or lost versions of societies at large. Human “perfectibility” is the key concept to More’s invention and the *Nowhere Everywhere* exhibition series examines the genres of utopia and dystopia through contemporary artists’ visions of human conflict and human dilemma within societal structures.

The exhibition *China Marks—Nowhere Everywhere*, opening September 4, initiates the series with a 13-year survey of *China Marks’* (Long Island City, NY) “process-directed, constructed fabric drawings” and one-of-a-kind books that explore social relationships, human conflict and human imperfectability through the artist’s fantastic and irresistibly irreverent visual iconography. *China Marks—Nowhere Everywhere* is the first solo exhibition of the artist’s work in the New England area and it provides an unprecedented opportunity to view 70 works by Marks who draws with “thread, an industrial zigzag sewing machine and a computerized embroidery machine on commercially available printed fabric, to realize complex narratives.”

Marks describes her work in this way: “Process is the transformative agent, synthesizing and subverting the forms and stories contained in the original sources. For the last five years I have also written dialogue and -- MORE --
commentary for my drawings and books, first cutting out words and letters from printed fabric, then using a computerized embroidery machine and CAD software to produce embroidered text.”

“Marks manages a large collection of printed fabrics, keeping an eye out for recognizable paintings from art history made into tapestries which she happily appropriates, disassembles and then reconstructs into novel combinations,” explains Todd Bartel, gallery director, curator of the series and CSW visual arts teacher. “It is as if the artist is reaching out to the art and culture of the past to rekindle dialog and initiate new discourse,” he said.

Fulbright-Hayes Fellow, and Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant recipient, China Marks has exhibited her work in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, Montana and Kansas, Massachusetts and Europe. While Marks earned a BFA and an MFA in sculpture, she has focused on drawing extensively throughout her career, working on materials as diverse as Plexiglass, aluminum, paper and cloth. The Thompson Gallery exhibition is the most extensive examination of the artist’s constructed fabric drawings and books to date. Visit: [http://www.csw.org/Page/Arts/Thompson-Gallery/Exhibitions](http://www.csw.org/Page/Arts/Thompson-Gallery/Exhibitions).

“China Marks’ newest creations in particular engage with a collagist strategy of appropriation. Her work is wonderfully eclectic and recalls the art of High Renaissance masters such as Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder infused with the contemporary feel of Pop Art and the sarcasm and whimsy of Philip Guston’s paintings. Marks’ cosmology is an amalgam of mixed-up characters which wear on their sleeves the kinds of thoughts and emotions people think, but don’t often utter,” Bartel noted. “Marks’ work asks us, ‘How can we create utopia when we are still dealing with such thoughts?’”

“I am after as complex a truth as possible,” Marks adds. “My drawings reflect the world we live in all its glory, horror, and absurdity; the workers and the slugs, sleepwalkers and prophets. Who is in charge and who suffers because of that? Why does the past keep biting us in the ass? What does it mean to be in love? I do my best to make sense of things, and it takes everything I’ve got.”

The Nowhere Everywhere exhibition series will feature the work of Raúl Gonzalez III (Boston, MA) in the winter exhibition and a group show in the spring of 2016. “The topic of Utopia was voted on by our student body two years ago for the Thompson Gallery to develop into a series of three exhibitions,” Bartel explains. “The Nowhere Everywhere exhibition series was designed to support the school’s pedagogical interest in providing platforms for discussion and learning regarding issues of social justice.”

Spanning two locations at the Cambridge School of Weston, the exhibition will be on view at the Thompson Gallery (September 4 to November 14) and at the Red Wall Gallery, located inside the Mugar Center for the Performing Arts (September 4 through October 10, 2015).

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

China Marks, *So What!*, 2015
fabric, thread, screen-printing ink, old paint-smeared sweatpants, fusible adhesive, brass trim
18 x 16.5 inches
photo credit: Jeffrey Scott French

China Marks, *The Gallerist*, 2013
fabric, lace, thread, screen-printing ink, buttons, Jade glue, fusible adhesive
35.75 x 42 inches
photo credit: D. James Dee

China Marks, *Aggression Shows Civility the Door*, 2015 [Short Subject series]
fabric, thread, fusible adhesive
15 x 12 inches
photo credit: Jeffrey Scott French

China Marks, *Small Favor*, 2014
fabric, thread, plastic google-eye, Jade glue, fusible adhesive
18.5 x 15 inches
photo credit: Jeffrey Scott French

ABOUT THE THOMPSON GALLERY
The Thompson Gallery is a teaching gallery at CSW dedicated to thematic inquiry, offering three differing vantages of the selected topic, throughout the school year. As social justice is integral to the values and mission of the school, CSW looks to provide imaginative ways to spark discussion through mediums including gallery exhibits coupled with a curriculum that boasts a variety of courses to reflect the diversity of society and the world. Named in honor of a school trustee John Thompson and family, the Gallery promotes opportunities to experience contemporary art by local, national and international artists and periodically showcases the art of faculty, staff and alumni. The Gallery is located within the Garthwaite Center for Science and Art, The Cambridge School of Weston, 45 Georgian Road Weston, MA 02493. Visit Thompsongallery.csw.org to view exhibit art.

ABOUT THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF WESTON
The Cambridge School of Weston is a progressive, coeducational, day and boarding school for grades 9 through 12, and post graduate. Established in 1886, our mission is to provide a progressive education that emphasizes deep learning, meaningful relationships and a dynamic program that inspires students to discover who they are and what their contribution is to their school, their community and the world. [www.csw.org](http://www.csw.org)

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China Marks—Nowhere Everywhere Exhibition, Thompson Gallery, The Cambridge School of Weston

China Marks, *So What!*, 2015, fabric, thread, screen-printing ink, old paint-smeared sweatpants, fusible adhesive, brass trim, 18 x 16.5 inches (photo credit: Jeffrey Scott French)
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