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**Apex**  
**Curated by Meaghan Roddy**

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*Press Release*

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CHICAGO-Volume Gallery is delighted to announce *Apex*, a multi-generational group show of contemporary American artists working in fiber. Curated by esteemed craft specialist Meaghan Roddy, the exhibition features work by Tanya Aguiñiga, Lia Cook, Ricki Dwyer, Josh Faught, Terri Friedman, Ferne Jacobs, Michael Rohde, SHENEQUA, and Jana Vander Lee. *Apex* opens January 5, 2024, from 5-8 pm at 1709 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

*Apex* facilitates a dialogue among nine remarkable artists working in textiles now. In this context, the word ‘apex’ refers to a meeting point for these artists, many of whom arrived at working in fiber through different media, areas of practice, or subjects of study. It also refers to the joining of the many technical and material differences, practical approaches, and the diversity of age, geographical location, identity, and cultural backgrounds of the makers in the show.

Expanding on Volume Gallery’s existing program of presenting the work of contemporary American makers whose practices hover beyond the confines of categorization, this exhibition suggests no hierarchy among technical or material uses, or among established and emerging makers. *Apex* presents these artists as contemporaries living and producing alongside each other, exploring the limitless potential of the same craft.

*Apex* is an inaugural exhibition curated by Meaghan Roddy, the first in a series of exhibitions initiated by Volume Gallery to engage the perspectives of academics, market leaders, and influential voices within contemporary art, design, and craft. Roddy’s field of interest is mining alternate art histories to tell a more complete story of American art and design, spotlighting the common through-current of craft practices and materials, their precedence, and trajectory.

**Tanya Aguiñiga** (b.1978) was raised in Tijuana, Mexico, and crossed the border daily as a child to attend school in San Diego. This binational experience indelibly formed her perspective and continues to be an essential influence on her artistic and activist practices. Aguiñiga often uses off-loom weaving techniques and heavily symbolic materials connected with her Mexican heritage. Her ongoing investigations of identity, place, and craft are powerful and emotive abstractions of her and her community’s experience.

**Lia Cook** (b.1942), a pioneer of combining weaving with technology, confronts restrictive assumptions about the separation of art, craft, science, and technology within

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her work. *Little Tunnel B*, 1989, employs dyed rayon—a fiber made from plant cellulose—sculpturally, with repeated rows of pink and gray material rolling out into space to three-dimensional effect.

**Ricki Dwyer** (b. 1990) is a sculptor whose research into textiles and the historical trade routes, labor histories and contemporary economic theory linked therein informs the exploration of his practice. Dwyer sees his work as part of a lineage of skilled labor—his deconstructed and sculptural textile pieces embodying the intersection of personal and industrial production with the somatic. *Family Limits, the Political Imaginary*, 2023, is a lattice of intersecting lengths of woven black and purple material, exposing the layers of the textile structure and engaging gravity as an additional medium in its creation.

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**Josh Faught** (b.1979) is also interested in the history of textile production especially as connected to queer and feminist histories. His assemblage work merges woven material with cultural detritus and references to resistance and survival. *Souvenirs*, 2022, explores the humble basket's powerful ability to conceal and reveal, and includes baskets woven by Faught with reed and hemp, a found VHS tape, a heating pad, and a book entitled *Surviving the Collapse of Society: Skills to Know and Careers to Pursue*, all stacked on a pedestal housing a tower of tuna cans within a 'hidden' niche.

**Terri Friedman's** (b. 1962) colorful and gestural textiles are brimming with various materials and textures. Although meticulously planned in order to be woven on a loom, her vibrant pieces retain a sense of urgency. Friedman's recent work is inspired by neuroplasticity—the ability of our minds to change and heal. Descriptive titles *Your heart is the size of your fist*, *Neurons gone wild*, and *Laughter is Carbonated Holiness* draw from the mind-body connection.

**Ferne Jacobs** (b.1942) began using basket-weaving techniques to make sculpture with waxed linen thread in 1970. Creating irregular rows of intricate organic forms, Jacobs is interested in the close connection between her hands and the material. She considers the time-intensive process devotional—an attempt to serve the sacred in the feminine.

**Michael Rohde's** (b. 1943) weavings exercise a quiet beauty. The monochromatic pieces *Naiveté* and *Solemnity*, both from a series of four works created in 2005 in response to the Bush Administration, note the characteristics desired of politicians and are among the first instances of Rohde's use of natural dye in his textile work. Rohde's use of house imagery in recent work, including homes that seem to disappear, addresses the impact of human and natural causes on the homes and lives of people.

**SHENEQUA's** (b. 1992) work celebrates her Afro-Caribbean identity and, specifically in this body of work based on the Tarrus Riley song *She's Royal, So Royal*, the Black hair salon as the center of community, intimacy, and friendship. SHENEQUA uses the materials and imagery of Black hair styling practices to explore the complexities of Black women. *Blonde Plaits*, 2018, weaves together black cotton thread with interruptions of braided synthetic hair and hangs from an oversized bobby pin, mimicking the function of holding one's hair down in the work's installation against the wall.

**Jana Vander Lee's** (b.1945) work is informed by her studies of Lowland/Dutch tapestry traditions, Diné (Navajo) weaving, and subatomic physics. Her geometric textiles are rife with iconography. *Propensity*, 2022, is part of her recent Tribute Series in which she honors figures who have impacted her career—this piece is a tribute to Theo Moorman (1907-1990) an artist weaver whose innovative techniques have inspired many.

*Apex* will be on view at Volume Gallery through February 17, 2024.

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Based in Los Angeles, Meaghan Roddy has spent over two decades working in the auction sector, most recently as Senior Vice President of Design at Phillips. She has long been an advocate for works produced in craft-based media, seeking to advance their visibility and increase the market longevity of multiple artists in the secondary market. She successfully managed multiple auctions and singular collections and continues to privately advise collectors and institutions. A frequent contributor to publications regarding the design and craft markets, Roddy has also been a guest lecturer and panelist for various organizations including The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and Design Miami/. She was an inaugural Curatorial Fellow at the Center for Craft in Asheville, North Carolina, and is the catalog co-author and co-curator of the exhibition *The Good Making of Good Things: Craft Horizons Magazine 1941-1979*, which traveled nationally from 2017 to 2019. Roddy presently serves on the Board of Directors at the Center for Craft and is a member of the Design and Decorative Arts Acquisition Committee of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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