

SARAH SHEPARD

GALLERY & ART ADVISORY

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Prints by Louisiana Bendolph, Mary Lee Bendolph, Loretta Bennett & Loretta Pettway of Gee's Bend

In Collaboration with Paulson Fontaine Press

June 16 - August 1, 2020

Sarah Shepard Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of prints from four female quilters of Gee's Bend: Louisiana Bendolph, Mary Lee Bendolph, Loretta Bennett & Loretta Pettway. In collaboration with Paulson Fontaine Press, the show features ten etchings made between 2005-2014. For this body of work, the quilters were invited by Paulson Fontaine Press to come to Berkeley from Gee's Bend, Alabama, to partner with the team in order to conceptualize and realize a print based on their quilting tradition. Visits were made to local shops in order to purchase fabrics which would be assembled in a composition that would make its way onto the printing press. The way in which the fabrics were embedded into the paper take on a set of values very different than a quilt and the results offer a wonderful compliment to one another. For some of these quilters it was their first trip to the West Coast.

Gee's Bend is a rural community in Alabama made up of generations of quilters who have contributed to the history of quilting in the African American community since the early twentieth century. The quilts originating from this area are widely celebrated for their improvisational spirit and wonderfully bold, abstract compositions. Many have fallen under the classification of "My Way" meaning they are guided by an original vision with unexpected patterns and colors.

Matriarch quilt makers, Mary Lee Bendolph and Loretta Pettway (both born in 1935) descend from generations of accomplished quilters in Gee's Bend, Alabama. Their style mixes patterns of squares and rectangles emphasizing a carefully conceived use of color. Bendolph was one of many from Gee's Bend who accompanied Martin Luther King, Jr. in his march at Camden, Alabama in 1965. Louisiana Bendolph and Loretta Bennett are among the younger generation of quilters. Both embrace the innovative spirit of Gee's Bend tradition and bring vibrant color and bold composition to their pieces.

Remarkably, this group of women have made an impressively large number of prints at Paulson Fontaine over the last fifteen years, a testament to the success of the partnership between the press and the artists. Upon viewing these pieces, one can see the tangible nature of the process and feel the history behind the vision. We are grateful to be showing these works in Marin.

Each of these quilters have been widely exhibited and all have quilts in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York amongst other prominent collections.

For more information contact sarah@sarahshepardgallery.com or 917-375-2720.

For videos of Louisiana and Mary Lee Bendolph at work at Paulson Fontaine making these prints, please visit:  
<https://paulsonfontaine.com/artist/gees-bend-louisiana-bendolph/>  
<https://paulsonfontaine.com/artist/gees-bend-mary-lee-bendolph/>