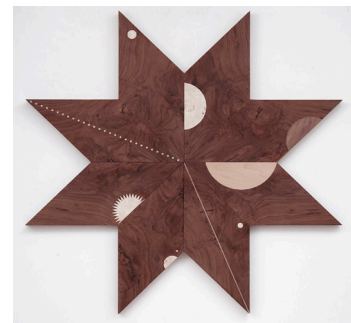


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Lena Wolff
Patterns & Spells

November 2 - December 3, 2019
Opening Reception: November 2nd, 5-7pm

Bay Area artist Lena Wolff combines iconography from American quilts with symbols for democracy and the larger universe in a body of work that forms an interplay of poetically related images. Working with variations of quilt patterns passed down through generations and shared across communities for centuries, she interweaves a geometric eight-pointed star with more literal representations of the natural world- suns, moons and constellation lines in a wide array of unexpected mediums. Grounded in traditions of handcraft, Wolff presents wood wall sculptures made with marquetry and inlay, side by side richly colored abstract collages, delicate pen drawings, and politically relevant text embroidery pieces that together create an evocative call and response in relationship to one and other.

In her inaugural exhibition at the gallery, entitled 'Patterns & Spells', Wolff investigates the power of visual symbols and images to shape culture, politics, and our state of mind. When contemplating the notion of casting spells, she considers the potential for patterns to mesmerize, hold us captive and create a sense of awe, while equally looking at how the visual symbolism we generate informs cultural imagination. Her iconic, *Quilt for the Future*, 2019, a cerulean blue paper quilt collage, combines images from 19th century American sampler quilts with more recent symbols for democracy, equality, justice, queer culture, free speech and a sustainable future, linking historic quilt imagery with vision for a more just body politic.

During her artistic practice, Wolff never loses sight of how we can affectively participate in transforming culture - for better or worse - through the images we generate. This commitment is being honored by the city of Berkeley on November 12th when she will have a day named in her honor for her work, in particular for the ubiquitous United Against Hate posters she made with collaborator Lexi Visco in 2017.

Lena Wolff was born in Larkspur in 1972, grew up living semi-communally with her family at the Zen Center of Los Angeles and then went to live in Paris and outside of Amsterdam as a young person before returning to the U.S. in the late 1980's. Based now in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1991, she works in a range of interdisciplinary approaches including drawing, collage, sculpture, murals, text-based pieces, and public art in addition to frequently collaborating with other artists. Her studio practice extends out of American craft and folk art traditions, while at the same time being connected to the modern and contemporary movements of geometric abstraction, minimalism, social practice, Op art and feminist art. Wolff received a BA in English and Creative Writing from Mills College (1995) and an MFA in Printmaking from San Francisco State University (2003). She has exhibited at the de Young Museum, the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, Headlands Center for the Arts and in numerous galleries. In addition to private collections, her work is in the public collections of the One Archive, the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Alameda County Arts Commission, Stanford University, Facebook, the Cleveland Clinic, the University of Iowa Museum and the Zuckerman Museum of Art. Wolff is the recipient of a Master Artist award from Kala Art Institute and will be honored by the City of Berkeley November 2019 for her contributions to the city as an artist engaged in social practice.

For more information contact sarah@sarahshepardgallery.com or 917-375-2720. Images: © Lena Wolff, *Star with Moons and Other Suns*, 2018, walnut, maple, birch and mappa, 42 x 42 x 2 in. All rights reserved.