

## **Females of Fabric Group Exhibition at tiny ATH gallery**

Three of Athens' talented fiber artists will exhibit at tiny ATH gallery in a group exhibition entitled "Females of Fabric" at tiny ATH gallery Feb.21. From 6-9. The artists include Barbette Houser, Heather Elisabeth and Paula Runyon. Each of the artists have come to fabric arts from different paths and perspectives, including painting, printmaking, home-furnishings textile design and more.

Barbette Houser is a writer and textile artist working in Athens, Georgia. She moved to Athens immediately after receiving her B.F.A. with an emphasis in Fiber Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design. Originally Houser didn't want to move to Athens, but says now she doesn't think she could ever leave. "I flirt with other, bigger cities, but Athens has such a lively arts and music community."

When she started studying at SCAD her intention was to major in Historical Preservation, however she connected with the Fiber Arts department head and loved what they had going on with the studio, such as weaving, batik, dyeing and embroidery. "I liked pushing the boundaries of traditional processes. I did a lot of assemblages with found objects that incorporated my handmade fabrics," said Barbette. It wasn't until eight years ago that she began quilting.

Some of Houser's quilted pieces will be exhibited on the 21st. "Quilting appeals to me because it is a series of processes. The designing and [assembling] of them requires creativity, energy, and deep attention to color and because of the way that colors interact with each other," said Houser. Her textile works are a visual response to patterns she finds in nature and the fabricated world. "After a walk through my neighborhood, I will typically come home and sketch a few designs based on trees, the curve of a meandering path, my neighbor's new mailbox," she said. She also speaks to the meditative quality that working with fibers has, which is one of the reasons another of the artists is drawn to in fabric arts.

Having spent 30 years as a practicing textile designer, Heather Elisabeth's design experience has brought her all the way to the White House during the Clinton administration to work on textile renovations and to designing a fabric to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II for Marvic Textiles, which is now part of the Victoria & Albert Museum's permanent collection, among others. Elisabeth received a B.F.A. in Fabric Design from the University of Georgia, and an M.A. in History of Decorative Arts and Design focusing on twentieth century popular culture design and theory with an emphasis in textiles from Parsons The New School for Design.

Heather Elisabeth has exciting expertise and artistry that she's been tapping into in the hundreds of hours she's spent preparing for this exhibition. "I realized that crocheting and mosaics are my creative outlet," said Elisabeth. For her textile collection, 'Runic Vessels,' she crocheted bowls with a combination of velvet yarn and recycled dyed sari ribbons that have been embellished with gemstones creating a mosaic feeling.

“My favorite part of the creative process is the trial and error that brings me to the 'aha' moment of ‘this works!’” said Elisabeth.

Her crocheted vessels are designed to house sentimental useless objects or 'tokens/souvenirs' collected in life. Elisabeth says she’s drawn to textiles due to the tactile creation of fiber arts, which she says has a meditative aspect to it. “Feeling the fabric or yarn, holding the beads, needles, fabric, thread, allows me to escape into a peaceful zen state,” said Elisabeth. Also drawing from nature, many times literally, is the final artist of the group, Paula Runyon.

Runyon recently graduated with an M.F.A. from the Lamar Dodd School of Art and just finished a residency at the Lyndon House Arts Center. Originally from Jacksonville, FL, Runyon has spent the past four years in Athens working on her degree and is planning on sticking around, as she now works as the Art Program Coordinator at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and serves on various non-profit boards and committees.

Originally a printmaker, Runyon says she loves the surprise element of textiles. “I find a lot of satisfaction in the way that a weaving slowly reveals itself and then gets hidden from view on the loom as it is made,” said Runyon. She works with salvaged or recycled materials, odd and experimental things, and especially materials found in nature. “My current material obsession is grass, which also translated to an obsession with making shag or fringe fabrics,” said Runyon.

“In my work I recognize craft as a concept positioned at the dynamic intersection of domesticity, nature and the politics of how we interact with our natural surroundings,” said Runyon in her Artist Statement.

The opening is set for Friday, Feb. 21 from 6-9 p.m. at tiny ATH gallery located at 174 Cleveland Avenue. There will also be an artist panel talk on Thursday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. with all three artists. Works in the exhibit are for sale unless otherwise noted. Limited gallery hours will take place the following week from 4-6. To RSVP for the event, visit [Facebook](#). For all information regarding the gallery, please visit [tinyathgallery.com](http://tinyathgallery.com).

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