

THE
Dennos
MUSEUM CENTER

Jim Hay: Go Where You Are

Introduction for Educators

January 16 - March 27, 2011



Mystery, Jim Hay, 2010

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The Work of Jim Hay

Jim Hay trained as a sculptor, doing mostly multi-media assemblage work, until he moved to Japan. Upon arriving, he felt the need to create window coverings for the huge windows in his rural home. This led to a love of fabric and he shifted his focus from sculpture to fabric collages, or art quilts.

Hay finds that his art quilts are very accessible to the public because of the ubiquitous nature of cloth. He says: *Cloth is a truer popular culture than even soup cans. We wear cloth, cover our windows with cloth, sit on cloth in our cars, trains, and workplaces. Cloth is near us from birth to death.*

Hay has a very improvisational style. He usually avoids preliminary drawings and specific expectations when starting a project. He cuts shapes and stitches without a plan. He freely rearranges sections into unlimited compositions. He likens his working style to his Michigan upbringing:

I am from Michigan, born in the "Motor City." I love driving fast and taking risks, love driving somewhere with no destination. For me, the foot pedal on a sewing machine has the same feel as the gas pedal on a car. I want to go fast, race around the cloth, skid around corners, and raise dust. Art is the path to my personal awareness and a communication of that awareness to others.

Discussion Sparks

- Jim Hay's work is improvisational. Discuss what this means. Can you think of other art forms that are improvisational? How are they like or unlike Jim Hay's work?
- What objects do you see in this work?
- Jim Hay often writes poetry to accompany his work. Write a short poem about the work *Mystery* featured on the opposite side of this paper. First brainstorm descriptive words and things that come to mind when you look at it. Then choose the 10 most essential words.



Nothing "Mu," Jim Hay, 2010

About Jim Hay

Jim Hay is a sculptor and textile artist living in rural Japan. He is originally from Michigan and graduated from Northwestern Michigan College before earning his Masters in Fine Arts from Michigan State University. Hay self-describes himself as an artist and poet who seeks to "figure out my own solutions" to life's problems.

Web Resources

- Jim Hay's website:
<http://www7.wind.ne.jp/jimhay/index.htm>
- Studio Art Quilt Associates Website:
<http://www.saqa.com/>
- Great Lakes Quilting Center:
<http://www.museum.msu.edu/glqc/>
- PBS' The Art of Quilting site:
<http://www.pbs.org/americquilts/aoq/index.html>