



**Exhibition**

***An Errant Line:***  
***Ann Hamilton / Cynthia Schira***  
Opening March 2, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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LAWRENCE, KS, February 12, 2013— The Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas has commissioned internationally recognized artists Ann Hamilton and Cynthia Schira to create large-scale installations in several of the Museum's galleries. A homecoming of sorts, the artists are returning to Lawrence, Kansas, to realize a collaborative exhibition, ***An Errant Line***, open to the public **March 2 to August 11, 2013**.

The title of the exhibition refers to a weaving technique in which the thread that has been winding over and under taut fibers floats away from the main body of the cloth and introduces another pattern, often decorative, that reconnects intermittently over the surface of the textile; there, on the surface, it makes an independent line. If its line is irregular, it can be referred to as "an errant line." The technique is a fitting metaphor for the relationship between the new works created for this exhibition and the Spencer Museum objects that served as inspiration. Each artist followed a thread, winding through the Museum's encyclopedic holdings and emerging with a new work.

Hamilton and Schira's decades-long conversation and shared textile history have shaped *An Errant Line*, in which the artists, guided by curator Susan Earle, respond to unique objects in the Museum's collection and distinctive features of the Museum's architecture. Drawn to legacies of the "hand-made" found in the Spencer Museum collections, including the recently integrated ethnographic collections from Spooner Hall, the artists used digital tools to cast a new lens onto the works they photographed, scanned, enlarged, and fragmented. The images culled from these processes became the basis for making new works. Schira, who is interested in notation systems, incorporates lines of writing into an enormous field of code on a large, computer-woven Jacquard cloth. Hamilton uses large digital prints on Japanese Gampi paper and cloth to render miniature objects gigantic. The materials both Schira and Hamilton employ contain the tactile intimacy inherent to cloth while working on an architectural scale that responds to the building's capacity to both reveal and conceal. Collaborating with current KU students, the artists also honor their former relationship as student and teacher at the University of Kansas, where Hamilton studied fiber arts in the late 1970's under Schira.

The artists' use of objects in the collection brings new life to the objects in poetic and unexpected ways. Hamilton's prints fill the Museum's Central Court with the haunting presence of the Spencer's rarely seen 18<sup>th</sup>-century Italian Presepio figures. Gigantic and at turns in-focus and out-of-focus, images of body parts and garments seem to reach— gesturally— across the space, reflecting Hamilton's ongoing interest in the relationship between the visual and the tactile. In the adjacent gallery, Schira has organized the space to address the museum activities of making, preserving, and exhibiting. Her labyrinth of monumental black-and-white textiles draws its abstracted imagery from textiles and paintings in the Spencer's collections. The result combines shoe buckles from the Presepio figures, hand-written documents, and woven fields of words.

The Spencer's famed Bechstein piano, played by Franz Lizst in 1886, will feature prominently in the unfolding exhibition, as will found texts about cloth and clothing. Live performances will interact with the artists' vision throughout the life of the exhibition; the complete calendar of events will be updated online at [spencerart.ku.edu](http://spencerart.ku.edu).

The public is invited to **join the artists for a conversation and opening reception for *An Errant Line: Ann Hamilton / Cynthia Schira* on Saturday, March 2, 6-8 PM**. The artists will speak in conversation with visiting lecturer Joan Simon from 6-6:45 PM; a reception will follow.

*An Errant Line* is supported by Art Works grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support comes from Emprise Financial Corporation, Linda Bailey, Dave & Gunda Hiebert, the Kress Foundation Department of Art History, the KU Department of Visual Art, and the Loomis family.

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### **About Ann Hamilton**

Ann Hamilton is widely recognized for large-scale, multi-media installations that respond directly to the sites they occupy. Her exhibitions fully immerse viewers in a poetic that is both visceral and literary. She has just completed a Park Avenue Armory installation, which became a cultural phenomenon in New York City, inspiring crowds of people to return daily to the site. She is currently a Distinguished Professor of Art at The Ohio State University. She received a BFA in textile design from the University of Kansas and an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University before going on to receive a MacArthur Fellowship, a Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship, a United States Artists Fellowship, and the Heinz Award. She was chosen to represent the United States at the 1991 Sao Paulo Bienal and at the 1999 Venice Biennale. Her installations have appeared in major museums worldwide, including the Guggenheim Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate Liverpool in Liverpool, England, and the Contemporary Art Museum in Kumamoto, Japan.

### **About Cynthia Schira**

Cynthia Schira is one of the contemporary textile world's most influential figures. She was one of the first to fully utilize the potential of computerization for the textile artist. She earned her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA from the University of Kansas, where she taught from 1976 to 1999. She is the recipient of two Craftsman Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, and an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2000 she was awarded a Gold Medal from the College of Fellows of the American Craft Council. Her work has been exhibited internationally for over forty years and is represented in major public collections. These include The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, the de Young Museum, the Museum Bellerive in Zurich, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

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### **Caption for Attached Image**

Artists Ann Hamilton (left) and Cynthia Schira (right) work with objects from the Spencer Museum of Art's collection in preparation for *An Errant Line*. Courtesy of the Spencer Museum of Art.

*Additional images are available upon request.*

**The Spencer Museum of Art** houses an internationally known collection that is deep and diverse, currently containing more than 36,000 artworks and artifacts in all media. The collection spans the history of European and American art from ancient to contemporary, and includes significant holdings of East Asian art. Areas of special strength include medieval panel painting and religious sculpture; the Kress Study Collection of early modern Italian painting; 19<sup>th</sup>-century American art and material culture; old master prints; photography; European, East Asian, and Indian textiles; American Indian pottery, beadwork, and jewelry; African sculpture; Japanese Edo-period prints; and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese painting. Admission is free and open to the public during gallery hours.

**Spencer Museum of Art**

The University of Kansas  
1301 Mississippi Street  
Lawrence 66045-7500  
785.864.4710  
[www.spencerart.ku.edu](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu)

**Gallery Hours**

Tues. 10 AM – 4 PM  
Wed. & Thurs. 10AM – 8PM  
Fri., & Sat. 10 AM – 4PM  
Sun. Noon – 4PM  
Closed Monday