TF: You’re not known for fiber work. How did that begin, and what does it mean to you to use textiles to paint?

I was a young child growing up in Colorado in the 1960s. I worshipped my mother, an interior designer. My palette is also influenced by my bedroom, with its hot pink shag carpet, and lime green and orange accents.

Do you view it as powerful?

I think so, although I’m not sure how to explain it. I like the idea of painting with fibers. Color can be confrontational. It’s very powerful.

Some people are repelled by these kinds of color schemes. Is that true for you?

I was pretty caught up in the idea of color as being related to homophobia, racism, sexism, and a host of other issues. That process led you to work in textiles—a few years ago you had an encaustic piece at the Berkeley Art Museum.

If you are hit on the head with a kaleidoscope, (does that mean you see stars?)

I haven’t unpacked it ever since. What does it mean to be hit on the head with something so beautiful, tragic, or profound that it wakes you up?

I’ve been unpacking it ever since. What does it mean to you to use textiles to paint?

I realized, “I like sickly sweet!” And I wondered, “Wow, what’s behind this? What’s going on with me?”

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Color does that mean you see stars?

I haven’t unpacked it ever since. What does it mean to be hit on the head with something so beautiful, tragic, or profound that it wakes you up? I wanted something that might speak to time and place. At first I wanted to create a wake-up call. What do I do, I wondered? I’m experiencing all the unhinged aspects of the death of a close friend, and here I am making work about optimism, inspiration, and action. Brain scientists have discovered that it can take many years and hard work to feel inspired or it can happen instantaneously in some way. I, like others have been inspired by a work of art that really moves me.

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I have always been drawn to textiles and seeing Miró’s tapestry, woven in his studio in Barcelona, saw the breadth of his work, and encountered his enormous, hairy, and ferociously well-woven tapestry. I had a visceral response and fell in love with textiles. I decided to pursue them. I would eventually like to integrate sculpture into my woven work. I really am a mixed-media artist. I am grateful to [BAMPFA Director] Larry Rinder for giving me this opportunity to work large. When he invited me to propose an idea for the Art Wall, I had to figure out how I could possibly fill that huge wall using my materials. When he invited me to propose an idea for the Art Wall, I had to figure out how I could possibly fill that huge wall using my materials. Honestly, I had no idea how it would work. It’s been a great and rewarding challenge. Of course now that I have finished, I’ve finally found my work.

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