

GALLERY555

OAKLAND MUSEUM of CALIFORNIA *at* CITY CENTER

Constance Harris



EXHIBITION DATES

January 5 – May 4, 2007

OPENING RECEPTION

January 18, 5 pm – 7 pm

GALLERY555

555 12th Street, Oakland, CA 94607

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555 12th Street, Oakland, CA 94607

Open Monday – Friday, 7 am – 6 pm; third Thursdays until 8 pm

Free and open to the public. BART, AC Transit and wheelchair accessible.

Constance Harris, *Counting Time*, 2006 – 2007, copper wire

Organized by the
Professional Services Division
of the Oakland Museum of California
510.238.6836



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Constance Harris

I think of knitting as a structural language akin to handwriting. It is an action, a performance that births a sculpture.

For San Francisco artist Constance Harris, knitting has become a writing system to be examined for hidden revelations. In the practice of handwriting analysis or Graphology, the stroke of the hand is said to reveal the personality traits of the writer. Additionally, the scientific practice of forensic document analysis can determine the authenticity of a signature or the authorship of a letter based on the principle that each of us writes in a unique way.

The site-specific installations, *Counting Time* and *Unraveled*, are made of thousands of feet of copper wire that Harris has painstakingly knitted; in the case of *Unraveled*, she then pulled apart each stitch. Unlike letters that symbolically represent what is expressible through language, the knitted wire forms a less precise, more mysterious imprint of the artist's persona.

Harris continues this self-examination in the paintings by using her brush to write words and phrases. The repetitive action of the artist as she layers each letter over one another on the same surface, lends the paintings a sense of abstract rhythm. Language itself is not the message. The significance of the writing is in its record of an action, rather than the meaning of a specific word.

Built up row by row, layer by layer, these pieces are the result of many hours of meticulous craftsmanship and intense labor. The viewer is presented with an elemental self-portrait of loops and twists, layers and texture.

Carin Adams

Museum Curatorial Specialist