

Josh Faught: Snacks, Supports, and Something to Rally Around

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS / JULY 10–AUGUST 11, 2013



Cover: *Nail Polish and Cookies*, 2013. Hand-dyed crocheted hemp, wool, cochineal, paint, lavender, wood-burned sign, sequins, spilled nail polish, and chocolate chip cookies on linen, 36 x 42 inches. **Interior:** *Greeting Card* (detail), 2013. Jacquard-woven Egyptian cotton, hand-dyed woven hemp, indigo, cochineal, silver thread, and greeting card on linen, 80 x 144 inches. **Back cover:** *Legs*, 2013. Disaster blanket, paint, denim, wicked witch legs, fabric, political pin, hemp, poplar, and spray paint, 49 x 73 inches. All images courtesy the artist and Lisa Cooley, New York. Photos: Jay Jones.



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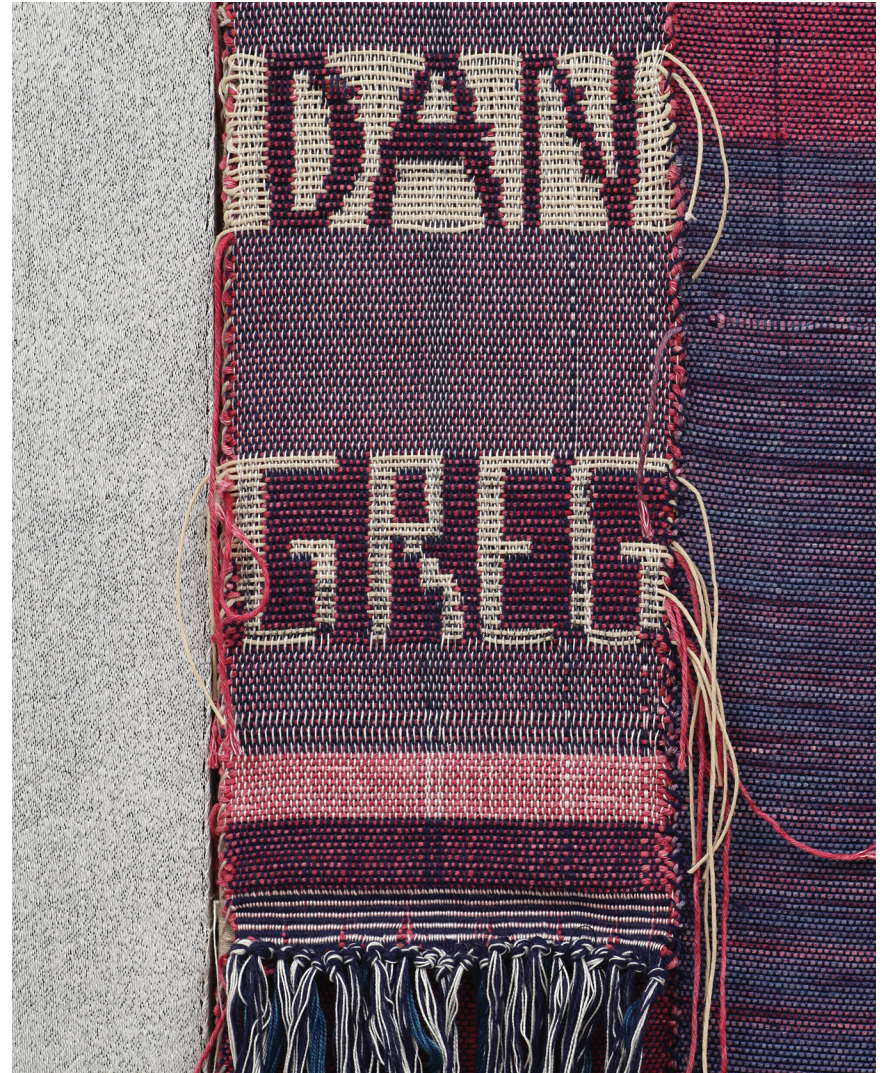
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San Francisco-based, St. Louis-born artist Josh Faught employs techniques such as crochet, weaving, and dyeing to create exuberant, large-scale textile works from everyday materials like nail polish, sequins, posters, buttons, and Xeroxed images. For this Front Room exhibition, Faught presents a new body of work that explores his ongoing interest in ideas of support, transition, and the passage of time. Several works allude to the artist's experiences growing up in Creve Coeur, a suburb bordering St. Louis. *Laugh Until the Mascara Runs* (2013) is a large textile triptych that features low-quality reproductions on woven jacquard (printed by photoweavers.com) of a page from a calendar and its accompanying illustration of a "Cathy"-like comic, which involves a "real-life intervention" against innocuous living. In *Legs* (2013), which is propped against the wall, Faught conflates the conditions of solace and threat, stitching onto a disaster blanket an abstract, quilt-like pattern, underneath which rests a pair of stuffed fabric legs evoking the Wicked Witch of the East from the film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

Snacks figure prominently in the exhibition, signifying both comfort and the rhythm of daily routines. Plastic replicas of cookies, nachos, popcorn, and other treats are affixed to several wall-mounted crocheted works, including *Nail Polish and Cookies* (2013), which features an image of a clock set to 5:00 PM. Faught renders the works at once witty and pathetic with wooden plaques emblazoned with banal inspirational slogans like, "When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on" (as in *Denny's on Olive*, 2013). In *Greeting Card* (2013) and *February (Coffee at MoKaBe's)* (2013), Faught uses reproductions of found documents (also on woven jacquard) from PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and Roger Troen, an early gay activist known for his outlandish (and sometimes unlawful) protest stunts. By abstracting these messages from their original contexts, Faught opens their language to new interpretations while retaining their political overtones. The notion of "something to rally around" in the exhibition's title is therefore purposely tentative, suggesting connections or bonds formed during our most incidental or unexpected encounters. Literally stitching humor as well as ambiguity into striking new forms, Faught points to our efforts to persevere or simply make do in the face of the continual uncertainties that plague contemporary life.

Josh Faught: Snacks, Supports, and Something to Rally Around is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Kelly Shindler, Associate Curator.

Running parallel to the Main Galleries, the Front Room operates at a different rhythm, featuring focused exhibitions of work by well-known and emerging artists. Support for CAM's exhibition program is provided by Jeanne and Rex Sinquefeld, William E. Weiss Foundation, and the Crawford Taylor Foundation. Support for the Front Room is provided by  Charter.



Josh Faught (b. 1979, St. Louis) lives and works in San Francisco. He has had recent solo exhibitions at Lisa Cooley, New York (2012, 2010); Western Bridge, Seattle (2010); and the Seattle Art Museum (2009). His work has been featured in group exhibitions at University Art Museum, Albany (2012); Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York (2011); Portland Museum of Contemporary Craft (2009); and Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago (2007), among others. Faught is the recipient of the SECA Art Award, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012), the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant (2011) and the Betty Bowen Award, Seattle Art Museum (2009). He holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is currently an Assistant Professor at the California College of Arts.