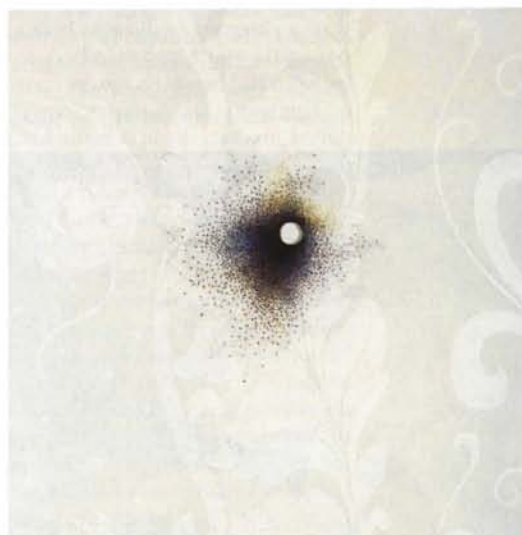


these earlier works, *Flaxen*, 2013, a square of linen covered in a web of hair and thread, hung behind the front desk at Rhona Hoffman. In Wilson's hands, hair is rendered both erotic and abject, a specimen of cultural identity detached from the social body. In the "Dispersions" series, 2013, discrete strands, which are intertwined with thread to build up an embroidered palette of kaleidoscopic color, elicit curiosity as to their source. We might wonder the same about the colored threads: Where did they come from?

This question, implicit in the constellation of colored fibers, implicates a world beyond these delicate drawings—an economy of foreign industry, factory labor, and oblivious consumption. Much of Wilson's work from the past decade has explored similar aspects of globalization and the sweatshop economy. For instance, in *Wind Up: Walking the Warp*, 2008, nine women, including Wilson, spent six days performing the labor of fabricating a warp, and for *Local Industry*, 2010, the Knoxville Museum of Art in Tennessee was converted into a weaving factory and museum visitors into workers. But while pieces such as these examined issues of global industry in relation to fabrication processes, "Dispersions" identifies so-called raw materials (textile, colored thread, and hair) as also implicated in this larger system of inequities, having been manufactured via similar industrial means. If craft and DIY aesthetics have traditionally been understood as being in opposition to industry, and as a way of circumventing or even subverting it, Wilson's textile drawings challenge this relationship.

Wilson does better than to just recycle familiar tools of postmodernism, such as the abject and the readymade, to lodge a critique. Pairing Conceptualism with the language of craft and textile art, she creates pictures of socioeconomic systems, sewing together what the artist has called "micro and macro worlds." This project is advanced through a variety of formal mechanisms. First, nearly all of the pieces of used cloth have frayed, jagged edges that call attention to the fact that they were torn from a larger bolt. Second, the embroidered apertures frame the white mats underneath, incorporating the support into the pictures themselves. These works not only gesture toward abstract global systems beyond the gallery but also call attention to the immediate situation of their display. The drawings, floating within white metal frames, are mounted closely side by side, effectively wrapping together the storefront gallery's three walls and emphasizing the works' connectedness. But seriality is punctuated by specificity. The repeated theme of the pictures is rendered unique in each work through compositional particularities regarding the kind of fabric and its patterning, the size of the apertures and their placement, and chromatic variations in the density and depth of embroidery. Through her careful crafting, Wilson describes the interwoven nature of the series, its exhibition, and the industrial economy as part of a unified system. This is the real success of "Dispersions"—its capacity to stitch together the micro and the macro, and to hold them both in focus, simultaneously.

—Maggie Taft



Anne Wilson, *Dispersions (no. 7)* (detail), 2013, thread, hair, cloth, metal frame, 25 1/4 x 25 1/4 x 1 1/2". From the series "Dispersions," 2013.

CHICAGO

Anne Wilson

RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

"Man can never expect to start from scratch," Marcel Duchamp told Chicago gallerist Katharine Kuh in 1962. "He must start from ready-made things like even his own mother and father." Anne Wilson's twenty-six *Dispersions*, in which she employs common craft materials to visceral and socially suggestive ends, echo this axiom. Each of these works consists of a piece of used white cloth, such as a handkerchief or a fragment of damask tablecloth, pulled taut and punctured by a perfectly circular hole circumscribed with embroidery sewn in irregular formations. These are stitched not only with colored thread but also with human hair, a familiar fiber in Wilson's oeuvre. Previously, the artist used it to repair torn textiles or to blanket them; as a reminder of