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Textile Meditations: Mary & Friends - An Upcoming Exhibition with Mary Fisher

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I recently visited activist and artist, Mary Fisher, down in her West Palm Beach studio. I was familiar with her vast philanthropy and fierce advocacy for the HIV community and felt honored to see another personal side to her. As music from the 60's filled what felt to be her creative sanctuary, I spent the day watching her creative process as she prepares for her upcoming exhibit and was moved by her talent, vulnerability and kindness.

At a glance, you notice Mary's sparkling blue eyes and petite stature, never knowing that she is a force to be reckoned with. For the past 25 years, she has been publicly fighting for those who aren't able to fight for themselves; more privately she has been working as a distinguished artist in diverse media including photography, sculpture, prints, beading, quilting and fiber art. She has earned a reputation for combining and juxtaposing materials in groundbreaking mixed media works earning special acclaim for this approach. Through the years, her art has revealed a soul that greets real-life agony with quiet grace while it has earned the respect of global textile design leaders, including four of Fisher's friends whose works will be exhibited with hers in an upcoming one-of-a-kind show. Fisher will exhibit a body of work entitled "*Words to Silence*" in this exhibition.



IMAGE BY KRIS TAMBURELLO

Fisher along with artists Jan Beaney, Jean Littlejohn, Jane Dannelwold and Marsha Christo will explore the art of textile construction, each engaging the power of color, shape, size and texture to evoke a spiritual response ranging from struggle to celebration – *Textile Meditations: Mary & Friends*.

In the past, Fisher often infused her art with words. Some were quotations taken from her memorable speeches or books she has written, others named subjects of photographs. Her highly publicized exhibition, “Messages,” which was banned from the Senate in 1995, featured a coffin with the words, “Let us unite in life rather than death.” Now, nearly 40 years later she is finishing pieces in a variety of materials without words; a place filled with silence. After the death of her mother, Fisher took some time away to be on her own to grieve - “I discovered the authority and the glory of silence. The pain I thought I could not stand was relieved by nothing less than a sense of quieting, divine love. I discovered what I once almost knew, that listening in silence can feed the soul.”



IMAGE BY KRIS TAMBURELLO

“Destruction to Ascension” - The angels watch the city’s demise. They’ll not tread among the smoking evil of those who destroy. But we-souls who hover and lift - we rise to see regeneration. Mother Earth’s soft green reappears, delivering hope to a dark and brutal time.

A theme throughout her pieces is the appearance of the human form - some a face, others a discernible vacant figure. This stems from the numerous encounters and friendships she has formed on her AIDS journey. All the work in her upcoming exhibit feels powerful, as if you have a window into Fisher's past, experiencing her feelings of love and loss right alongside her.

The exhibition kicks off with an opening reception on Friday, January 19th from 6:00 – 9:00 PM with Artist Talks from 7:00 – 7:45 PM. On Saturday, January 20th at 5:00 PM, Fisher will give a keynote speech entitled “*Collaborative Creativity.*” Two dynamic workshops are offered by the Armory Art Center and taught by Jane Dunnewold, Jan Beaney, and Jean Littlejohn on January 19-21, 2018.



IMAGE BY KRIS TAMBURELLO