Swarthmore College is pleased to present Responses to Gee’s Bend, an exhibition curated by Andrea Packard, List Gallery Director; Alicia Ruley-Nock, independent quilt maker; and Susan Dreher, Visual Initiatives and Exhibitions Librarian at Swarthmore College. Responses to Gee’s Bend features 17 artists from throughout the United States who are inspired by the aesthetic legacy and historic importance of Gee’s Bend. Selected from a large number of individuals who responded to a call for entries, the featured artists designed new works specifically for McCabe Library’s Lower Atrium space, where they will be displayed in the context of an installation of quilts loaned by the family of noted Gee’s Bend quilter Mary Lee Bendolph. Responses to Gee’s Bend will also feature two quilts made in spring 2018 by Swarthmore College students enrolled in the course Black Art: Quilting as History and Culture, taught by Alicia Ruley-Nock and Professor of History Allison Dorsey.

Responses to Gee’s Bend will also include WPA-era photographs of Gee’s Bend by Arthur Rothstein as well as photographs taken by Swarthmore College students Maisie Luo ’19 and Catherine Williams ’19, who conducted oral history interviews in Gee’s Bend in May 2018. Excerpts from their interviews will be made available and collected in a forthcoming catalog. The importance of sharing such histories will be the topic of Gee’s Bend: Personal Narratives and Artistic Legacies, a free and public panel discussion scheduled for Friday, September 21, 10 a.m.—Noon in Scheuer Room, Kohlberg Hall, Swarthmore College. The panel will be followed 1:30–4:00 p.m. by Quilting and Conversation, a gathering in McCabe Library lobby. Visitors are invited to enjoy refreshments, quilting demonstrations, and informal conversation with Mary Lee Bendolph, Essie Bendolph Pettway, Rubin Bendolph Jr., and more than a dozen other visitors from Gee’s Bend.
Featured Artists:
Alicia Ruley-Nock
Betty Leacraft
Michael Olszewski
Allyson Allen
Cassandra Stancil Gunkel
Chawne Kimber
Christina Johnson
Denise Roberts
Jas Mardis
Juandamarie Gikandi
Katie Baldwin
Melissa Maddonni Haims
Polly Dressler Bech
Rachael Dorr
Sheryl Kessler
Victoria Findlay Wolfe
Yixuan Maisie Luo

Victoria Findlay Wolfe, *Full Circle Moments*, 2018

RELATED PUBLIC EVENTS

Panel Discussion, Film Screening, and Reception for *Piece Together: The Quilts of Mary Lee Bendolph*
Thursday, September 20, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Lang Performing Arts Center Cinema
Public Reception 5:30-7:00 p.m., List Gallery

Gee’s Bend: Personal Narratives and Artistic Legacies
Friday, September 21, 10:00 a.m.—Noon, Scheuer Room, Kohlberg Hall
Panelists: Gee’s Bend residents and members of Mary Lee Bendolph’s family including Essie Bendolph Pettway and Rubin Bendolph Jr.; Yixuan Maisie Luo ’19 and Catherine Williams ’19; Ellen M. Alvord, Weatherbie Curator of Education & Academic Programs, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum
Moderator: Andrea Packard, List Gallery Director

Quilting and Conversation
Friday, September 21, 1:30-4:00 p.m., McCabe Library Atrium
An informal public gathering with quilters and other residents from Gee’s Bend

Public Reception and Curators’ Talk for *Responses to Gee’s Bend* and *Piece Together: The Quilts of Mary Lee Bendolph*
Tuesday, October 23, 4:30-6:00 p.m., McCabe Library Atrium

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