

Quilt Visions 2020

Meet Mary Pal
Toronto, Ontario Canada



www.marypaldesigns.com

Artwork on Display

Bella

Mary Pal is a Canadian fiber artist best known for her cheesecloth portraits, based on a technique she pioneered over a decade ago. Her work has been exhibited and collected throughout the world, and published in numerous books and magazines.

With over 40 years of teaching experience, she is a sought-after and popular instructor who enjoys sharing her knowledge and skills with her students around the world, either across Canada and the US or in such far-flung destinations as Brazil, China, Great Britain, New Zealand and Taiwan. A past Director on the Board of the international organization, Studio Art Quilt Associates, and a current member of Contemporary Textile Studio Co-operative in Toronto, Mary is an enthusiastic promoter of the growing fibre art movement.

Artist Statement

My process involves saturating cheesecloth with adhesive and sculpting it into forms that are ultimately machine-stitched to a background textile.

Cheesecloth for me represents the very essence of textiles – the most minimal configuration of warp and weft. Its fluidity permits me to control opacity, to depict light and transparency, to play with chiaroscuro. I am thus able to sculpt a two-dimensional representation that nonetheless reflects a unique depth and texture. And further, I am free to explore the connection between process and materials and the way that they relate to my subject matter, in this case, the texture and vulnerability of a living creature, in this case, one with a very curly coat and a cheeky gaze.

From afar, a viewer might be intrigued by a first impression of this unusual and somewhat striking portrait of a goat. Stepping nearer brings them considerably closer than they typically get to a farm animal, able to study the piercing gaze of this particularly impish creature. Viewers who approach closer still reach that zone of intimacy, a proximity we use only with those we know well, a private yet shared space. But suddenly there is a surprising perspective shift – once directly in front of the work, the viewer discovers that the subject disappears, replaced by the complex interweaving of thread on cloth, so mesmerizing they are tempted to reach out and touch it.