

◇ AGGRESSIVELY ELOQUENT

By [Justin Beachler](#) April 29, 2010

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A review of Elana Herzog: *Dewarped* and *Unweft*



Elana Herzog, installation view of "Untitled," (Seams), site-specific installation for the Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, found fabric, staples, dimensions variable, 2009. Photo: Kevin Sisemore, courtesy of the museum. For more views, click the image to go to the museum's archive.

[Daum Museum of Contemporary Art](#)

Sedalia, Missouri

October 2 – December 13, 2009

One room of work on view until May 16, 2010

From a distance, the remaining [Elana Herzog](#) installation, staged in the upper gallery of the Daum Museum, resembles a hard-line, minimalistic, wall painting. However, as each step takes the viewer closer, it is revealed that these hard lines of color — stretching from floor to ceiling — are not, after all, lines of paint on the wall. Instead, they are actually various found colorful fabrics stapled directly onto the gallery wall itself.



Elana Herzog, detail of "Untitled," (Seams), site-specific installation for the Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, found fabric, staples, dimensions variable, 2009. Photo: Kevin Sisemore, courtesy of the museum

An even closer examination reveals that these fabrics are frayed on either side of the staples, ripped and torn, their eloquent lines created through violent physical action. Removing the fabric is a destructive act, and the surfaces of these walls bear the damage that such repetitive penetration by hundreds of industrial-sized staples inflicts. Not only are the holes from the staples visible, but pieces of the gallery walls themselves have been torn out.

Herzog's installation suggests the gallery space as a pale white room where colorful fibers have forced their way through the walls via the stapled-shut cracks on its surface. This work is conceptual, emotional, and gutsy. It is an aggressive alternative to most fiber art, which too often focuses on craftiness and the technicalities of the fabric. Herzog's work wrestles with the association between female stereotypes and the angst of fiber, yet it is executed in an ambiguous way. It is left to the viewer to determine whether Herzog's art speaks about the textiles themselves, the association between fiber and the female gender, or the remnants of history left behind from the creative, yet destructive, process. Either way, Herzog bestows upon the viewer a simple joy, inspired by beauty of her art. Its meaning — possibly dark and brutal — is left open to conjecture by each individual viewer.