

# Soft Sculpture

Squishy, Bouncy, Plump, Puffy

# Overview

Soft sculpture is a type of sculpture made using cloth, foam rubber, plastic, paper, fibers and similar material that are supple and nonrigid. They can also be made out of natural materials if combined to make a nonrigid object.

- <https://ago.ca/learn/ago-makes/soft-sculpture>

# Claes Oldenburg

The best-known exponent was Claes Oldenburg whose giant sculptures of foodstuffs—such as **ice-cream sundaes, hamburgers, or slices of cake**—were made from stuffed vinyl and canvas. Possibly the earliest example of Soft art had been Marcel Duchamp's typewriter cover exhibited on a stand of 1916.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2qxxWmdlrs>

<https://walkerart.org/magazine/upside-down-city>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rHKorwuxco>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx38g\\_IWdl8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx38g_IWdl8)









# Eva Hesse

Eva Hesse was a German-born American sculptor known for her pioneering work in materials such as latex, fiberglass, and plastics. She is one of the artists who ushered in the postminimal art movement in the 1960s.

Despite material changes, *Expanded Expansion* still holds tremendous power and is a testament to a pioneering artist who, despite her untimely death in 1970, left a body of work that pushed sculpture beyond Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, and has deeply influenced the work of younger artists.

Curated by Lena Stringari, Deputy Director and Andrew W. Mellon Chief Conservator, with the collaboration of Richard Armstrong, Director, and Esther Chao, Objects Conservator, [Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion](https://www.guggenheim.org/video/the-afterlife-of-eva-hesses-expanded-expansion) is on view through October 17, 2022.

<https://www.guggenheim.org/video/the-afterlife-of-eva-hesses-expanded-expansion>















# Dorothea Tanning

Recently on display in Tate Modern's [\*Surrealism Beyond Borders\*](#), Dorothea Tanning's soft sculpture *Pincushion to Serve as Fetish* is an intriguing object. If you walk round it, the pincushion radically changes shape to reveal different orifices and protuberances so that it might resemble a bagpipe from one angle, a dwarf elephant from another, or a human organ from yet another. Made from black velvet, the white circular lines describing its swells, indents and uplifting form recall tailor's chalk, while the sewing pins stuck in its flanks make one think of a pincushion. Its size, shape and the dichotomy of the title suggest some ritualistic juju.

In 2000, Dorothea Tanning (1910 – 2012) wrote:

*"Maybe a pincushion is a far cry from a fetish. A fetish is something not exactly or always desirable in sculpture, being a superstitious if not actually shamanistic object; and yet, to my mind it's not so far from a pincushion – after all, pins are routinely stuck in both.... [it's] Not an image but bristling with images. And pins."*

- <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/dorothea-tanning-2024/learn-about-100-years-dorothea-tanning>



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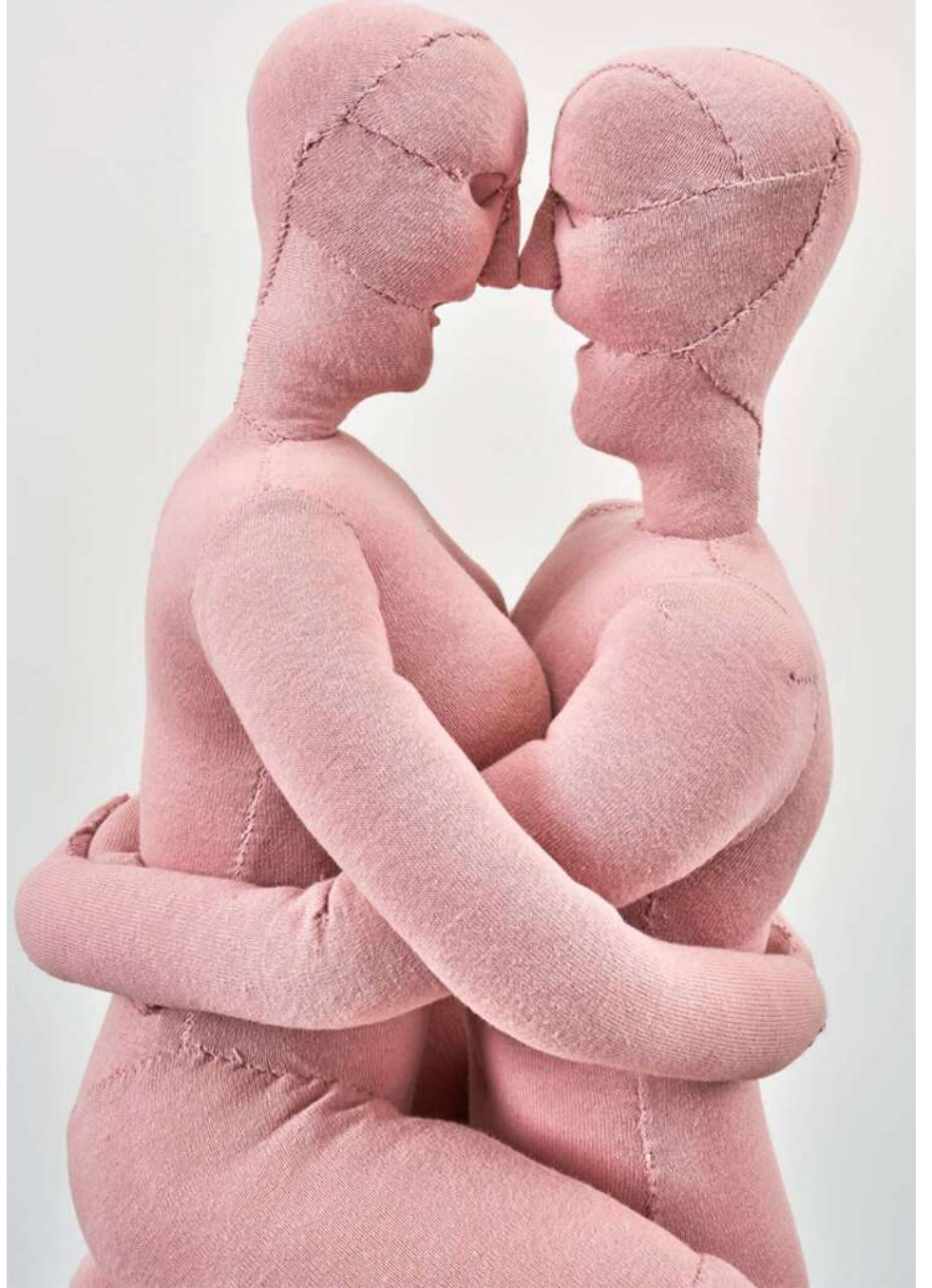
# Louise Bourgeois

Over a period beginning in the mid-1990s and continuing up until her death in 2010, Louise Bourgeois created an astonishingly inventive, and often psychologically harrowing, range of sculptures using domestic textiles including clothing, linens, terry cloth towels and tapestry fragments, often sourced from her own household and personal history.

While these late works explored some of the motifs and concerns of her earlier art – sexuality, familial trauma, the ambivalence of human relationships – they also introduced a fuller articulation of the figure and face, as well as an expanded and at times more intimate emotional register, due in part to the personal character and softness of their materials. Primarily focused on the female form, Bourgeois's panoply of soft bodies and orphaned anatomical parts can be disconcertingly confrontational while also conveying a sharp-edged poignance, especially when invoking abject and distressed states of being.

In a broad sense, these fabric sculptures continued the unswerving exploration of ambiguity that comprised the core aesthetic strategy of the artist's earlier oeuvre. Bourgeois's description of a work from the 1960s as being 'simple in outline but elusive and ambivalent in its references' aptly applies to most of her late sculpture as well. A carnivalesque vein that veers from the macabre to the fantastic also weaves in and out of these late sculptures; amidst notes of loss and desolation, one encounters flashes of mordant humour.

- <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/louise-bourgeois-the-architecture-of-memory-works-from-a-private-collection>











# Trevon Latin

Large, life-sized doorways and entrances line [Perrotin](#)'s New York gallery. Reaching up to seven feet tall, these patchwork planes are made from patterned, sequined, and solid-colored fabrics that evoke the stained glass windows of Christian cathedrals, their curved architectural shapes mimicking the windows and archways of the religious sanctuaries.

The work of artist [Trevon Latin](#) ([previously](#)), these reliefs can also be seen as portals. Latin is visionary and corrective, using quilted, mixed-media forms to amend historical narratives and envision new realities. Part of their solo show *TOYMAKER: Big Blu & the Weeping Walls!!* these works reflect a world that welcomes the fluidity of gender and sexuality and where queer love and joy reign.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzdikDOEAQM>





















# Max Colby

Max Colby is an artist known for her work in textiles, sculpture, installation, embroidery, and painting. Her work highlights precarity and vulnerability through a consistent investigation of ritual objects, most often, funereal.

<https://vimeo.com/92581997>

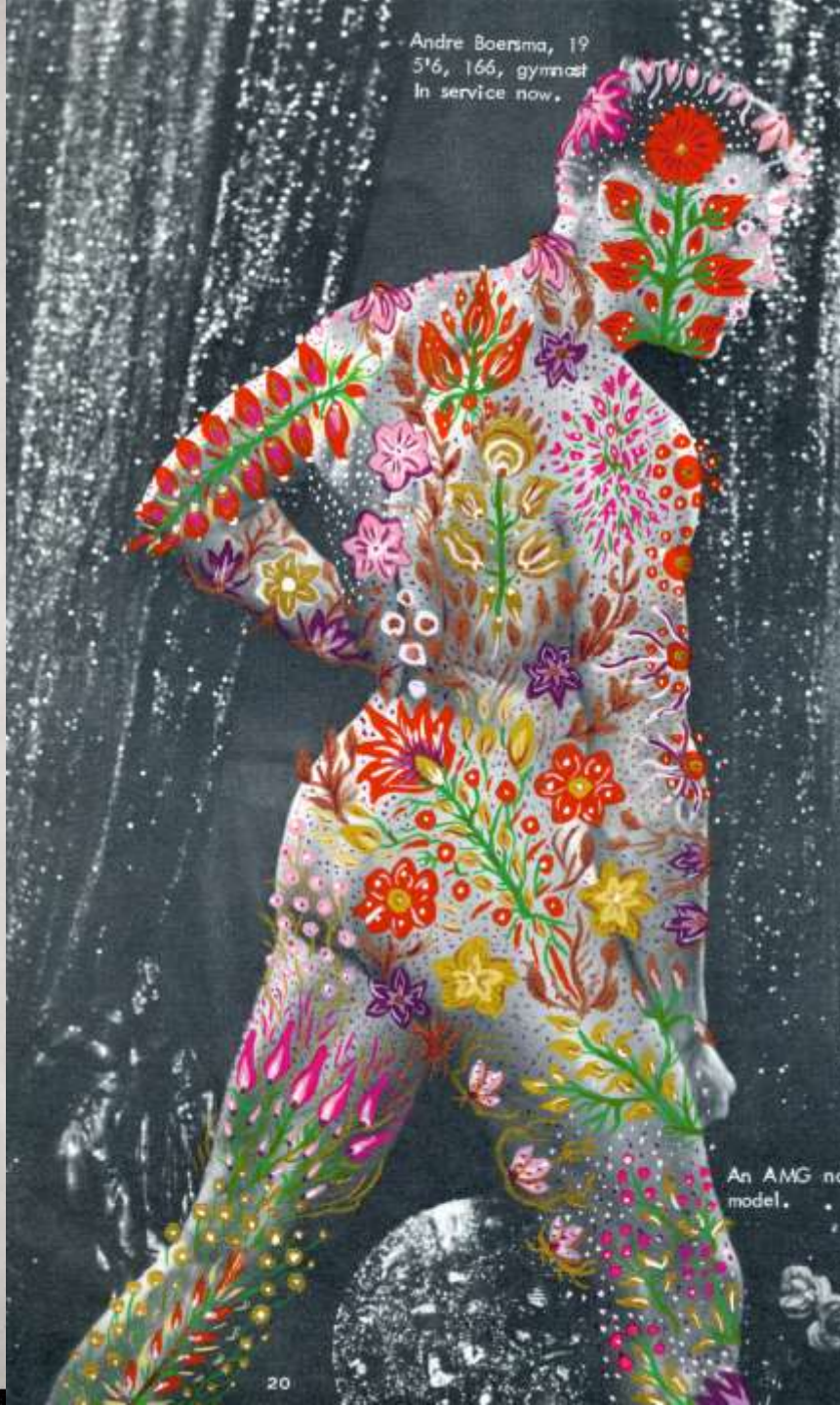
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mwKGcm3TfY>











# Mariko Kusumoto

Japanese artist and designer [Mariko Kusumoto](#) ([previously](#)) shapes gossamer coral and sea creatures from soft fibers like polyester, nylon, and cotton. Embedded with tiny ripples or airy pockets, the standalone sculptures and wearables are translucent renditions of lifeforms, and their delicate compositions correspond with the fragility of the subject matter. The Boston-based artist tends to cluster the individual pieces into larger works, creating sprawling reefs and diverse ecosystems brimming with color and texture.

Kusumoto is currently preparing for a solo exhibition next November at [Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens](#) in Delray Beach, Florida, and until then, you can find more of her ethereal works on [Instagram](#).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpRWvpHgAuY>

















# Mark Jenkins

Mark Jenkins is an American artist who makes sculptural street installations. Jenkins' practice of street art is to use the "street as a stage" where his sculptures interact with the surrounding environment including passersby who unknowingly become actors. His installations often draw the attention of the police

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXLPz\\_CwNIU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXLPz_CwNIU)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBQAVqZolK8>



















# Lilah Rose

It took me a long time to plant my feet as an artist—they were pretty cold. A few years ago, while I was still living in Olympia, Washington, I was apprenticing with a costume designer and hoping to follow her into a career of challenging, elaborate work for theater and opera productions. Before that, I was living in Chicago going to film school and crossing my fingers that knowing how to use a camera would somehow parlay into production design for something fun and weird like another Pee-Wee's Playhouse. And before that, I was at a boarding school outside of Detroit with a distinguished weaving/textile program, aspiring to take to the floor loom but learning fast that a floor loom is actually a big, beautiful computer—noble, but too hard for me. That whole school was pretty damn hard, but above all what I choose to remember from that time is the day-to-day experience of living in a place so completely, inherently informed by design. The Loja Saarinen work I passed every day on that campus is still some of the most beautiful I've ever seen, and I wasn't even in a museum.

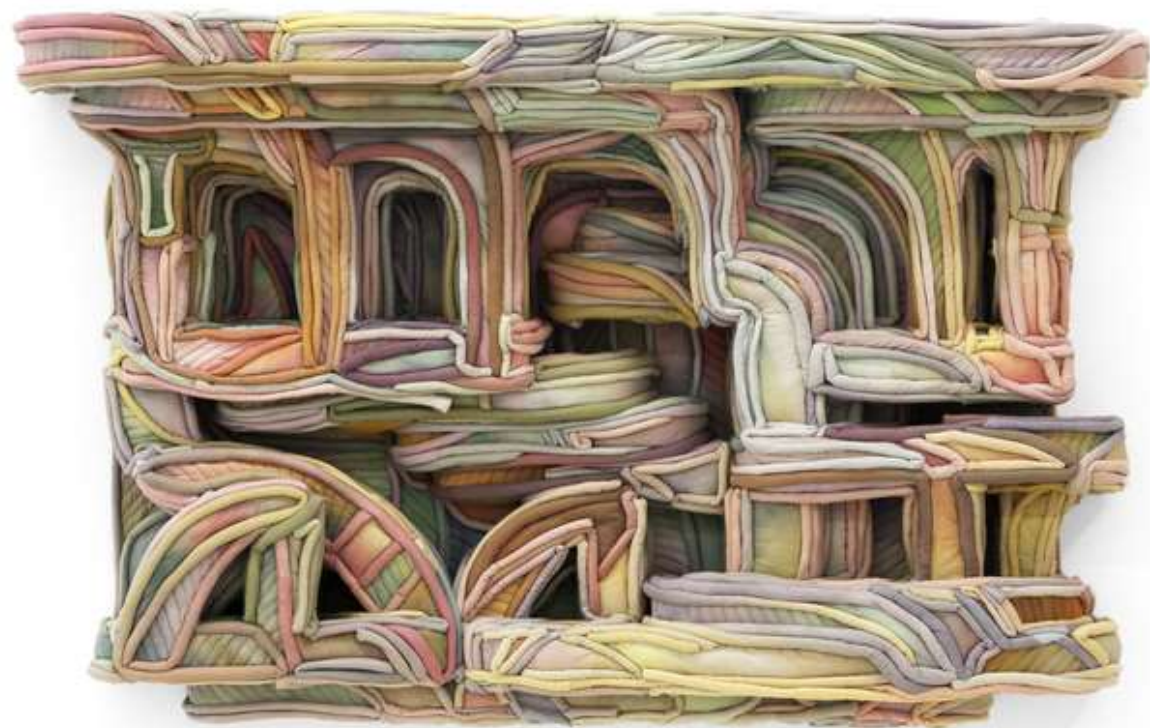
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOleKk0mdNI>











# Yarrenty Artists

The Yarrenty artists have been gaining recognition for their soft sculptures made from recycled woolen blankets dyed with local plants and even rusted metal found in and around Alice Springs. The women make figures such as spirits, insects and reptiles, as well as larger animals such as camels and birds. Embellished with brightly colored hand embroidery and sometimes feathers or beads, they exude a unique quirkiness which is their trademark feature.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= znIQI-GYGk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znIQI-GYGk)













# Erica Gray

*“Initially influenced by garment design and construction processes, Gray utilizes similar principles to produce soft sculpture and installation art. Her art is often a reference to personal experiences as well as concerns for humanity, our environment and the treatment of animals.*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR1YWnoMhk8>



















# Benjamin Shine

Benjamin Shine is a multidisciplinary artist most known for his pioneering work in tulle, which centers on ideas of energy, impermanence and the relationship between the spiritual and the superficial. Works have been exhibited by arts institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Arts and Design New York, The Crafts Council UK and The London Design Museum. Clients and collaborations include The MET, Givenchy, Maison Margiela, Bergdorf Goodman, Beyonce, Barclays Wealth, Vogue and Google. Benjamin has also won a number of awards including the Red Dot Design Award, The Enterprising Young Brit Award and the Arts Export Award in Australia. Videos of his work have amassed over 250 million views via publications including New York Magazine and The Huffington Post.

From Bergdorf Goodman and Givenchy to Sotheby's — and across much of the internet — artist Benjamin Shine's ethereal work with tulle has made him perhaps the foremost fabric sculptor in practice today. We met with Shine in his studio to see, and try to understand, his process.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLLOIB2WF\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLLOIB2WF_Y)





CUT









# Megan Whitmarsh

Megan Whitmarsh is an American artist living in Los Angeles, California. Whitmarsh received an MFA from the University of New Orleans and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute, both in painting.

<https://rvca.com/anp/artists/megan-whitmarsh.html>











# Isabel Berglund

The works of Isabel Berglund unfold as sculptural objects subjugated to an intimate investigation of material, color, and space. Berglund's preferred media is the handknitted yarn which she varies and processes with a focus on the material's aesthetic and tactile qualities. By connecting the knitting of untraditional materials with found objects, she creates a dislocation between the timely object, the historic craft, and the timeless choice of material. Berglund's works appear fluent in form; whether the knitting is presented alone or as an organic elongation of found objects, the works contain several elements and layers that slowly develop in the gaze of the viewer. The textile empathizes Berglund's use of color and the creation of space. Often, she works with a simple color scheme that brings forward the surface and accentuates shape and density. With small spaces in between the masks, she gives attention to tactile qualities and details. The knitting appears strong and energetic, often with loose ends fluttering in all directions. Berglund's works appear as animated objects who are brought to life through organic expressions and processed shapes. A dialogue is played out. Berglund assigns titles to her works which become an entrance to a large, conceptual universe. This indicates that during the process of creating, she lets herself get carried away by the materials she works with. The sensibility of the thread contains a presence of interaction; process, time, and hand are present in the work.

- <https://www.isabelberglund.dk/sculpture>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLoDCoalzaM>
- <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10160432969517037>













# Janet Echelman

Janet Echelman is an American sculptor and fiber artist. Her sculptures have been displayed as public art, often as site-specific installations.

<https://www.echelman.com/project/skies-painted-with-unnumbered-sparks>

























# JooYoung Choi

JooYoung Choi is a Houston-based Korean American multidisciplinary visual artist working with paintings, sculpture, and video to portray the mythology of a fictional world called the Cosmic Womb.

<https://crystalbridges.org/blog/state-of-the-art-2020-update-crystal-bridges-acquires-artworks-and-a-new-vr-experience/>

<https://www.jooyoungchoi.com/about>













# Lucy Sparrow

Felt artist Lucy Sparrow is one of the most exciting and original artists working in the UK today. Her practice is quirky yet subversive, luring the audience in with her soft, tactile, colourful felt creations before hitting them hard with her comment on subjects from the demise of the traditional high street to censorship in pornography.

<https://www.kickstarter.art/lucy>

- <https://www.sewyour soul.co.uk/inside-felt-hq/>













# Kate Jenkins

If you like knitting, crocheting, food, art or ANY combination of them, you will LOVE this post! I follow [Harbour City](#) on Instagram (it's a premier shopping mall in Hong Kong) and saw this amazing exhibit called The Art Of Love Bakery. Displayed were loaves of bread, hot cross buns, gingerbread men, croissants, bagels, pretzels, pies, cakes and tarts ... ok, I'll stop there! Just looking at everything made me hungry! Well these marvelous creations are FOOD INSPIRED textile art! The artist is Kate Jenkins. She is from the UK. She learned to knit and crochet when she was eight years old. She has a BA in Fashion & Textiles from the University of Brighton. She has worked with fashion labels from Missoni, Donna Karan, Ralph Lauren etc. She creates these 3D pieces using wool rather than painting or drawing. Her creations are absolutely amazing. Below are some pictures from the Harbour City Exhibition. I've also included two videos of her work as well. Her artwork is available for purchase [on her website](#).

<https://viking.tv/tv/this-week-on-viking-tv/tuesdays/alastair-miller-in-conversation-with-textile-artist-kate-jenkins>

- <https://www.averysweetblog.com/2020/01/kate-jenkins-art-of-love-bakery-at.html>



SMOKED  
HADDOCK  
&  
COD  
FILLETS

FRESHLY  
CAUGHT  
CRABS

COOKED  
PRAWNS  
FRESHLY  
SEQUINED

SCALLOPS  
MUSSELS  
CLAMS

RED  
MULLET  
PLAICE  
MACKEREL

TODAY  
SPECIAL  
AT LUNCH  
SALMON

LOCALLY  
CAUGHT  
HARDINES







# Nastassja Swift

Nastassja Swift is a **multi-disciplinary artist and owner of D for Dolls**. She received her Bachelors degree of Fine Art from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) with a major in Painting & Printmaking and a minor in Craft & Material Studies.

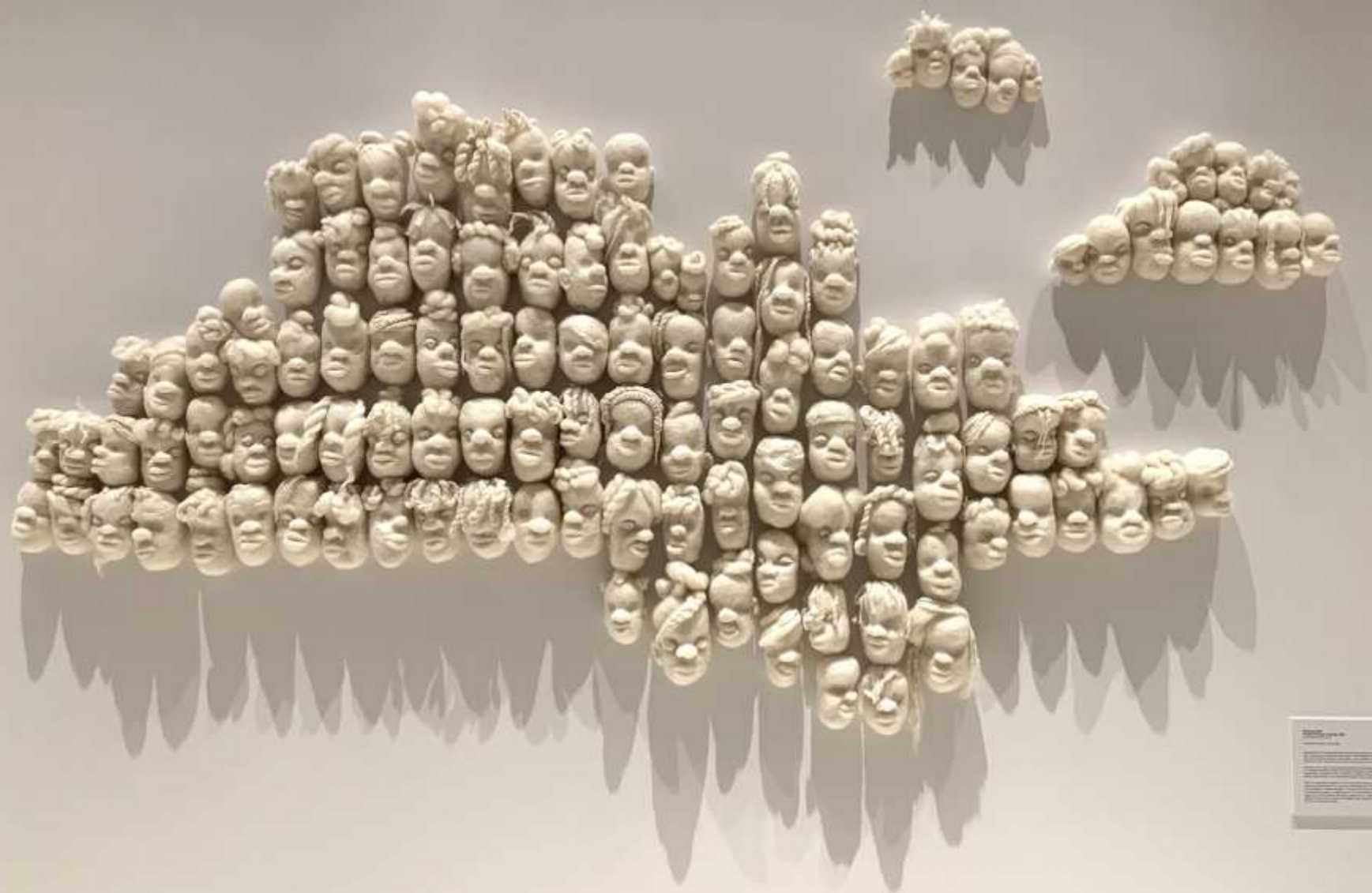
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA9Ulw6G7c0&t=10s>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/nastassja-swift-lza4un/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzwdtLSB9X0>







Small informational plaque with text, likely describing the artwork.





# Jannick Deslauriers

Montreal-based textile artist [Jannick Deslauriers](#) builds elaborate and often life-size pieces of machinery by sewing together yards of silk, aluminum mesh, and tulle. Each fabric she uses is transparent, which speaks to the hidden politics lurking behind commonly used objects and goods. One of her latest works, *Sentence, souffle et linceul*, is a full-scale replica of a demolished car. The translucent vehicle is slumped to the right, its broken form further exaggerated through a composition of soft and easily manipulated materials.

In the months before the opening of her exhibition, Imaginary Being, Jannick Deslauriers was working in situ on her new installation, Phasmes. An immersive piece blending steel, textiles, beeswax and ashes was gradually taking shape on the ground floor of the 1700 La Poste. Director Bruno Boulianne and his team followed the artist all through this process. In this short documentary, Deslauriers tells of her inspirations and her reflections, and explains what lead her to this shift in her production. We now invite you to discover the artist at work.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2087412441479968>

<https://1700laposte.com/en/jannick-deslauriers-isabelle-de-mevius>

<https://1700laposte.com/en/documentary-jannick-deslauriers-imaginary-being>













# Assignment Suggestions...

- Stuff old stockings or clothes, arrange and photograph them
- Make a stuffy of something in your home by cutting out fabric, burlap or felt and hot-glue or sew it together.
- Create a temporary soft sculpture and animate it with wind or a fan. Photograph it.
- Experiment with stuffing—crumpled plastic or paper.