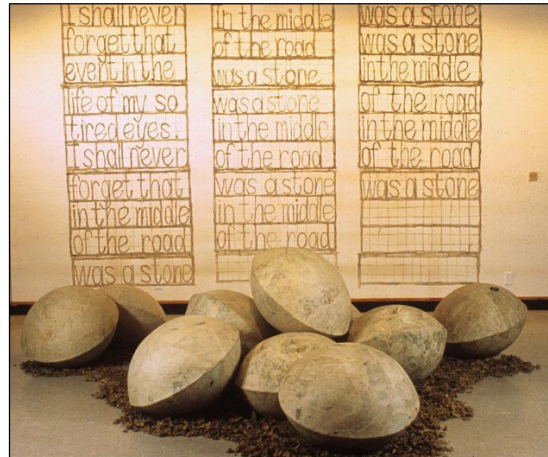


***The Language of Objects: New Works by Jane Birdsall-Lander and Jo Stealey***  
**Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists at the Sheldon Art Galleries, St. Louis**  
**September 25, 2009 – January 16, 2010**



Organized in conjunction with the citywide **Innovations in Textiles 8** celebration, *The Language of Objects* features new work made specifically for the Sheldon Art Galleries exhibition by sculptors Jane Birdsall-Lander and Jo Stealey. Birdsall-Lander and Stealey both use language as a point of reference in their sculpture and describe their work as “visual poetry.” In their installation at the Sheldon Art Galleries, Birdsall-Lander and Stealey use language as a conceptual catalyst as well as a textural and/or a contextual component.

Stealey’s work with language conceptually touches upon both the mundane and the sublime. In her cast paper rocks, trees and word totems of mulberry pulp she underscores how objects and words mediate our experience of the world through fundamental tensions that shape how we structure and find meaning in our daily lives. Text becomes image and image becomes narrative in these floor sculptures. Using the origin of language as a source, Birdsall-Lander creates wall pieces that combine used and abandoned tools with industrial waxed linen to make three dimensional hybrid forms that function separately as visual poems and taken together, comprise an idiosyncratic sign system that she has titled *Bound Alphabet*.

**Jane Birdsall-Lander**

Trained as an artist, writer and educator, Jane Birdsall-Lander has an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and graduate degrees from Washington University, St. Louis and Webster University, St. Louis. In addition she participated in the Graduate Writing Program at Washington



University, where she won the Norma Lowry Poetry Prize. Birdsall-Lander is a graduate of the Community Arts Training Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. She has had one person shows at the Forum for Contemporary (now the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis); the Midwest Center for the Literary Arts, Kansas City, KS; the University of Missouri-St. Louis; the National Women’s Studies Association; and six solo exhibitions at Elliot Smith Contemporary Art, St. Louis, among others. Her installation, *Girlife: Artifacts and Testimony* was featured in a documentary on PBS. Her poetry has

been published in numerous literary journals such as *Poetry Now*, *Beloit Poetry Review*, *Tendril*, *Ascent*, and the *Webster Review*, and anthologized in the *American Anthology of Literature and Magazine Verse*. She has given educational workshops for such institutions as the Smithsonian Institution, Mid America College Art Association, the St. Louis Art Museum, Laumeier Sculpture Park and the National Women’s

Studies Association, and she has given poetry readings at Olin Library Special Collections, Washington University, among others. Birdsall-Lander has contributed articles and curriculum to the *Journal of the National Art Education Association* and has written children's guides for Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, and the St. Louis Art Museum. She is a studio artist in St. Louis, Missouri and the Project Manager and co-author for the *St. Louis Public Art Curriculum Kit* and most recently author and project manager of the *Arts in Transit Curriculum Kit*. Both are free on-line resources for classroom teachers and national models for interdisciplinary public art education. In the fall of 2007, she curated an exhibit titled *Material Attitudes: Defying Textiles Stereotypes* for the Gallery at the Regional Arts Commission in conjunction with the citywide Innovations in Textiles 7 exhibition in 2007. Concurrently, her artwork was exhibited at Craft Alliance in the exhibit *Mysterious Enchantments*. To learn more, visit Birdsall-Lander's web site [www.rootlanguage.com](http://www.rootlanguage.com).

### Jo Stealey

Jo Stealey is a professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia where she is head of the fiber program. She also has a Ph.D. in Art Education. Stealey exhibits her work nationally and internationally and has taught workshops throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia and her work is placed in many public and private collections. Recent exhibitions include solo exhibitions in Granada and Benalua, Spain as well as the Perlow-Stevens Gallery in Columbia, Missouri. Recent group shows include the 2008 International Biennial at the Snyderman-Works Gallery in Philadelphia and SOFA, Chicago. Her work has been included in such traveling exhibitions as *Contemporary Baskets: No Boundaries* and *A New Era of Sculpture*, in Taiwan. In 2007-2008, She collaborated with *Eklektica*, a performance art troupe in Spain and produced a set design for their new performance "Lumen" which is presently touring throughout the U.S. and Europe. Examples of her work can be seen in *Fiber Arts Design Books III-VIII* as well as issues of *Surface Design*, *Fiberarts*, and *Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot* and *Sculpture* magazines. Stealey was trained as a potter, but since being introduced to papermaking 25 years ago, the majority of her work has utilized this material in sculptural baskets and 2-dimensional formats. To learn more, visit Jo Stealey's website at <http://www.jostealey.com>



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The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibits works by local, national, and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the galleries' spaces on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, jazz art and history, and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present. **Gallery hours** are Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays - Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m., Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on the exhibition visit the galleries' website at [www.thesheldon.org/galleries.asp](http://www.thesheldon.org/galleries.asp).

**innovations**  
in textiles 2009

More information on **Innovations in Textiles 8** can be found at:  
<http://www.craftalliance.org/exhibits/it8.htm>

**The Sheldon Art Galleries, 3648 Washington Boulevard,  
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[www.thesheldon.org/galleries.asp](http://www.thesheldon.org/galleries.asp)