



Nancy Cook Smith

FABRIC COLLAGES

WWW.NANCYCOOKSMITH.COM

Nancy Cook Smith



BOATS EVERYWHERE

26x27 in.



When Nancy Cook Smith roams through the alleys of her Santa Monica neighborhood, her gaze – trained during her thirty-five years as a textile artist – wanders over seemingly worthless items others have carelessly discarded: curtains, used upholstery fabric or scrapped dish towels. “I’ve always had a sentiment for things that were trashed by others. I like to reuse materials and bring them back to life.” Her skilled hands transform these materials from trash into treasure as she combines them into striking fabric collages, weaving the story of these individual pieces into a narrative of her own. Smith combines her alley finds with choice fabrics she has acquired over decades: silk, linen, heavy cotton, thus creating a meaningful cohesion, raising the trivial to be on par with the beautiful. “I want these materials to be appreciated, as they come with a history of their own. I will

combine anything that works. Store-bought fabric or alley finds – in the end it’s all threads.”

Smith sets out to re-examine, to challenge existing patterns. In a way that’s the story of her life. Nancy was born deaf, but learned to lip-read and speak when she was seven – a blessing that came with a price. “It was culture shock,” Smith recounts, “the transition from the world of the deaf to the realm of the hearing.” But she dealt with that experience in a creative way: “As I didn’t have the same means of communication as other kids, the creation of something physical, visual became my voice.” Smith graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, moved to California and kicked off a successful career as a designer of hand-woven fashion – which enabled her to follow a long held dream. “I’ve always wanted to be a painter – I guess my work with these tapestries is, in a way, painting with fabric.” She began to create what she refers to as ‘conversations’ – the visual interaction of the textiles she finds, procures and integrates into her large odd-piece collection. These conversations include numerous voices she isolates, frees up and eventually orchestrates into formal arrangements or psychological landscapes. Even though her approach bears elements of both the collage and the ready made, her artworks are always anchored in nature. “I use a lot of floral and organic images. They are accessible to everybody and offer a huge palette.” The sum of these cutouts creates a geometry that offers a sturdy scaffold for a variety of visual metaphors and concepts. Beyond the interactivity of the different types of materials, shapes and patterns, Smith’s pieces are always a playful way of reaching out, of sparking a dialogue between artist and spectator.

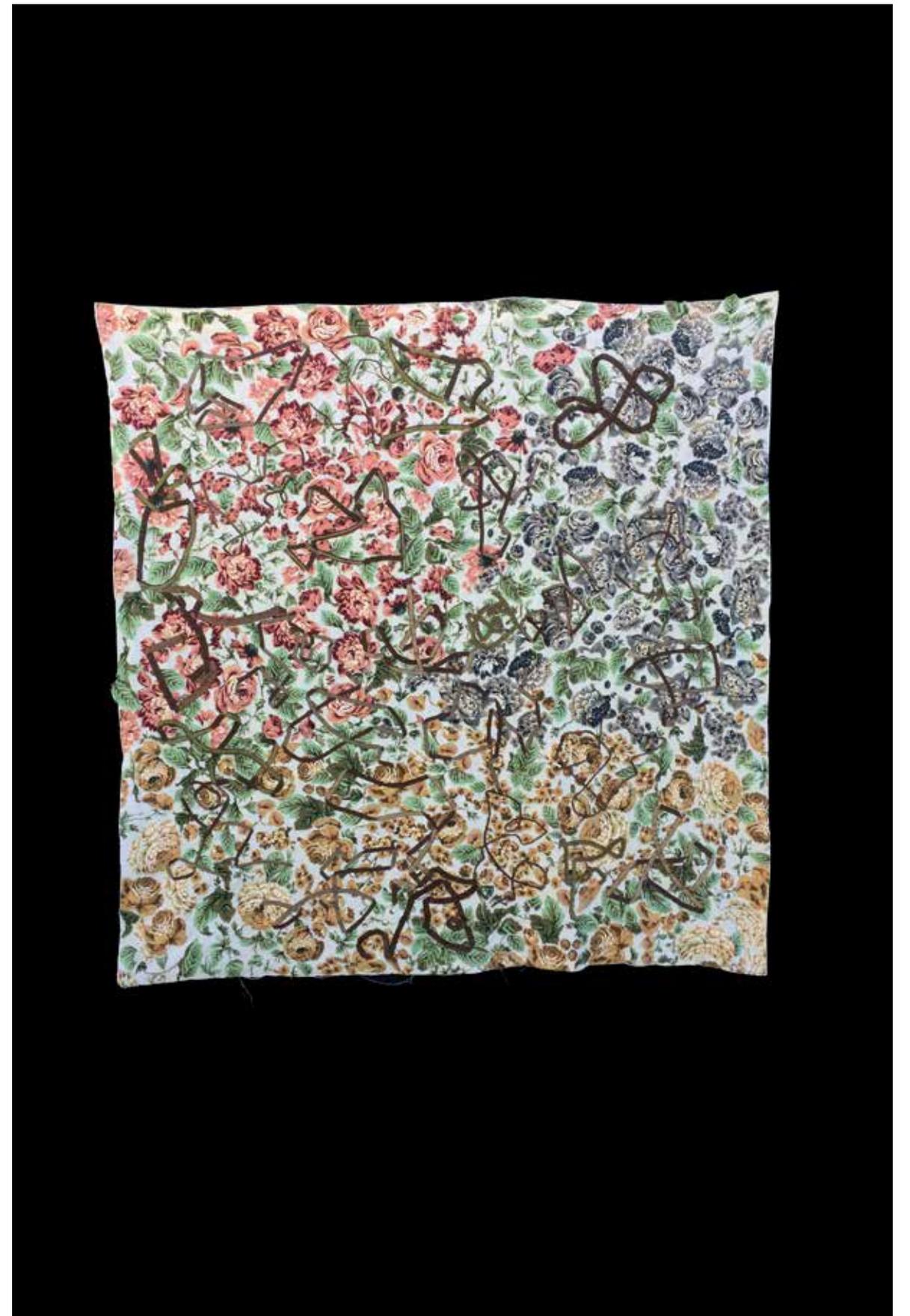
BIOGRAPHY

Nancy Cook Smith was born in Hartford, CT, in 1950. After her pediatrician discovered that she was deaf from birth, she was sent away to an institution for handicapped children at age 3. At seven, she attended Clarke School for the Deaf in Massachusetts, where she learned Alexander Graham Bell’s auditory-oral method. The ability to lip-read and speak clearly enabled her to attend a regular high school and then Rhode Island School of Design. After graduating with a degree in textiles, she relocated to Southern California, where she started her own business as a designer of hand-woven textiles. Her strong work ethic, combined with a keen eye for patterns and an innate sense of style soon paid off: her pieces were sought after by Hollywood icons like Lauren Bacall, Anne Bancroft, Carrie Fisher and Meryl Streep and featured in blockbusters like *Tootsie* and on television series such as *Moonlighting*. Her successful career in fashion enables her to devote herself to her purely artistic pursuits, like creating one of a kind, large-scale tapestries, collaged from a mix of found and store bought fabrics. Thus her works reexamine established patterns and ignite visual interactions between various materials as well as between artist and recipient. Today, Smith lives in Santa Monica with artist husband Peter Tigler.



HORIZONISH

44x49 in.



FLOATING LINTS

70x69 in.



BLIZZARD
53x96 in.



JUST LINES
66x70 in.



FLAT BASKET
55x53 in.



SIDEBAR
67x23 in.



GARDEN WALL
20x33 in.



TUNNEL
73x61 in.



LOOKS RIGHT UPSIDE DOWN

70x59 in.



ARTIFICIAL SNOW

51x52 in.



PARADISE WHYDAH

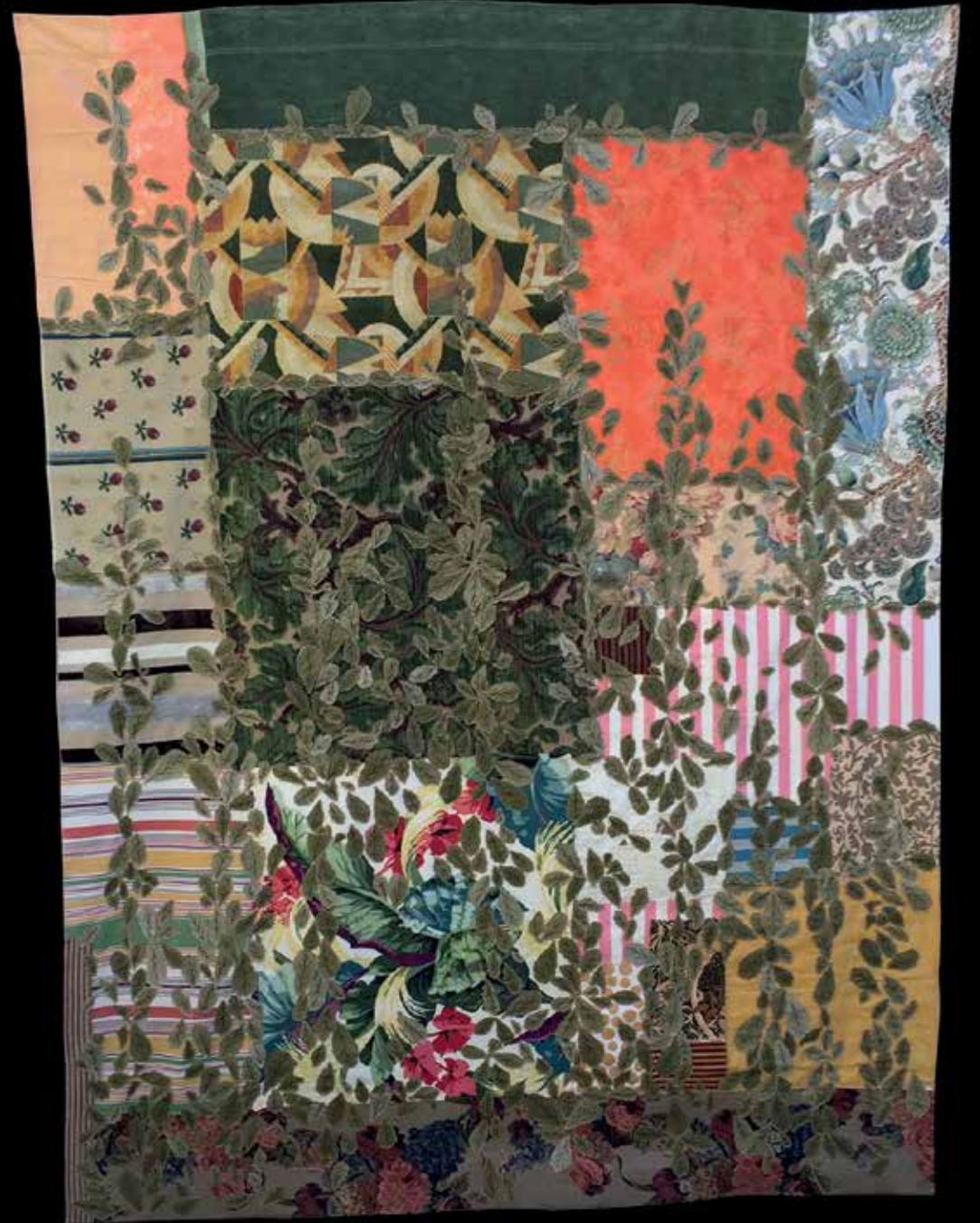
24x51 in.



TRAIN WINDOWS
23x22 in., 22x21 in.



LANDSCAPE EAST / WEST
12x12 in., 12x12 in.



CREEPING IVY
83x63 in.



OLD MAP WALL PAPER
17x18 in.



FLORA ON STRIPES
13x14 in.

SMALL STUDY
12x12 in.



**PERFORMER
WITH
AUDIENCE**
17x18 in.



**WONDER
BREAD**
24x32 in.



**TWO
DANCERS**
12x12 in.





GOLDEN STRIP

22x114 in.

Nancy Cook Smith

FABRIC COLLAGES BY
NANCY COOK SMITH

2017

SANTA MONICA, CA

310 450 1755
NANCY@NANCYCOOKSMITH.COM

WWW.NANCYCOOKSMITH.COM