

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

ARTS & CULTURE

## Two fall shows use sculpture and photographs to fold past into present

Hanne Friis and Lynda Benglis play off one another at Locks. At Rowan, Wendel White presents an evocative, era-spanning photography exhibit of Black American history.

By Amy S. Rosenberg  
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LOCKSGALLERY



Installation view of the two-person exhibition of sculptures by Norwegian textile artist Hanne Friis (b. 1972) and renowned sculptor Lynda Benglis (b. 1941) at the Locks Gallery in Philadelphia. Left to right: Hanne Friis, 'The Juice From the Trees II,' 2019; Lynda Benglis, 'Come 11: Seis,' 1976; Lynda Benglis, 'Untitled,' ca. 1966-67; Lynda Benglis, 'Blue Pair, 1972.'

Photo by Joseph Hu

Two exhibits this fall contemplate the expanse of time and demonstrate how artistic expression — and a focus on process — can transform our understanding of commonplace objects and materials and fold past into present.

At the Locks Gallery in Philadelphia, a two-person show juxtaposes the visceral sculpture of Lynda Benglis, born in 1941 in Louisiana, with that of Norwegian textile artist Hanne Friis, born three decades later.

600 Washington Square South Philadelphia, PA 19106 [www.locksgallery.com](http://www.locksgallery.com)

## At Locks Gallery, it's about the process

Hanne Friis said she was introduced to American abstract art as an art student in Northern Europe in the 1990s.

“I immediately felt a connection to this period in art history when artists like [Benglis] were experimenting with new sculptural materials and working in a very processual way,” Friis said in an email exchange upon arriving from Oslo for the opening of the exhibition at the Locks.

“At that time, the art scene in northern Europe was very theoretical, conceptual, and boring, and I didn't fit into that,” she said. “I wanted to work out my ideas through a

L O C K S G A L L E R Y



7 Come 11: *Seis* (left) and *B-Witched* (right) by renowned sculptor Lynda Benglis, part of the two-person exhibition of sculptures by Norwegian textile artist Hanne Friis and renowned sculptor

material, or maybe the opposite, finding out new things through being in direct contact with a material.”

Both Benglis, 82, the pioneer, and Friis, the next-generation textile artist, focus on the process and the material itself, centering the act of working out ideas through direct contact with materials.

Benglis turned to hard industrial materials like stainless steel mesh, bronze, zinc, copper, and beeswax and rendered them weightless and buoyant in appearance. Art historian Amanda Gluibizzi writes in her essay for the exhibition catalog that Benglis’ “sprayed metal wall sculptures ... snarl, barrel, billow, and ripple.”



[left] Hanne Friis, *Dance*, 2022, hand-stitched faux leather and steel, 78 x 19 11/16 x 11 13/16 inches.  
 [right] Hanne Friis, *La Vague*, 2020-2022, hand-stitched faux leather and steel, 38 5/8 x 30 3/4 x 29 1/2 inches.

Friis, working with faux leather, steel, hand-stitched cotton, and satin, creates “ecstatic folds,” Gluibizzi writes, that “flow, change direction, pucker, purse into rosettes, and develop their own structures.”



Friis said she was drawn to the energy in Benglis’ work.

“We share many of the same thought and ideas, which encourages me to become even more brave and experimental, like she always has been,” Friis said.

Her technique, which includes hand stitching, directly references “the history of textile art and women’s work,” she says, “which is something you don’t find in Benglis’ works, I think.”

“Benglis’ sculptures imitate soft materials, but are hard; my textile works imitate hard materials while they are soft,” Friis said. “We are both playing with high and low culture in the use of plastic and sometimes toxic materials, and we both transform metallic surfaces to flexible forms.”

She added: “We share the same passion for processing materials into organic formations and complex structures that gives a sense of change and growth.”

*“Hanne Friis/Lynda Benglis” runs from Sept. 12 to Oct. 31 on the second floor of the Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South, Philadelphia.*