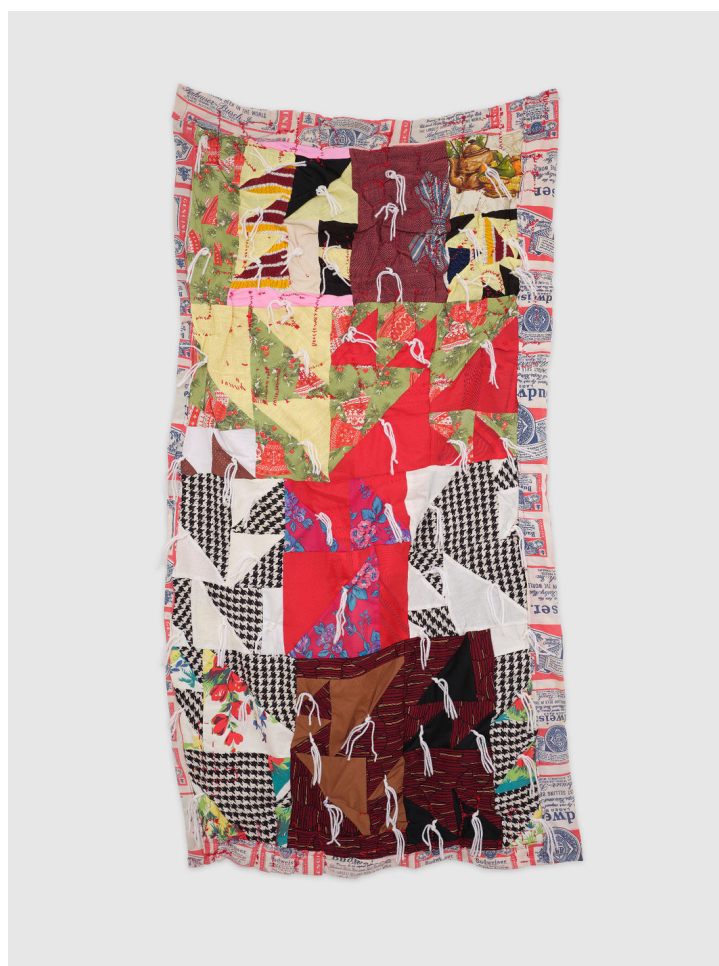


SPOTLIGHT

## Rosie Lee Tompkins

Anthony Meier Fine Arts



**Rosie Lee Tompkins, *Untitled*, ca. 1974**, polyester double knit, acrylic yarn, crepe print, synthetic sheer polyester tablecloth, muslin, shot cotton, nylon-spandex knit, acrylic sweater knit, poly-cotton linen blend, polyester crepe, polyester woven cotton Christmas print, cotton thread, backed with cotton advertising print, 62 1/4 × 34 3/4".

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Anthony Meier Fine Arts will present a solo exhibition of never-before-seen works by renowned American artist Rosie Lee Tompkins (1936–2006), considered one of the greatest quiltmakers of all times, and one of the century’s greatest artists.

The seven artworks included in the exhibition date from 1974 to 2006, coinciding with a major retrospective of her work at the Berkeley Art Museum Pacific Film Archives. The exhibition is accompanied by a newly commissioned essay by Lawrence Rinder, a longtime champion of Tompkins and former Director of the Berkeley Art Museum Pacific Film Archives.

Rosie Lee Tompkins is the pseudonym of quilter Effie Mae Howard, who carefully guarded her privacy after her rise to national prominence in the late 1990s. Born on September 6, 1936 to a sharecropping family in southeastern Arkansas, she learned quilting from her mother as a child but did not begin to practice the craft seriously until the 1980s, when she was living in the Bay Area city of Richmond, CA. Many of her quilts tell a highly personal story through embroidered words and numerical citations, often with family members, friends or spiritual texts in mind.

Few of Tompkins’ quilts conform to the traditional scale of a bed covering, a byproduct of the conceptual logic inherent in each piece. Her quilts are characterized by the variation in scale of the triangles and squares used in her patterns, creating “asymmetrical forms that pull, crumble, and bend,” says Rinder. Tompkins “transformed everything she touched with her improvisatory piecing and unerring sense of color, composition and scale,” notes critic Roberta Smith. “In the still-unfolding field of African-American quilt-making, she has no equal.”

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