

# Allegra LaViola Gallery

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## *OFF THE WALL*

Nicole Barrick, Helle Mardahl, Doreen McCarthy, Gelah Penn,  
Gae Savannah, Amanda Smith and Grace Sutton

**June 2 July 3rd, 2010**

Opening reception: Wednesday, June 2, 2010 from 6-9PM

Allegra LaViola Gallery is pleased to present *Off The Wall*, a group show comprised of sculptural works attached to the wall.

The origin of the term “off the wall” remains unclear, but it is a relatively new phrase, used to describe something, or someone, who is zany, untraditional and unusual. Though the concept of three-dimensional works that are still on the wall is not new, the seven artists included in this exhibition are pushing the boundaries of how sculptural form can remain coherent when not liberated from a hanging surface.

**Nicole Barrick's** fascination with symbols and the power inherent in them lead her to examine the art of Victorian mourning wreaths, traditionally made from hair of a deceased beloved and fashioned into a horseshoe shape. In Barrick's contemporary take the hair is dyed bright colors and the shape can shift into a circle, a neon crown of laurels. Her paintings on robes, slips and dresses continue the exploration of symbolic power, bringing to mind ceremonial kimonos and church vestments. A corresponding sense of occasion is present in **Grace Sutton's** work: her paintings on fabric call to mind prayer flags and banners, their dazzling colors floating before us. Our sense of place is inverted in Sutton's work we are not standing in front of the view the view is forming around us in animated fragments as light refracts the images.

**Helle Mardahl's** cloth collages assemble a cast of unruly characters who are sewn into their landscapes. Her playful use of silk, yarn and needlepoint belie a darker side to these figures, which appear to be walking a fine line between child's toy and voodoo dolls. A similar darkness inhabits the world of **Amanda Smith**, whose ceramic girls occupy a candy-colored landscape filled with animals, trees and flowers that look good enough to eat. This sugary brightness conceals an unsettling vision: the girls are insolently partaking of a flaming beverage or assembling an army behind the abundant vegetation.

**Gae Savannah's** opulent totems appear to be jewel encrusted idols from another planet. On closer inspection they reveal themselves to be constructed from ordinary items of feminine adornment: hair clips, sparkly barrettes and hanging ornaments. They stand as icons to consumerism turned celestial. Ordinary material is also used by **Gelah Penn**, whose installations of fishing line, plastic mesh and mosquito netting form a rich, tangled calligraphic drawing in sculptural space. Each line is drawn in stereo crossing and re-crossing a territory that becomes mapped by shadows. The play of light on surface is also present in **Doreen McCarthy's** Plexiglas works, where the refracted colors on the wall form a soft halo encircling a hard surface. In the lenticular sculptures an illusion of texture is projected over the curved ribbons, unfolding like corsages on the wall.

### Gallery hours

Wednesday Saturday: 12-6PM  
Sunday: 1-6PM

### Upcoming

*Summer Show*  
Group show