

MOCA

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CLEVELAND



Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson: energy forms

PULSE

JANUARY 28 – MAY 1, 2005

The first weaver to be shown
in the PULSE series, **Hildur**



Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson has
lived in Ohio for the last
20 years. She studied at
the Cleveland Institute

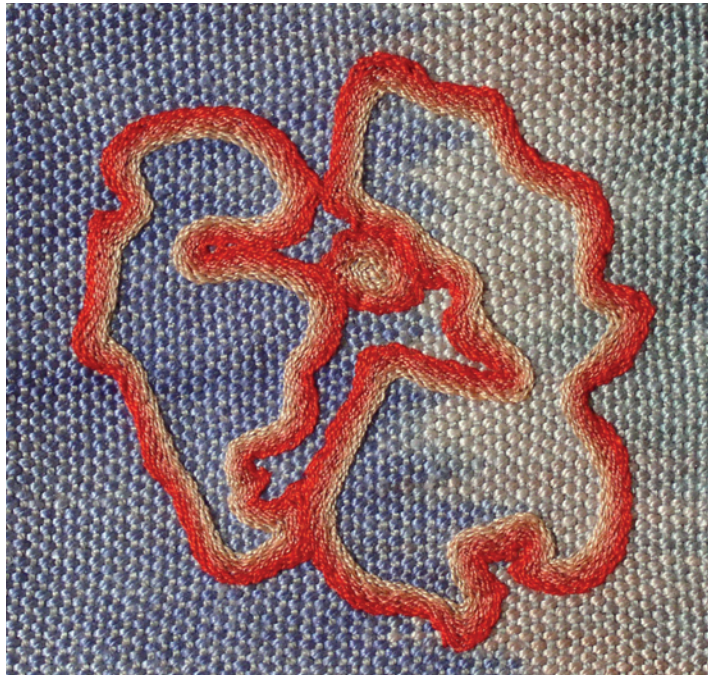
of Art and received a BFA and
MFA from Kent State University.

Jónsson's drawings and weavings
have been exhibited in Spain,
France and Iceland and included
in numerous shows throughout
Ohio. Most recently, Jónsson
was commissioned by the Ohio

Arts Council to design the
2004 Governor's Annual
Awards in the Arts.

PULSE: A series
of solo exhibitions
featuring new bodies
of work by Northeast
Ohio's most talented
emerging and
established artists.

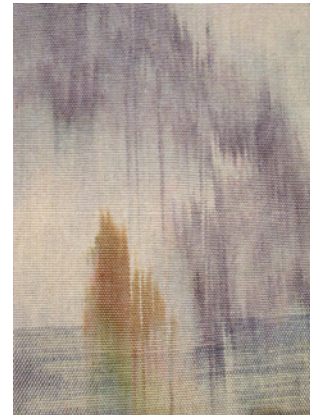
energy forms



Trifid Nebula II, 2005, Silk embroidery, 4.25 x 4.25; Courtesy of the artist

In a country abounding with geothermal pools, glaciers and panoramic views of the sky, it is no wonder that the people of Iceland are keenly aware of the earth's physicality. Sparsely populated with approximately 290,000 inhabitants, Iceland is roughly the size of Ohio. With an abundance of unsettled land, nature is omnipresent and the experience of its geophysical activities is direct and immediate. Originally from Iceland, Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson articulates this acute awareness of the natural world through an exploration of the ageless trope of landscape, both earthly and celestial. As the artist explains, the country's environment is highly influential and "in some way or another, every Icelandic artist deals with the unique landscape because it is inescapable."¹ In this exhibition of silk weavings, drawings and embroideries titled *Energy Forms*, Jónsson mines this fertile territory and explores the romantic, sublime and fantastic motifs in nature.

Jónsson culls from the rich visual history of Chinese and Indian textiles, the technique used by Japanese and Indonesian weavers, the work of Modernist textile artist Anni Albers and contemporary art in other media.² She draws from these diverse artistic disciplines, merging and transitioning between conventional divisions of artistic media. Conceptually, the link between Jónsson's weavings, drawings and embroideries is their depiction of natural phenomena and the powerful enigma of such forces—often physically and mentally beyond our comprehension. Working in a meditative manner, Jónsson immerses herself in the awe-inspiring Icelandic landscape; her practice of hiking for several hours and stopping along the way to observe the scene, akin to the work of British artist Richard Long, is philosophical. The materialization of that experience or idea into a visual object is equally contemplative. Her studio practice is liminal—it entails a state of mind that is simultaneously aware, yet lost in thought.



above *Floating Iceberg* (detail), 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 68;
Courtesy of William Busta and Joan Tomkins

left *Floating Iceberg*, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 68;
Courtesy of William Busta and Joan Tomkins

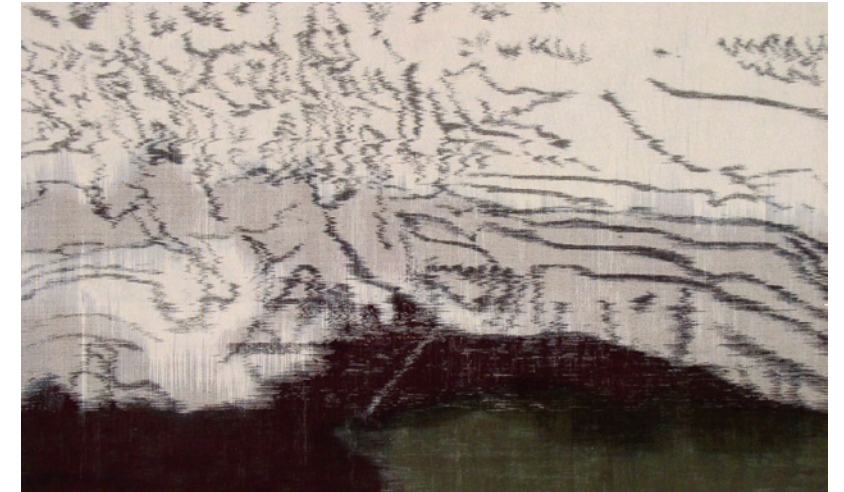
Tranquil and dreamy, these large-scale weavings are abstract reinterpretations of geological formations. Beginning with a photograph of the Icelandic landscape, Jónsson crops and isolates portions of the image to translate the composition into a loosely abstracted cartoon—a sketch—that functions as an outline for the loom. Sets of separately strung warp and weft threads are then placed on the cartoon and painted with fabric dye. The subsequent weaving integrates the two individually painted components into one meticulously coordinated image. The hazy and luminous effect of the woven silk fibers emulates the atmosphere of her sublime landscapes. Suggesting a sense of place, rather than a realistic portrayal, Jónsson states, "the final results of the weavings are more about an energetic quality than of the representational character of the site."³



Light Echoes of Supernova, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20;
Courtesy of the artist

In her embroideries and ink drawings, Jónsson shifts her focus away from the depiction of glaciers, icebergs and horizons to explore massive cosmic subjects. These meticulous works create a visual paradox by representing vast and tumultuous chaos through small, labor-intensive compositions. For example, celestial bodies such as nebulas, galaxies and quasars are captured in brightly embroidered six-inch by six-inch squares⁴. Resembling microscopic organisms, Jónsson's drawings and embroideries radiate from their core outward with topologic-like lines that pulsate with intensity and life. Equally inspired by nature, these works transcend Iceland as a theme and explore the unfamiliar, fantastical and infinite entities that exist beyond our physical realm.

Tranquil and dreamy, these large-scale weavings are abstract reinterpretations of geological formations.



Mountain Lake, 2004, Silk weaving, 40 x 65; Courtesy of Hahn Loeser + Parks LLP

When presented in an urban context, Jónsson's work comments on our disconnection and dislocation from the physicality of our world. While we encounter technology and civilization in every segment, scope and periphery of our daily routine, we often overlook our existence on the surface of the earth, an immensely powerful object that evolves each day. *Energy Forms* awakens our perception of the world and invites us to acknowledge the power and significance of nature.

ANA VEJZOVIC Associate Curator

- ¹ Stated during a conversation between the curator and the artist on November 22, 2004.
See *Confronting Nature: Icelandic Art of the 20th Century* organized by The Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington DC for further discussion.
- ² Anni Albers (1899-1994): A German-born American textile artist and an important member of the Bauhaus movement in the early 20th century. It is also important to note that textiles have been popular among many contemporary artists such as Alighiero e Boetti, Ann Hamilton, Rosemarie Trockel and Andrea Zittel.
- ³ Stated during a conversation between the curator and the artist on December 30, 2004.
- ⁴ The compositions are pulled from satellite imagery found in scientific books and, although the image is slightly altered in the translation, Jónsson aims for the work to stay true to its source.

exhibition checklist

Mountain Lake, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 65
Courtesy of Hahn Loeser + Parks LLP

Floating Iceberg, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 68
Courtesy William Busta and Joan Tomkins

Glacier Tongue, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 68
Courtesy of Hahn Loeser + Parks LLP

Water, 2004
Silk weaving, 41 x 74
Courtesy of the artist

Ice Breaking, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 68
Courtesy of the artist

Clouds, 2004
Silk weaving, 39 x 50
Courtesy of the artist

Grey Blue, 2004
Silk weaving, 40 x 45
Courtesy of the artist

Iceberg Line, 2004
Silk weaving, 18 x 72
Courtesy of Edward R. and Winifried Haymes

Einstein's Cross, 2003
Ink on vellum, 13 x 13
Courtesy of Hope and Clark Hungerford

Earthquake Landscape, 2003
Ink on vellum, 17 x 26
Courtesy of Bellamy Printz and Ben Lewis

Core of the Whirlpool Galaxy, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Supernova Remnants and Pulsar, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of Brian Schriefer

Light Echoes of Supernova, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Quasar Radio Map, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Quasar and Companion Galaxy, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Trifid Nebula, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Stingray Nebula, 2004
Ink on vellum, 18 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Einstein's Cross, 2003
Silk embroidery, 5 x 5.5
Courtesy of the artist

Quasar Radio Map, 2003
Silk embroidery, 3.5 x 4
Courtesy of The Ohio Arts Council

Core of the Whirlpool Galaxy II, 2005
Silk embroidery, 4.5 x 4
Courtesy of the artist

Tribid Nebula II, 2005
Silk embroidery, 4.25 x 4.25
Courtesy of the artist

Quasar and Companion Galaxy II, 2005
Silk embroidery, 4 x 4.5
Courtesy of the artist

Supernova Remnant and Pulsar, 2004
Silk embroidery, 4 x 4
Courtesy of the artist

Light Echoes of Supernova II, 2004
Silk embroidery 5.5 x 6.25
Courtesy of the artist

Cartwheel Galaxy, 2005
Silk embroidery, 4.25 x 3.25
Courtesy of the artist

Stingray Nebula, 2005
Silk embroidery, 5 x 5.5
Courtesy of the artist

PHOTOS: Michael Loderstedt

All measurements are in inches; height precedes width.

related program

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27 / 1pm*

Contemporary Conversations:

Don Harvey with Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson

Artist Don Harvey joins Jónsson for a gallery conversation surrounded by the PULSE exhibition in the Ginn Gallery. Like Jónsson, Harvey often uses landscape as a subject in his work and is well known in Ohio as an artist and educator. In 2001, Harvey's work was the subject of a ten-year survey at MOCA Cleveland and his work is in The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Akron Art Museum and numerous private collections.

**Preceded by a Member's Brunch at 11am.*

sponsorship

Support for PULSE: *Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson: Energy Forms* is generously provided by Hahn Loeser + Parks LLP and the Kulas Foundation.

Jónsson received additional support from the Ohio Arts Council.

All of MOCA Cleveland's exhibitions and programs are presented with major support from American Greetings, The Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, National City, Nesnadny + Schwartz, The Ohio Arts Council, The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation and the continuing support of our Board of Directors, patrons and members.



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8501 Carnegie Avenue
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p 216.421.8671
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