

SEWN PAPER: PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT

Anna Von Mertens: Glass, Metal, Thread: Building Our Observable World

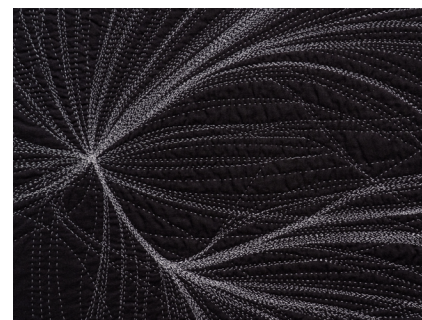
Through her hand-sewn quilts and observational drawings, [Anna Von Mertens](#) explores the power of single, measured actions. Each stitch in her detailed quilts illustrates the movement of [stars](#) and [galaxies](#) over time.

Explore the exhibition guided by the following prompts:

- What shapes and patterns do you see in Von Mertens's works? What do they remind you of?
- Look for an artwork that suggests a sense of movement.

Does the movement appear to be fast or slow? What do you see that suggests this? Consider how the line qualities—such as thick, thin, wispy, or curved—contribute to your interpretation. Try following the lines with your eyes or motioning with your arms to feel the potential speed of the line's movement.

Based on your observations, what object(s) might make this pattern of movement?



Anna Von Mertens, *View V* (detail), 2016. Hand-stitched cotton. Courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, OR.

In response to Von Mertens's representations of the movement of stars and galaxies over time, create an artwork that represents the pattern of movement of an object, sound, or element (such as a bouncing ball, a trumpet's blare, water, or fire).

Step 1: Select an object, sound, or element for your project.

- On a scratch piece of paper, draw a variety of line patterns to visually represent the movement of your chosen subject.
- Consider what line qualities you will use in your design—such as thick, thin, wispy, or curved.
- Choose one design to use for your artwork.

Step 2: Draw your pattern on a black piece of paper with white chalk.

Step 3: Prepare your paper for sewing.

- Place your drawing face-up on a piece of foam board.
- Using a plastic needle, poke evenly spaced holes along the lines of your drawing. This will make the sewing process easier.
- Avoid placing holes too close together or the paper may tear when you begin sewing.

Step 4: In [The stars fading from view on the morning of Henrietta Leavitt's birth, July 4, 1868, Lancaster, Massachusetts](#), Von Mertens used varying thicknesses of white, black, and grey thread to represent the brightness of each star. Choose a color and thickness of yarn to represent your chosen subject.

- Cut a piece of yarn to about the length of your arm.
- Thread the yarn through your needle so that you have one long and one short tail.
- Tie a knot at the end of the long tail so that it doesn't pull through the paper when sewing.

Step 5: Sew along the lines of your drawing, weaving in and out of the holes in the paper. When you come to the end of your thread, tie a knot so that your work doesn't unravel. ***Optional:** Use more than one color, thickness, or texture of yarn in your design.

Step 6: With a partner discuss how you represented the movement of your chosen subject. Then look for connections between your and Von Mertens's artwork.

Step 7: Photograph your work and share it with us on Instagram by tagging us at [#universitygalleriesisu](#).

Glass, Metal, Thread: Building Our Observable World is organized by Kendra Paitz, University Galleries' director and chief curator. This exhibition and programming are supported by University Galleries' grants from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, Harold K. Sage Foundation, and the Illinois State University Foundation Fund. [University Galleries](#), a unit in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, is located at 11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available in the Uptown Station parking deck located directly above University Galleries—the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01 p.m.

