

# THE FIELDS ARE ALIVE WITH — ART!

## FROM MILAN AND MADISON AVENUE TO ... ROUND TOP

An ambitious public art program comes to Round Top — here’s your first look at internationally exhibited artist **Rachel Hayes** and her site-specific projects planned for The Compound, The Farm at Wellville, and The Halles, during this month’s Round Top Spring Antiques Show. Catherine D. Ansporn reports.

**D**iaphanous, translucent textiles reminiscent of Christo and futuristic quilting, from artist Rachel Hayes’ first Texas commission, “Slant of Light,” will billow in the bucolic countryside via three sites: The Compound, a key Antiques Show venue, which serves as lead underwriter for this initiative; The Farm at Wellville, a new luxury wellness retreat in the works; and The Halles, Round Top Publishers reborn event space (formerly The Boneyard). Piper Faust Public Art curates, inaugurating Faust’s vision of bringing public art to rural Texas towns.

“Rachel Hayes’ whimsical and colorful interjections into the landscape, both natural or architectural, are the perfect fit to kick off a public art presence in Round Top,” says

Faust. “By launching an active contemporary public art program, lead partner The Compound joined by The Farm at Wellville and The Halles, add a vital cultural layer to the existing activities in Round Top.”

Hayes’ background boasts a Midwest upbringing where she earned her BFA in fiber arts at the Kansas City Art Institute, followed by a MFA in painting from Virginia Commonwealth University. Now based in Tulsa in Oklahoma’s heartland, Hayes has crafted a unique artistic practice that straddles interventions in the landscape à la Christo and Jeanne-Claude, conceptually juxtaposed with notions of women’s work — aka the domestic, historic art of quilting, but with a very contemporary, riotous, rainbow take on it all. Hayes’ craft-centric handmade work also speaks to the antique textiles that are sold at booths and in the fields at the Round Top Antiques Show. The

artist is also utilizing unique fabrics for her Round Top projects, sourcing heirloom lace-encrusted handkerchiefs and vintage table linens, to infuse into her installations, thus alluding to Round Top’s half-century tradition of antiquing.

There’s also a global fashion component to this sculptor’s CV. Italian fashion house Missoni tapped Hayes for a series of projects in 2017-2018, beginning with a runway installation during Milan Fashion Week, following by an installation/exhibition at its flagship Manhattan store on Madison Avenue; the finale was photographing



Rachel Hayes’ site-specific installation in Wessington Springs, South Dakota, 2017



The plains of South Dakota gave inspiration to this creation from the summer of 2020.



Rachel Hayes in her Tulsa studio, 2021

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A garment-inspired handmade textile dialogues with a weathered South Dakota barn, summer 2020.

Missoni's Summer 2018 ad campaign in White Sands National Park, where Kendall Jenner posed with Hayes' signature Technicolor textiles against the backdrop of New Mexico's pristine natural landmark.

"Anytime art is placed within a landscape another dimension is added to the work, isn't it?" queries Kathy Johnston, The Compound Antique Show's producer/director. "The Compound's big barns and park-like setting are a fitting backdrop to Rachel Hayes' mega textiles. Her swaths of color, in varying opacities, float on the softest breeze — they're like moving murals, or sculptures, or something else entirely." Mark Massey, owner of The Compound, continues: "Round Top is home to many talented artists and creators exhibiting work in a variety of mediums — the peaceful, rural setting is a natural backdrop that inspires."

Hayes eagerly anticipates this project, which will require nearly a month in Round Top to install. She will also be present at each of the three show openings. "I'm approaching these installations like different bodies of work," the artist says, "but at each site, the barns, the windmill, the trees, and the grassy landscape will be the architecture of the space and will dictate what is possible ... The wind and sun will also impact each site, giving breadth and dimension to the textile interventions. This is the exciting part for me, because there is always something unexpectedly beautiful to come out of



A Rachel Hayes installation wafts on the prairie, Jerauld County, South Dakota, summer 2020.

that spontaneous interaction." *Rachel Hayes is represented by Lowell Ryan Projects, Los Angeles.*

*Rachel Hayes at The Compound (Saturday, March 20 – Saturday, April 3; 9:30 am to 6 pm daily; artist reception with champagne, sweet treats, and art tours, Saturday, March 20, 11 am and 1 pm; art tour with curator Piper Faust, Saturday, April 3, 11 am); The Farm at Wellville (Friday – Saturday, March 26 – 27, 9 am – 3 pm; Friday – Saturday, April 2 – 3, 9 am – 3 pm; art tours with Piper Faust, Saturday, March 27, 11 am and 1 pm); and The Halles (Thursday, March 18 – Saturday, April 3, 9 am – 5 pm; artist reception Saturday, March 20, 3 to 5 pm).*

Rachel Hayes artwork created during her Roswell, New Mexico, residency, 2015

