

CAYCE ZAVAGLIA

RECTO | VERSO

Cayce Zavaglia creates portraits – strictly of friends and family – that provide a contemporary take on figuration, bringing these subjects to life in a way that privileges the handmade and underscores her extraordinary craftsmanship. Trained as a painter, Zavaglia works in embroidery, blending colors and establishing tonalities that recall the techniques of classical oil painting. Her tightly executed works, rendered on an intimate scale, encourage kinship not only between artist and sitter, but also between viewer and subject.

Most recently, Zavaglia has come to look at the verso, or reverse side, of her embroideries as a new kind of portrait. This strategy directly alludes to the rich history of tapestry, in which the verso has traditionally been hidden from the viewer. The network of loose ends, knots and chaos correspond to – but remain psychologically different from – the meticulously sewn front image. Recto | Verso presents a selection of hand-embroidered works alongside related gouache and large acrylic verso portraits. The series charts the development of Zavaglia's current painting style, which finds her producing on an ambitious new scale. Taken together, the works on view ultimately address the divergence between our public and private selves.

May 2014, Taken from Great Rivers Biennial 2014 Gallery Guide, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis