

KATHRYN
MARKEL

FINE ARTS
EST. 1976

**KATHRYN MARKEL FINE ARTS PRESENTS *BALANCING ACT* AN EXHIBITION
OF NEW TEXTILE WORKS BY DEBRA SMITH**

**June 25th – July 31st, 2026
Artist Reception: June 26th, 6-8pm
179 10th Avenue Gallery**

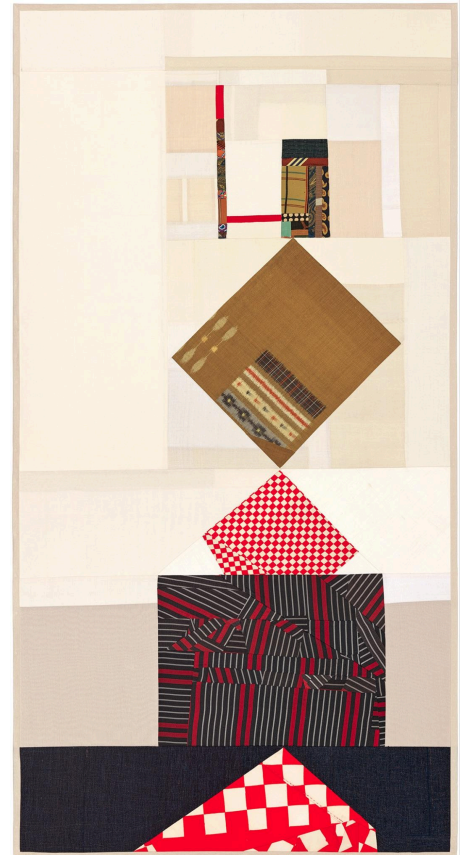
NEW YORK, NY – June 9, 2026 – Kathryn Markel Fine Arts is pleased to announce *Balancing Act*, an exhibition of new works by Debra Smith. This will be her fourth solo exhibition with the gallery and a reception will be held on June 26th from 6-8 PM.

Textile artist Debra Smith manipulates her materials with the instinct of an abstract painter. Her palette consists of carefully chosen fabrics that carry history and weight. Vintage men's suit linings contrast with vintage kimono linings, one austere, opaque, and rigorously striped, the other translucent, soft, and creamy. Both are resonant with use and the lives lived.

The resulting works are cut, layered, and sewn through an intuitive process that subtly blends the patterns, weights, and opacities inherent in the fabrics. Idiosyncratic geometric forms shift playfully across the picture plane, balancing movement and structure. As Smith's compositions totter and skew, they possess a lightness and sense of improvisation that belie the painstaking labor behind them. In breaking from conventions of textile as craft or "women's work," Smith positions her practice firmly within the lineage of abstract painting while insisting on the irreplaceable presence of material, touch, and time.

She says: "Within my work, I believe I am breaking all stereotypes associated with textiles, from ideas of craft to that of 'women's work,' before I even begin to cut, sew, and piece the material back together."

Debra Smith studied at the Italian Academy of Fashion and Design, Lorenzo de Medici, in Florence, Italy, and received her BFA in Fibers from the Kansas City Art Institute, and an Associate in Applied Science from the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2002. Her work has been exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions over the past two decades and is held in museum and corporate collections. In 2012 she was named one of Women to Watch: Focus on Fiber and Textiles by the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. Her work has been published in *New American Paintings* and *Textiles Around the World*. She lives and works in Kansas City, MO.



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IMAGE CAPTION:

Debra Smith, *Balancing Act*, 2026, pieced vintage textiles, 44 x 22 in.

MEDIA CONTACT

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ABOUT KATHRYN MARKEL FINE ARTS

Kathryn Markel Fine Arts is a contemporary gallery with two locations in Chelsea, New York. Founded in 1976, the gallery works with a multigenerational group of artists united by hard-won craft and the joy each finds in their studio practice. Their sustained engagement with formal concerns — the materiality of paint and a distinct visual language — results in work that is both visually compelling and conceptually sophisticated, a combination that has always driven our program and attracted the wide network of collectors and institutions we have been privileged to work with. <https://www.markelfinearts.com/>

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