

**Annual Meeting  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
2014**

# VISUAL ARTISTS NETWORK 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

## EXHIBITION

**NOVEMBER 7 – 22, 2014**

### Akiko Kotani

*Soft Walls*

Slippery Rock, PA [www.akikokotani.com](http://www.akikokotani.com)



01

*Soft Walls*, 2013  
crocheted plastic  
96 x 216 x 18" and 96 x 156 x 18"

### Laurie Spencer

*Sensual Earth*

Tulsa, OK [www.lauriespencer.com](http://www.lauriespencer.com)



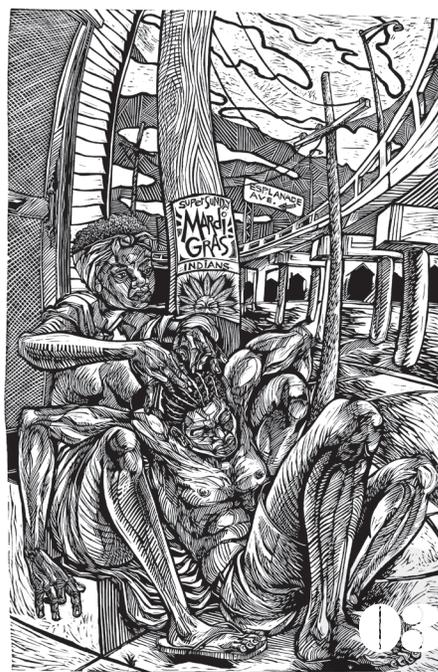
02

*Susurrations (detail)*, 2012  
ceramic whistle  
19 x 8.5 x 9"

### Steve A. Prince

*The Old Testament*

Meadville, PA [www.eyekons.com/steve\\_prince](http://www.eyekons.com/steve_prince)



03

*Judges: Delilah Didn't Do It*, 2014  
linoleum cut on paper  
24 x 36"

#### EXHIBITION HOSTED BY

Living Arts  
307 M.B. Brady Street  
Tulsa, OK 74120  
(918) 585-1234

#### GALLERY HOURS

1–5 pm Tues, Wed, Fri and Sat  
1–9 pm Thursday  
Closed Sundays and Mondays

#### FIRST FRIDAY OPENING

Friday November 7, 2014  
6–9 pm

#### ANNUAL MEETING OPENING RECEPTION

Sunday November 16, 2014  
6–8 pm



*Art that makes you talk.*

Living Arts is generously supported by the  
George Kaiser Family Foundation

#### ABOUT THE VISUAL ARTISTS NETWORK 2014 ANNUAL MEETING EXHIBITION

This multi-disciplinary group exhibition features artists who have participated in the Visual Artists Network Exhibition Residency program and a Tulsa-based visual artist. The exhibition is held in conjunction with the National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN) Annual Meeting – a national gathering of artists, curators, presenters and colleagues. This exhibition is hosted by Living Arts, an NPN Partner. Participating artists are engaged under a VAN Exhibition Residency contract and will serve a week-long residency at the NPN/VAN Annual Meeting. For more information, please visit [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org)

# Akiko Kotani

*Soft Walls*

Slippery Rock, PA [www.akikokotani.com](http://www.akikokotani.com)



**Soft Walls, 2013**  
crocheted plastic  
96 x 216 x 18" and  
96 x 156 x 18"  
installation at  
Women & Their Work,  
Austin, TX



In the summer of 2014, Women & Their Work gallery in Austin, TX exhibited Kotani's *Soft Walls*, along with her drawing *The Black Sea*. *Soft Walls*, was shown initially at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PCA) 2013 Artist of the Year Exhibition that featured four large galleries of Kotani's art. Adam Welch, curator of the PCA stated, "By co-opting the basic aspects of drawing, crochet and sewing, she has contemporized ancient processes within a new language of material and spatial relationships."

*Soft Walls* consists of two large "walls," each of which stand 8 feet high and span 13 – 18 feet. The piece required three years of hands-on work to complete—Kotani hand-cut strips from over one thousand white plastic trash bags and then crocheted every single stitch. *Soft Walls* received positive reviews while it was displayed at Women & Their Work. Rachel Adams of the Texas Society of Architects, wrote: "With *Soft Walls* Kotani is interested in representing the strength and the softness of a mother. Playing off the structural strength that comes from the repetitive stitching, she makes a claim that mothers, like the work, exhibit both external flexibility and internal fortitude." Further, according to Jeanne Claire van Ryzin of the *Austin American-Statesman*, "There is a compelling economy of means to *Soft Walls* that bolsters its potency. And rendered large and abstract, traditional handcraft is repositioned as conceptual art."

Kotani received a BFA in Painting from the University of Hawaii near her birthplace, and an MFA from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, PA. Her inspirations are diverse and often surprising. Her background in Buddhism quietly informs all of her work, which draws its subtle power from this venerable tradition. The preeminence of her hand derives from vivid memories of her mother, herself a strong and unpretentious woman whom she saw working items with her hands to grace the home and body.

Before her MFA studies, Kotani traveled to Guatemala and studied traditional weaving with a Rafaela Godinez, a highly accomplished Mayan Indian weaver. The geometric shapes that came from the cyclical mysteries of their culture made a striking impression on Kotani. She carried these images with her to Tyler, where she distilled them further in her graduate work in concert with her own sensibility. Her Guatemalan experience resonates in Kotani's work in many ways, most prominently in her 1977 *Sawtooth Series*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired it in 1981 for their permanent collection and exhibited the large three-paneled work in 1986.

# Laurie Spencer

*Sensual Earth*

Tulsa, OK [www.lauriespencer.com](http://www.lauriespencer.com)



Laurie Spencer is a native of Tulsa, OK where she maintains a studio and teaches at Holland Hall School. She received a BFA in 1981 and an MA in 1985, both with a concentration in ceramics, from the University of Tulsa.

Spencer explores work that is multi-sensory and experiential. Her sculptures are ceramic whistles and large-scale domes inspired by organic forms. Her work connects with viewers on an emotional level that is not about time or place but that which is intrinsically human. Her work serves as reminder of what all people hold in common, particularly a primal soul.

Through the whistles, Spencer explores various themes such as contrasting masculinity, femininity and sensuality. These works also invite a physical and spiritual interaction with the viewer as a simple breath can bring the whistles to life. Her whistles are based on organic, sensual, plant-like, and flowering forms suggestive of fertility figures.



LEFT  
***Satiety*, 2012**  
ceramic whistle  
25.5 x 11 x 11.5"

RIGHT  
***Susurrations*, 2012**  
ceramic whistle  
19 x 8.5 x 9"

The ceramic domes originally evolved from Spencer's whistles as a sound chamber but diverged into pieces of their own. These large structures, which are created and fired on site, are large enough to hold several people. They become meditational, inspirational, and transformative spaces. As with the whistles, they are also multi-sensory and experiential. Being inside one of the domes creates the sensation of being enveloped with sound, light and wonder. Inside, voices resonate, vibrations are felt, and with it, thoughts and images of times and peoples of the past can be imagined. Thumbprints pressed into the walls during its creation are a remnant of the process and brings the immediacy of the material and the maker to life. Both the domes and the whistles seem familiar but yet cannot be placed or identified.

Spencer has received many awards including the New Forms Regional Initiative Grant and the Fellowship Award in Crafts from the Mid-America Arts Alliance / National Endowment for the Arts. Spencer has also been awarded several residencies such as the Americans for the Arts, Community Residency Exchange Program in Buncrana, Ireland and the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest International Artist Program Grant / Arts International in Cuenca, Ecuador. Spencer was invited to lead a fire sculpture workshop and demonstration at the International Ceramics Festival 2007 at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre in Wales. Her work has been published in several books and magazines including *Alternative Kilns* by Ian Gregory, *Architectural Ceramics for the Studio Potter* by Peter King, *Handbuilt Ceramics* by Kathy Triplett and *Ceramics Monthly* magazine. Recently she completed a ceramic dome in Perrysburg, Ohio, built and fired on site with the assistance of over 50 local participants.

# Steve A. Prince

*The Old Testament*

Meadville, PA [www.eyekons.com/steve\\_prince](http://www.eyekons.com/steve_prince)



Artist Steve A. Prince is a native of New Orleans, LA, and he currently resides in Meadville, PA. Prince received a BFA from Xavier University of Louisiana and an MFA in Printmaking and Sculpture from Michigan State University. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Printmaking and Drawing at Allegheny College. He is represented by Eyekons Gallery in Grand Rapids, MI. Steve Prince's recent work titled *Old Testament* is based on the premise that "true love is like an Old Testament made new each day."

Prince's recent large-scale linoleum cuts explore the emotional terrain of couples carving out a space in a contested world, attempting to maintain a covenantal love within the context of the complications of home. The prints in this series reflect various themes derived from the Old Testament placed in a contemporary framework. Like the mythical Sankofa bird created by the Akan people, his work endeavors to look into the past in order to collectively move forward. Each piece is named after one of the 39 books of the Old Testament. Prince explodes those narratives to create subtle, yet complex stories that embolden the viewer to champion social justice. Prince methodically researches each image before rendering onto the linoleum substrate, then he carefully carves the negative space to fashion his relief prints.



Prince has created several public works in a variety of media including a life-size bronze bust of 1967 Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Ruppert Leon Sargent located in Hampton, VA; a 15-foot stainless steel kinetic sculpture titled *Song for John* also in Hampton, VA; a 8 x 16-foot woodcut titled *Make Me Over* located in Grand Rapids, MI; and a 6 x 6 x 10-foot welded aluminum sculpture titled *Open Expressions* in Richmond, VA. Prince received several honors for his art and scholarship including Second Prize in the *Ruminant Magazine* Kalos Foundation Visual Art Prize, a 2013 Janet and Walter Sondheim Prize Semi-finalist, the 2010 Teacher of the Year for the City of Hampton, VA through the Virginia Public School Program, and the two time Best in Show recipient at the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia Beach News Waves regional competition in 2001 and 2004.

Prince has shown his art internationally in various solo, group, and juried exhibitions, at the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia, the National Gallery of the Bahamas, the Museum of Cultural Arts Center in Santa Catarina, Brazil, the Grand Rapids Museum of Art, the Portsmouth Courthouse Museum, the Louisiana Art and Science Museum, Hampton University Museum, the Museum of African American Culture in New Orleans, and the Peninsula Fine Arts Center to name a few.

Prince has participated in several residencies including the 2014 Artist in Residence at the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, VA, 2012 Keyholder Resident at Pyramid Atlantic in Silver Spring, MD, the 2007 Partners of the Americas Artist in Residence in Santa Catarina, Brazil, and the 2007 Artist in Residence in Winnipeg, Canada with the Invisible Dignity Project.

LEFT  
**Lamentations: Send Your Rain, 2013**  
linoleum cut on paper  
24 x 36"

RIGHT  
**Job: Take Me to the Water, 2013**  
linoleum cut on paper  
24 x 36"