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***SHEILA HELD: RAPPACCINI’S DAUGHTER OPENS APRIL 7***

**First Exhibition in *Women, Nature, Science* Series**

With **Sheila Held: *Rappaccini's Daughter***, Lynden inaugurates a series of occasional exhibitions that investigate the work of artists who have taken women, nature and science as their subject. Seven of Held’s tapestries, including her most recent work, will be on view. The exhibition opens with a reception on Sunday, April 7, 2013 from 3 to 5 pm and remains on view through May 26, 2013. The reception is free and open to the public. A catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Nicholas Frank will interview the artist in the gallery on Sunday, April 21, 2013 at 2 pm as part of **Kites Over Lynden: A Day for Art and Flying.** The Lynden Sculpture Garden is located at 2145 West Brown Deer Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217.

**Images available at:** [**http://lyndensculpturegarden.org/press**](http://lyndensculpturegarden.org/press)

**More information at:** [**http://www.lyndensculpturegarden.org/exhibitions/women-nature-science-sheila-held-rappaccinis-daughter**](http://www.lyndensculpturegarden.org/exhibitions/women-nature-science-sheila-held-rappaccinis-daughter)

Sheila Held works within a traditional form, tapestry weaving, and up-ends it to create images that reflect a visually compelling personal cosmology. Her references are drawn from literature philosophy, and the study of religious and spiritual traditions. The title of the exhibition, *Rappaccini’s Daughter,* comes from one of Held’s tapestries; she, in turn, borrows it from a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, a cautionary tale about the dangers of single-minded pursuits and the sometimes vexed relations between women, nature and science.

Held is quick to point out that Tantra means “weaving,” the vertical warp threads representing *purusha,* the unseen ground of being holding all together, and the horizontal weft threads *maya,* the outward manifestation, ever-varied and visible. According to Held, “Their union forms an image that, like matter itself, appears to be continuous but is in actuality composed of quantified units: materially-speaking fibers, conceptually-speaking pixels.”

Weaving is also a precise and time-consuming process, a statement against the “ephemeral and dispensable.” It speaks to women’s work and the passage of time—one thinks of Penelope at her loom. But there is something undeniably heady about Held’s tapestries. She produces in series, making individual works around a particular theme—*Eros + Thanatos, Phenomena + Noumena, The Art of Memory, Homo Ludens* and *Origins* are represented in this exhibition—over a period of several years, ranging across series and returning to them with new knowledge and experience. She communicates with her viewers by constructing a metaphorical space, both image and idea, in which they can make their own meaning.

Held simultaneously exploits the medium's limitations--the inflexible grid that forms the basis of weaving, the particular ways in which color relationships can develop, the textures that make the surface--and moves beyond them by collaging found images to explore ideas about human existence. Her pieces retain the tactile qualities of weaving but read more like paintings, and that unlikely confluence of idea, image and medium is at once novel and powerful. Whether or not she is addressing women, nature or science explicitly--as in her series *Women + Science* or in individual works like *Rappaccini’s Daughter, The Plantmaster* or *Ecotourism--*Held tries to “access the point where magic, science, religion, art and nature intersect.”

**About the Artist**

Sheila Held’s tapestries have been exhibited in solo and group shows, both locally and around the country, since the 1980s. Recent solo exhibitions include West Bend Art Museum, West Bend, Wisconsin (1999), Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (2004-2005), and the Underwood Gallery, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin (2008). Held has won awards, including a Wisconsin Arts Board Fellowship, and numerous prizes in juried exhibitions. She has executed many commissions, both private and public, including pieces for the Medical College of Wisconsin, Marian College in Fond du Lac, and Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services World Headquarters. Sheila Held received a B.A. in Comparative Religions and English from Western Michigan University in 1968. She is currently a full-time artist working out of her studio in her home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

**About the Lynden Sculpture Garden**

The Lynden Sculpture Garden offers a unique experience of art in nature through its collection of more than 50 monumental sculptures sited across 40 acres of park, lake and woodland. The sculpture garden is open to art and nature lovers of all ages on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 am to 5 pm; and Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon to 5 pm through May 13. Beginning May 14, we stay open until 7:30 pm on Wednesday evenings. Closed Thursdays. Admission to the sculpture garden is $9 for adults and $7 for students and seniors; children under 6 and members are free. Annual memberships are also available.

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