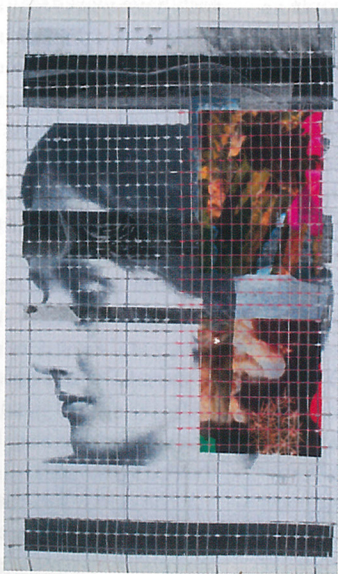


## PREVIEW: *Vermont*

### GAIL SKUDERA: SOLO SHOW

Yester House, Southern Vermont Arts Center • Manchester, VT • [svac.org/yester](http://svac.org/yester) • Through October 6, 2019

Gail Skudera's solo show at Yester House, on the Southern Vermont Arts Center campus, features mixed-media enlarged, altered photographs. Her work, which weaves together old black-and-white photos, threads, knots and beams of color on a loom, seems especially appropriate in a contemporary arts venue whose name is an archaic word for "of or relating to yesterday." While Skudera uses historic imagery ranging from her parents to anonymous



Gail Skudera, *Desert Bloom*, 2018, loom woven-photo and color print on paper with cotton, linen, chenille fibers, 21 1/2 x 17". Photo: Jay York.

people in found photos to famous figures such as Virginia Woolf, her art feels fresh and timely.

The pieces vary in size, but the largest, *Shelter*, is 34 x 24 inches. Skudera started this piece with an enlarged photo she took of her parents in Vermont using a Yoshimura box camera. She then cut the black-and-white image down the middle, with her mother and a Collie on the left and her father on the right. Skudera further cut each half into strips, put the strips in the shed of a loom, and used the loom to inlay wool yarns with a tabby row. The photograph is thereby reconstructed, but—unlike a repaired article of clothing—Skudera intentionally left a visible rift in the middle of the piece with crisscrossed threads holding the two halves together.

This repaired rift is evocative, whether it suggests destruction and reconstruction or a gulf that is always present but usually invisible.

Skudera's pieces are intentionally mysterious, but are grounded in human relationships. People come together in her photos, are torn apart, and then put back together again. While there is a sadness in the deconstruction, Skudera ultimately emphasizes the connections that bring us all together. Or, as in the case of her piece, *Desert Bloom*, Skudera works from a photograph of Virginia Woolf and evokes hopefulness at what an individual's life can be, even in the face of mental illness or other obstacles. Skudera's altered photographs prominently, though not exclusively, feature women and use a loom referencing industry, productivity and women's work—inviting us to consider collaboration as a way to repair problems, whether in an individual relationship or on a global scale.

—Corwin Levi