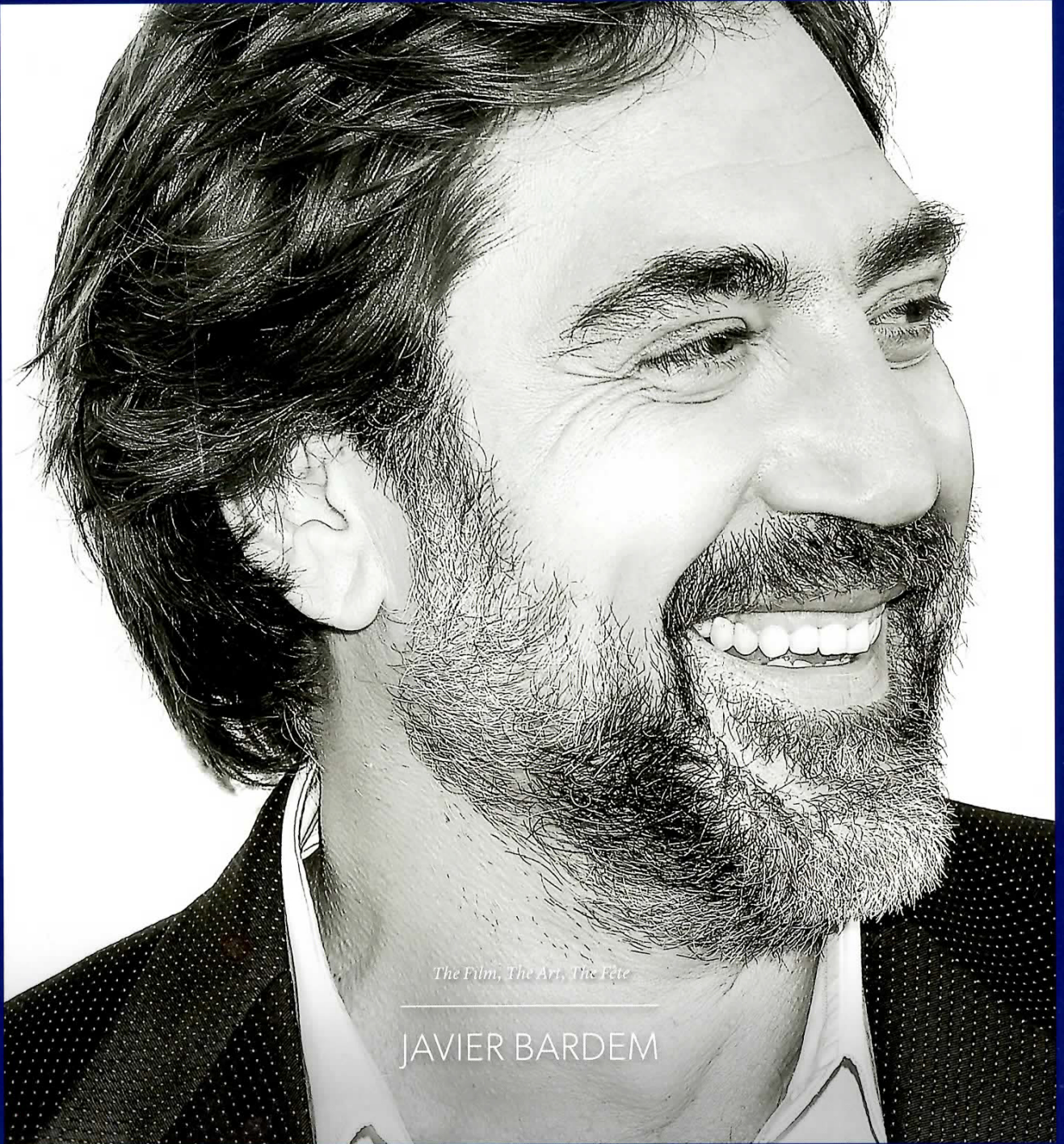


# Festival Style



*The Film, The Art, The Fête*

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JAVIER BARDEM





# *Hanging by a* **Thread**

**THIS PAGE** Neon Bloom (2014–2015), **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP** Ice Crystals (2011), Floating Garden (2014–2015), Living Room (2010–2011), and the artist Amanda McCavour



Amanda McCavour takes embroidery to new heights by stitching ethereal, threaded installations that nostalgically capture familiar spaces.

BY *Sienna Vittoria Lee-Coughlin*

**AMANDA MCCAVOUR SEEMS TO EXIST IN DUALITIES.** Her voice is cheerful yet contemplative; she is an endlessly creative artist that adores mundane paperwork; she's a modern entrepreneur who wears vintage cinched-waist frocks from the fifties; and she creates floating fantasies that are grounded in the reality of their subject matter.

The 32-year-old Canadian artist has spent the last decade crafting whimsical, airy installations made from thread. It started in a drawing class about a decade ago, when a young McCavour defied the two-dimensional nature of a line by drawing with thread, a medium that has a flat appearance yet exists in space.

"At first, I had no idea how to make it happen," she says.


First, she experimented by sewing onto paper that she could rip away, then sewing onto wax that she could melt away. Eventually, she discovered a fabric that dissolved in water, which she could use as a temporary base for her embroidered drawings. With this technique, McCavour was able to create threaded images that remained intact on their own. And while her hanging works of art may look like they're about to unravel, they are in fact firmly stitched together.

"There's a fragility to the thread," she says. "But then on the flipside, the pieces are actually quite strong." It is this dichotomy within McCavour's medium of choice that she finds so fascinating. As an onlooker, it's impossible not to recognize that same quality within the artist as well.

Her early work explored the connection between the fibrous quality of both thread and the human body, and she created small-scale self-portraits that captured the fleeting nature of life. Her works grew in size over time, and she began a large-scale series of immersive, threaded reconstructions of her temporary Toronto rental apartments. Her embroidered outlines hang suspended from the ceiling, creating colourful, dreamlike environments that viewers can walk through.

"I want people to have a sense of being in a space that's sort of unreal," she explains. While her works attempt to capture familiar spaces, they remind us that there is a temporary quality to life that is both eerie and beautiful.

Today, McCavour is prepping for an upcoming exhibition by experimenting with a new digital embroidery machine that mechanically prints out threaded images. Using these new techniques and technology, she continues to push the boundaries of her art, using less and less stitching to solidify her embroidered images as she progresses, slowly learning to trust the fragile material to hold.

The threadbare has never looked so beautiful. 

See Amanda McCavour's work up close this fall at ARTiculations' East Selkirk Gallery in Toronto from September 21–November 5, 2017.

