

GALLERIES

# From Bloom's spiritual palette

By Cate McQuaid | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MAY 23, 2012

**BOB OPPENHEIM:****Dot by Dot**

At: Trustman Art Gallery, Simmons College,

300 The Fenway, through June 1. 617-521-2268, [www.simmons.edu/trustman](http://www.simmons.edu/trustman)**Threads of color, sentiment**

When painter Bob Oppenheim returned to the studio after his wife's death several years ago, he picked up needle and thread to sew fragments of her clothing into collages. The playful works in his show, "Dot by Dot," at the Trustman Art Gallery at Simmons College, are past mourning, but the stitchery remains, and so does the sense of intimacy.



CLEMENTS/HOWCROFT PHOTOGRAPHY

**"Split Field" by Bob Oppenheim, at Trustman Art Gallery at Simmons College.**

Most feature stitches, puncture marks made with needles, and loose threads held down by dots of paint wandering over fields of blue. They bring to mind constellations in night skies, musical notation of improvised jazz, and a child's tattered security blanket.

The turquoise stunner "Split Field" has a roughly sewn scar of a zipper that splits the space, in a domesticated nod to Barnett Newman's more heroic zip paintings. Stray black and white threads fly around it like ribbons around a May pole, each marked by dots of paint.

Oppenheim's use of threads draw the eye to the surface, but layers of paint below often suggest breathable depth. There's no zipper in "Interventions," just untethered threads dotted in candy colors, rambling over a blue-jeans ground glimmering with pale squiggles of light.

It's a big show of nearly 50 small works, with a lyrical installation that allows the paintings to play off and amplify one another. The theme repeats: pulling together, anchoring, and then billowing away. Oppenheim's work embodies loss, and letting go, and finding your way back.

*Cate McQuaid can be reached at [catemcquaid@gmail.com](mailto:catemcquaid@gmail.com).*