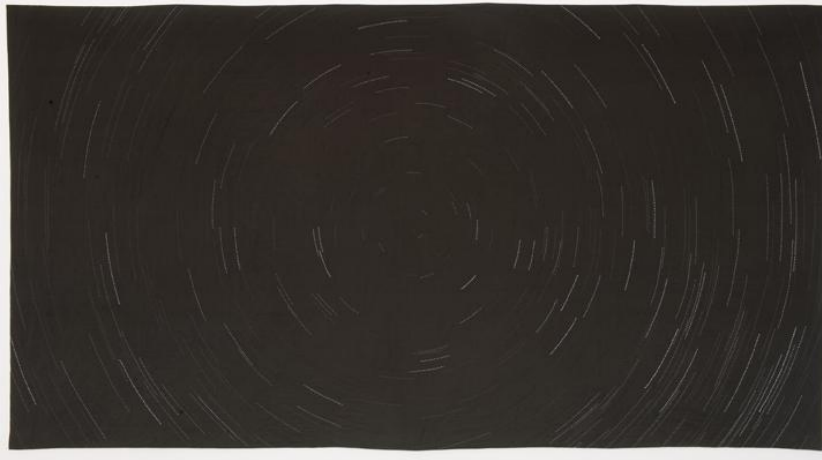


# JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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## PRESS RELEASE



### *Night Watch*

May 3 – June 2, 2012

### Opening Reception

Thurs, May 3, 6 – 8 pm

### Anna Von Mertens:

*The Day Without Yesterday, June 18, 1925,*  
*Mount Wilson Observatory, 2008*  
hand-stitched, hand-dyed cotton  
56 x 103"

Gallery hours are Thurs. to Sat.  
11:00am - 5:00pm or By Appt  
Images are available upon request.

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present *Night Watch*, a small exhibition of work in which the subject is the sky at night. The show includes the work of Vija Celmins, Richard Misrach, and Anna Von Mertens.

In the mid-1960s, Vija Celmins began using photographs from books, magazines, and newspapers that she found at secondhand stores and yard sales as the subject matter for her work. Her exacting depictions of such star-studded night skies are a meticulous result of the artist's interest in the illusionistic process of image making. Her paintings and prints act as metaphor for the stillness of space, and the unsettling vastness associated with it.

Richard Misrach's practice has significantly contributed to the redefinition of landscape photography. His images push the medium beyond documentary into abstraction, reality and metaphor. By exposing the film for a lengthy period of time at night, the artist captures the visual complexities of the movement of stars in the sky above. The delicate pattern of concentric arcs acts like line drawings punctuating the night sky with a rhythm of form.

The subject of Anna Von Mertens' fabric piece is the trajectory of stars across the sky at specific moments in time. Using a computer program to calculate these historic vistas, Von Mertens chooses episodes that reflect who we are as a culture and where we locate ourselves physically and metaphorically in the broader universe. The work considers events when science, religion, and astrology intersect. The dates chosen mark moments of transition; moments in which society moved away from understanding the universe through religious belief to understanding the universe through scientific observation.