

Southwest Contemporary

NEW MEXICO / REVIEW

Nancy Fleming at Axle Contemporary: Socially Distant Home-Feels

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Nancy Fleming, *Good Will Prevail*, 2021, installation view, 2021, Axle Contemporary, Santa Fe, textiles and mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy Axle Contemporary.

Nancy Fleming: Good Will Prevail

May 28–June 20, 2021

Axle Contemporary, Santa Fe

Seeing domestic interiors through a screen has become a familiar pastime for many in the last year, but Nancy Fleming's *Good Will Prevail* installation at Axle Contemporary torques the experience in all the right ways, deconstructing the frame of a personal computer and reconstructing its elements in a mobile, public art space.

The interior of the retrofitted Axle Contemporary art van is clad in Fleming's multi-colored and -patterned textiles. "Sewn, latched, and mosaiced" two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects include a woven backgammon set and checkers board, multiple needlepoint cactus tiles, trout as big as dollar bills, carpet weavings, a life-size crocheted cat,

as well as embroidered miniature houses, trucks, windmill façades, and more. The shifting scale of these objects instills the environment with an ambient instability comprised of unpredictably scaled elements.

A large quilt hangs on one wall with a collection of needlepoint house images and sometimes incomplete phrases like “Home is where the <3 is,” “Bless this Home,” and “Home Sweet H—,” where the stitching of “Home” has been abandoned after the letter H. Fleming has therefore produced a dizzying environment of domestic tropes effecting a maximalist but dowdy kitsch.

In the residual panic of shelter-in-place measures, *Good Will Prevail* evokes an apt anxiety. Covering every surface of the van’s interior (except the ceiling) with decorative textiles feels compensatory and appropriately neurotic—like, *look I can make my space soooooo cozy*—and tipping the overall aesthetic into something wonderfully disconcerting. That tipping point is further emphasized by the glass window over the van’s back door, preventing viewers from stepping inside the tableau and settling into Fleming’s chair. The installation remains physically remote as a result.



A reflected view of Nancy Fleming's *Good Will Prevail* from outside the Axle Contemporary art van. Photo: Caroline Picard.

Reflections on the van’s rear window also obscure some view of the interior, scrambling Fleming’s homage to living space with reflections of the newly liberated and still pandemic-hesitant public walking through the Santa Fe Plaza on a recent Sunday afternoon.

Although Fleming's installation was originally conceived and produced in a thrift store in Grand Rapids, Michigan as part of the [2010 Art Prize](#) and shown later in Gallup, New Mexico, the 2021 iteration of *Good Will Prevail* takes on new resonance. In this setting, after a year of Zooming into the houses of others, one is constantly mediating opposite but simultaneous cues of intimacy and alienation, access and restriction.

Hailing from the Midwest, Fleming got her BFA at the Kansas City Art Institute and moved to Roswell, New Mexico in the early 1990s. She has since served the Roswell Artist-in-Residence program in multiple roles, taught art to middle schoolers, and currently helms the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art as the director.

Axle Contemporary continues to plan exhibitions and art events through the summer, including a *Why is art like an alligator?: An interrogation by Burning Books* that opens June 18 as part of the Currents New Media Festival. The upcoming installation *998* by c marquez of seed pods and plant stalks opens July 2. The art van has also published a [call for performance art](#) to take place in and around the vehicle from July to September.



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CAROLINE PICARD

Caroline Picard, she/her. Caroline Picard is a writer, cartoonist, and curator based in New Mexico. Art criticism and comics have appeared in *Art Forum*, *Hyperallergic*, the *Paris Review*, and *Visual Art Source*, among others. She started the Green Lantern Press in 2005.