

***BREAKING TRADITION:
CONTEMPORARY
APPROACHES TO THE
DECORATIVE ARTS***

FALL EXHIBITIONS 2020
FRONT GALLERY

Historically, the decorative arts have been classified as functional and beautiful objects—from furniture to vessels—by a Western world perspective that is governed by dealers and collectors. The decorative arts market privileges purity of form, material, and a prescribed demonstration of skill over individual creative expression and ingenuity. But this narrow view of the genre excludes a wide array of perspectives from the makers that produce these objects and the communities with whom they identify.

Decorative arts objects have an impact far beyond monetary gain, serving to bridge cultural divides by representing shared interests. As artifacts, these objects reveal the belief systems, social status, and affiliations of their first owners. Through the emergence of global trade routes, different countries began to adopt decorative motifs and forms from other parts of the world, signifying the complex history that is embedded within the objects.

By investigating how they identify with the decorative arts as makers, the three artists featured in *Breaking Tradition* provide an alternative context that allows this antiquated genre to be seen in a new light. With an in-depth knowledge of their craft, furniture maker Sophie Glenn, ceramicist Steven Young Lee, and glass artist Beth Lipman draw upon their understanding of material and technique to

question the decorative arts hierarchy, while connecting the loaded histories of these objects with the present. Poking holes in the purity of this genre, they challenge the rules that have guided the field since before the turn of the 20th Century and offer up different ways for all to identify and investigate decorative arts traditions.

—Kathryn Hall, HCCC Curator

To learn more about the exhibition, please visit crafthouston.org/breakingtradition.

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Históricamente, las artes decorativas se han clasificado como objetos funcionales y hermosos, desde muebles hasta vasijas, según una perspectiva del mundo occidental que se rige por comerciantes y coleccionistas. El mercado de las artes decorativas privilegia la pureza de forma, material y una demostración prescrita de habilidad sobre la expresión creativa individual y el ingenio. Pero esta visión estrecha del género excluye una amplia gama de perspectivas de los creadores que producen estos objetos y las comunidades con las que se identifican.

Los objetos de artes decorativas tienen un impacto mucho más allá de la ganancia monetaria, ya que sirven para salvar las diferencias culturales al representar intereses compartidos. Como artefactos, estos objetos revelan los sistemas de creencias, el estatus social y las afiliaciones de sus primeros dueños. A través del surgimiento de rutas comerciales globales, diferentes países comenzaron a adoptar motivos y formas decorativas de otras partes del mundo, indicando la compleja historia que está incrustada dentro de los objetos.

Al investigar cómo se identifican con las artes decorativas como creadores, los tres artistas que aparecen en *Breaking Tradition*, brindan un contexto alternativo que permite que este género anticuado se vea bajo una nueva luz. Con un conocimiento profundo de su oficio, la fabricante de muebles Sophie Glenn, el ceramista Steven Young Lee y la artista del vidrio Beth Lipman, se basan en su comprensión del material y la técnica para cuestionar la jerarquía de las artes decorativas, mientras conectan las historias cargadas de estos objetos con la presente. Al exponer los puntos débiles de la pureza de este género, desafían las reglas que han guiado el campo desde antes del comienzo del siglo XX y ofrecen diferentes maneras para que todos puedan identificar e investigar las tradiciones de las artes decorativas.

—Kathryn Hall, Conservadora

Para obtener más información sobre la exposición, visita crafthouston.org/breakingtradition.

Steven Young Lee (Helena, Montana)

Vase with Yellow Glaze and Lobed Rim, 2020

Porcelain and glaze

Courtesy of the artist

Sophie Glenn (Starkville, Mississippi)

Purple Reign, 2019

Painted and rusted steel

Courtesy of the artist

Steven Young Lee (Helena, Montana)

Gourd Vase with Bats and Clouds, 2019

Porcelain, cobalt inlay, glaze

Courtesy of Duane Reed Gallery

Steven Young Lee (Helena, Montana)

Jar with Scroll Pattern, 2017

Porcelain, cobalt pigment, glaze

Courtesy of Duane Reed Gallery

Steven Young Lee (Helena, Montana)

Maebyeong Vase with Birds, 2020

Porcelain, copper inlay, glaze

Courtesy of the artist

Left to right:

Beth Lipman (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin)

Distill #10, 2015

Cast iron, enamel, chrome with rust patina

Courtesy of the artist and Cade Tompkins Projects

Distill #12, 2015

Cast iron with rust patina

Courtesy of the artist

Distill #14, 2015

Cast iron and chrome with rust patina

Courtesy of the artist and Cade Tompkins Projects

Beth Lipman (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin)

Still Life with Candlestick, Cheese, and Figs, 2006

C-print face mounted to acrylic

Edition of 8

Courtesy of the artist

Beth Lipman (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin)

Gazing Ball with Lemon and Fly, 2014

C-print mounted to aluminum with gloss laminate

Courtesy of the artist

Beth Lipman (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin)

Cheese and Fruit, 2013

C-print face mounted to acrylic

Edition of 3

Courtesy of the artist

Beth Lipman (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin)

Chalice at Priest's Rock, Lake Clark, AK, 2014

C-print mounted to aluminum with gloss laminate

Courtesy of the artist

Left to right:

Sophie Glenn (Starkville, Mississippi)

Rebel Rebel, 2017

Painted and rusted steel and annealed wire

Courtesy of the artist

Moonstruck, 2020

Rusted steel

Courtesy of the artist