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Aug. 3, 2009

Fact Sheet “Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009”

Exhibition

“Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009”
Aug. 7 – Jan. 3, 2010

Where

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum
Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W.

Description

“Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009,” the fourth in a biennial exhibition series, presents the work of ceramic artist Christyl Boger, fiber artist Mark Newport, glass artist Mary Van Cline and ceramic artist SunKoo Yuh. These artists depart in significant ways from long-standing craft traditions by discarding the baseline rationale of crafts, their functionality, to create narrative artworks that confound old categories. As the exhibition title suggests, theatrical elements, including props, costumes and narration, bind together the 58 artworks included in the exhibition. Kate Bonansinga, director and chief curator of the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts at the University of Texas at El Paso, is the guest curator.

Boger (b. 1959), an assistant professor at Indiana University in Bloomington, creates large-scale gilded ceramic figurines that incorporate props such as inflatable toys. Newport (b. 1964), artist-in-residence and head of the fiber department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., examines issues of masculinity through knitted superhero costumes. Van Cline (b. 1954), who lives and works in Seattle, creates large black-and-white photographs and encases them in glass to create staged environments. Yuh (b. 1960), an associate professor at the University of Georgia in Athens, creates densely layered ceramic sculptures and drawings that compress multiple figures into a complex story.

Free Public Programs

Several free public programs are planned in conjunction with the exhibition, including an Artists’ Roundtable, moderated by Bonansinga, Friday, Sept. 25, at 6 p.m. in the McEvoy Auditorium in the museum’s main building (Eighth and F streets N.W.). Details are available at americanart.si.edu/calendar.

Publication

A catalog with essays by Bonansinga and biographies for each artist is available in the museum’s store and online for \$24.95 (softcover).

Credit

The Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation generously supports “Staged Stories: Renwick Craft Invitational 2009.”

The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Metro stations: Farragut North and Farragut West. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information: (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.
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