

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES EXPLORED IN EXHIBITION OF DRAMATIC FIGURATIVE CERAMICS OPENS SEPTEMBER 24, 2013 AT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

Twenty-Four International Artists Featured, Many for the First Time in the United States



New York, NY (June 27, 2013) – The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) will present *Body & Soul: New International Ceramics*, an exhibition featuring the work of 24 international ceramic artists addressing critical social and political issues through figurative sculpture. By way of clay, the figure becomes a catalyst for exploring the impact of contemporary pressures confronting societies today. *Body & Soul* will offer visitors a rare opportunity to experience a diverse range of ceramic artistry and expression. The exhibition will be on view at MAD September 24, 2013 – March 2, 2014.

In recent years, the human figure has experienced a renaissance among artists around the world. *Body & Soul* draws attention to the power of the figure to convey strong emotions and to the versatility of ceramics as a medium for artistic expression through works that address societal, political, and personal views. Themes explored in the exhibition include gun violence, bullying, rebellion, sexual abuse, anxiety, and identity. The exhibition will highlight several artists who will be shown in New York for the first time. Many of these artists came to clay as painters, draftsmen, or sculptors. Adopting the medium of clay, they create powerful, engaging, and provocative work each inspired by his or her own experience as a participant or observer of contemporary society and culture.

“The artist with a social conscience who models in clay strives to capture an immediacy and a passion through tactile manipulation. With a focused purpose, he or she creates a specific message of historical or current concern, giving voice to a cause,” said Guest Curator Wendy Tarlow Kaplan. “*Body & Soul* underscores the ability of the human form to convey intense emotions, and we feel privileged to bring this important work together for the first time, and to address the human condition with raw power and pathos.”

Exhibition highlights include:

- Mounir Fatmi, (Morocco, b. 1970; lives in FR), *Forget*, 2010, an installation of several ceramic skulls wearing hard hats comments on the fragility of both body and brain, and the hard demands of physical labor and work.
- Teresa Gironés, (SP, b. 1941), *Victima [Victim]*, 2012, a poignant representation of a woman unable to speak out against her abuser; the raw treatment of the clay expresses the anger of the incident.
- Michel Gouèry, (FR, b. 1959) *Riri, Fifi*, 2006, a sardonic pair of seated female bodies with no distinguishable facial features: empty vessels without identity, encased in a restrictive armor, and rendered powerless.
- Elsa Sahal, (FR, b. 1975) *Pieds Noirs/Black Feet*, 2010, depicts the memory of bias and hostility by the French people to French immigrants from North Africa.
- Kim Simonsson (Finland, b. 1974) *Untitled*, 2013, and *Carrie II*, 2009, eerie, dramatic, and forceful depictions of children, contrasting innocence with a sense of impending violence.

“From ancient Greece through the Etruscans and Romans to the Renaissance and, ultimately, to the twenty-first century, clay has remained a powerful and immediate way of expressing ideas,” added David Revere McFadden, William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, Museum of Arts and Design. “Since 1956, when the Museum of Arts and Design opened in its first manifestation as the Museum of Contemporary Craft, we have underscored our commitment to ceramics in general, and ceramic sculpture in particular. The MAD collections include landmark works by such luminaries as Robert Arneson and Viola Frey, both of whom concentrated their vision on the human figure and its perpetually evolving nature. *Body and Soul: New International Ceramics* is the latest manifestation of how the humble and quotidian material born of the earth itself once again claims center stage in contemporary art.”

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

Body & Soul: New International Ceramics is organized by the Museum of Arts and Design and curated by guest curators Wendy Tarlow Kaplan, Laurent de Verneuil, and Martin S. Kaplan with David Revere McFadden, William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, Museum of Arts and Design.

Major support for *Body & Soul: New International Ceramics* is provided by George Abrams, Kate and Gerald Chertavian, Chubb Insurance, Friends of Contemporary Ceramics, the Glassman Family Fund at the Boston Foundation, Hunt Alternatives Fund, Nancy Klavans, Cheryl and Philip Milstein, David and Susan Rockefeller, Michael and Karen Rotenberg, Shepherd Kaplan LLC, Lisbeth Tarlow, five anonymous donors, with additional support from a group of private donors.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated 128-page color publication, featuring images of each of the works in the exhibition and full artist biographies, with essays by David Revere McFadden, William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, Museum of Arts and Design; Wendy Tarlow Kaplan, Guest Curator; Laurent de Verneuil, Guest Curator; and additional essays on figurative ceramics, gender issues, and violence by leading scholars. This catalogue will significantly contribute to the discourse on the power of figurative ceramics to express emotion and address serious identity, social, and political issues.



ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design explores the intersection between art, design, and craft today. The Museum focuses on contemporary creativity and the ways in which artists and designers from around the world transform materials through processes ranging from the artisanal to digital. The Museum’s exhibition program explores and illuminates issues and ideas, highlights creativity and craftsmanship, and celebrates the limitless potential of materials and techniques when used by gifted and innovative artists. MAD’s permanent collection is global in scope and focuses on art, craft, and design from 1950 to the present day. At the center of the Museum’s mission is education. The Museum’s dynamic new facility features classrooms and studios for master classes, seminars, and workshops for students, families, and adults. Three open artist studios engage visitors in the creative processes of artists at work and enhance the exhibition programs. Lectures, films, performances, and symposia related to the Museum’s collection and topical subjects affecting the world of contemporary art, craft, and design are held in a renovated 144-seat auditorium.






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