

WEXLER GALLERY

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New Visions

Jen Blazina, Amber Cowan, Stacey Lee Webber, & Joanna Manousis



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March 1 - April 27, 2013

PHILADELPHIA- Wexler Gallery will feature ***New Visions***, an exhibition of dynamic sculptural works in glass, metal, and mixed media by Philadelphia based artists **Jen Blazina, Amber Cowan, Joanna Manousis**, and **Stacey Lee Webber**. The show will run March 1 - April 27, 2013. An Opening Reception will take place First Friday, March 1st from 5 – 8pm.

Jen Blazina creates mixed media objects and installations, incorporating materials such as cast glass, steel, resin, fabric, and ink. Reflecting on her own personal history and childhood memories, Blazina draws inspiration from family photographs and belongings that have been passed down to her through generations. Concentrating on narratives combining self-portraiture and appropriated family snap-shots, Blazina's work explores concepts regarding memory, the passage of time, and personal moments delineating rites of passage.

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According to the artist:

My installations use photographs to create a pathway into the past. These pictures present us with an untouchable place we can only re-visit again through memory... My collections represent a sense of holding onto a place in time. By re-creating these objects through casting and re-fabrication, I recast the history of these objects in as part of my own current voice.

Blazina received her M.F.A. in printmaking from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1996, her B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College in New York in 1991 and her B.F.A., cum laude, from the State University of New York at Purchase College in 1994. Her work has exhibited on a national and international level. Highlighted solo exhibitions include: Garden of Decadence, Pictura, Dordrecht, Netherlands; Oracle, Kunstoffice, Berlin, Germany; and Bittersweet at Scuola di Graphica, Venice, Italy. She is currently a professor of fine arts at Drexel University.

Sculptor **Amber Cowan** works with recycled materials, typically American pressed glass from the 1940's to the 1980's. Using techniques such as flame-working, blowing, and hot-sculpting, Cowan creates beautifully detailed and complex sculptures that reference patterns of growth found in nature. While her pieces may appear floral at first glance, their compositions also reference natural phenomenon, tension, and expansion through viral repetition. According to Cowan:

"My work involves process driven creation using repetition and manipulation of simple forms. I am interested in creating compositions that are beautifully inviting yet have a corporeal intangibility that is also repelling. From a distance the evocative form and pallet lure the viewer into treacherous lairs of dangerous beauty."

Cowan earned an MFA in Glass/Ceramics from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia and a BFA in 3-Dimensional Design with a concentration in Glass from Salisbury University. With over ten years of experience working with glass, Cowan was recently awarded the 2012 International Procter Fellowship at The Australian National University and The Steve Stormer Award from Temple University. She has lectured at the 2011 International Flameworking Conference at Salem Community College and was a resident artist at The Toledo Museum of Art for the Toledo Workshop Revisited Residency. Cowan is currently a faculty member of the glass department at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia.

Stacey Lee Webber is best known for her sculptural work made from altered discarded or rarely used currency. Taking the form of traditional tools such as hammers, screwdrivers, and saws, the artist's *Craftsmen Series* is celebration of the history of American blue-collar labor. Honoring the working class families which make up the heart of American culture, Webber aims to make art objects that exist as declarations of the importance of the handmade. According to Webber:

"The Craftsmen Series evokes American iconography and pride in the working class hero. In contemporary American society, pennies have become nostalgic coins, often discarded and rarely used as currency. Seeing these superfluous coins manipulated with skill and precision into basic workingman's tools glorifies not only the object, but also the material."

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With an MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a BFA from Ball State University, Webber's work can be found in collections across the United States. Her work has exhibited in group and solo shows on a national level, highlights include exhibits at The Society for Contemporary Craft in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and *the Metal Museum* in Memphis, Tennessee. In 2012, the artist was also included in the Smithsonian American Art Museum Remwick Gallery's exhibition "*40 under 40: Craft Futures / American Art.*" She presently teaches Metalsmithing at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

British born artist and designer, **Joanna Manousis** creates narrative works in glass and mixed media that speak of human emotion, memory and the passage of time. Using the physical nature of glass as a metaphor for the human condition, much of the artists work is reflective, both physically and symbolically. Her newest body of work, which incorporates taxidermy elements, explores the relationship of between what is reality and what is mimicry.

According to the artist:

"My work captures and animates luminal moments, revealing a world in which objects, beings and places are interconnected and in flux. I re-appropriate objects that exist in the world as a device to lure and engage a universal audience. Through spatial configuration, context and material I use the information connected with them as objects to bring about an extended dialogue."

Holding an MFA in Sculpture from Alfred University, New York, and a BFA from The University of Wolverhampton, England, Manousis has worked, studied and taught in Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Manousis earned a Bombay Sapphire Award nomination for 'Excellence in Glass' in 2008, as well as the first 'Hans Godo Frabel Award' for 'Outstanding Achievement in Glass' in 2010. The artist has participated in residencies at The Museum of Art and Design, NYC, Corning Glass Museum, NY and The Cité Internationale des Arts, France. Her work can be seen in the permanent collections at Ebeltoft Glass Museet, Denmark and the Cafesjian Center for the Arts, Yerevan, Armenia.

Fascinated by the notion of challenging traditional labels that categorize art, Wexler Gallery exhibits work that can coexist in the worlds of design, fine art, decorative art and craft. By questioning and challenging the boundaries of these fields, we aim to present functional and non-functional work that consistently celebrates innovation. Unified by a commitment to excellent craftsmanship and true dedication to their art, we are proud to showcase some of the world's most esteemed artists working in their areas of pursuit.

The 5,600 square foot gallery opened in 2000 in the historic district of Old City, Philadelphia. Since then, the gallery has proudly showcased extraordinary work by both master artists and the emerging talent of today.

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Jen Blazina

Transience, 2009

Cast crystal, found purse chains

Dimensions available upon request

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Jen Blazina

Memento

Cast crystal, screen-print, wire

3 X 5"

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Amber Cowan

Algae Bowl, 2013

Flamed-worked, fused, and slumped recycled glass (wine bottles)

19 X 19 X 4 1/2 inches

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Amber Cowan

Frost Bowl, 2013

Flame-worked, fused, and slumped glass

19 X 19 X 4 1/2 inches

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Stacey Lee Webber

The Craftsmen Series: Saw, 2012

Pennies, brass cast 'liberty' from pennies

L x H x W: varies

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Stacey Lee Webber

Portraits of Post Industrial Americans: Large Bouquet, 2012

Brass screws, brass, bronze

L x H x W: 12" x 24" x 12"

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Joanna Manousis

Fertile Ground, 2012

Cast crystal, flame-worked glass, taxidermied peacock and metal stand
17 X 15 X 81 inches

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Joanna Manousis

Inverted Vanitas Series, 2010

Blown, pate de verre, lampworked, and mirrored glass, with found objects
Approx. 5.75" X 7.5" X 5.5"