



PHOTO: RICHARD GOODBODY © PAUL SEIDE



PHOTO: RICHARD GOODBODY © 1978 TOM MCGLAUCHLIN

Paul Seide (US, born 1949), 'Radio Light', 1985, blown glass, mercury and argon gas, 41.9 x 42.5 cm. Toledo Museum of Art. Gift of Dorothy and George Saxe

Tom McGlauchlin (US, 1934–2011), 'Dessin de Bulle', 1978, vase, glass, blown, cased, flashed and cut, ht 22.5 cm. Toledo Museum of Art

COLOR IGNITED: GLASS 1962–2012

Wolfe Gallery, The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio, 13 June–9 September, 2012

TOLEDO, Ohio has long been referred to as "The Glass City" owing to the fact that many large glass manufacturing companies were founded and continue to operate within its city limits. But even many Toledo residents don't know that the city was also the birthplace of one of the 20th century's most important innovations in art glass: the American Studio Glass Movement.

The movement began with two seminal workshops at The Toledo Museum of Art in 1962, in which artists trained in ceramics experimented with glass as an artistic medium. Previously, glass was considered a strictly industrial material used to manufacture utilitarian items in a factory setting. The workshops were led by Harvey K. Littleton, one of the movement's



PHOTO: TIM THAYER © 1990 HARVEY K. LITTLETON

Harvey Littleton (US, born 1922), 'Blue/Ruby Spray from the Crown Series', 1990, blown clear and coloured glass, multiple cased overlays, largest of the pieces 43.1 x 9.8 x 34.7 cm. Toledo Museum of Art



PHOTO: © JUDITH SCHAECHTER

Judith Schaechter (US, born 1961), 'Nature', 2010, stained glass lightbox, 68.6 x 106.7 x 15.2 cm. Image courtesy Claire Oliver Gallery, New York

earliest evangelists, who demonstrated how a small glass-melting furnace could be used by artists in their own studios, creating their own works of glass art. The workshops fostered the talents of artists who are now considered pioneers of studio glass, including Toledo glass visionary Dominick Labino, and by extension helped revitalise studio glass in post-war Europe.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of the American Studio Glass Movement, and its proud parents – The Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) and the City of Toledo – have planned weeks of celebration. At the forefront of the festivities were two museum events: the Toledo Workshop Revisited Residency, held in March, which featured a working re-creation of the furnace used in the 1962 workshops, and a landmark exhibition, "Color Ignited: Glass 1962-2012", which opens concurrently with the Glass Art Society 2012 international conference.

International in scope, "Color Ignited" showcases studio glass created during the past half-century, spotlighting pivotal work by Toledo Workshop participants and by major artists working in the medium since then. The exhibition focuses on the role of colour in artistic expression – a subject much on Labino's mind during the early years of the movement. Because Labino worked in production glass at Toledo manufacturer John's Manville, he already had a working knowledge of the science of glass when he attended the 1962 workshop, but he was intrigued by the chemistry of colour, experimenting with different materials to achieve new hues. He also believed that colour was a primary determiner of shape.

'Certain colours and forms complement each other,' said Labino. 'If you blow clear glass you're at a loss as to what to make. The colour of the glass dictates the form.'

Co-curators of "Color Ignited", Jutta-Annette Page, curator of glass and decorative arts at the Toledo Museum of Art, and Peter Morrin, director emeritus of the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Ky., have brought together approximately 80 objects from private collections, galleries, other museums and the TMA's own collection. Included are works by Littleton, Labino, Marvin Lipofsky, Dale Chihuly, Dan Dailey, Judith Schaechter, Ginny Ruffner and Klaus Moje.

'We have pieces from the original Toledo workshops by the late Tom McGauchlin and Edith Franklin, and we also have fused glass, neon

glass, mirrored pieces and sculptures,' Page said. 'The variety of objects is quite impressive'

That variety will be on exhibition in the museum's new Frederic and Mary Wolfe Gallery of Contemporary Art. The Wolfe Gallery space was the home of the museum's glass collection until 2003, when construction commenced on the TMA Glass Pavilion. TMA director Brian Kennedy appreciates the serendipity of exhibiting "Color Ignited" in the new Wolfe Gallery. 'This is a full-circle moment for the Toledo Museum of Art, as our former glass gallery has been remodeled to display contemporary art,' Kennedy said. 'What better way to inaugurate the space than by displaying the work of the leading studio glass artists of our time.'

Another facet of the 50th anniversary celebration occurred in March with the Toledo Workshop Revisited Residency. This 10-day intensive studio event, co-sponsored by the Robert Minkoff Foundation, allowed three artists-in-residence, Kim Harty, Amber Cowan and Matthew Szösz, to recreate the furnace built for the original 1962 workshop and blow glass with the same glass marble batch as that used by the first workshop participants. Jeff Mack, TMA's glass studio manager, called it a tribute to the small-scale furnace design that made the Studio Glass Movement possible and the pioneer spirit of the original workshop team.

'Today, we take the glass furnace and studio for granted,' Mack said. 'You can walk into a studio with only a bag of your favorite tools and start making glass. In the early days you needed a few more items,



PHOTO: RICHARD GOODBODY © 2008 YOICHI OHIRA

Yoichi Ohira (Japanese, active Italy, born 1946), 'Untitled', 2003, from 'Murrine Incise' series, blown glass, cut, engraved, diam. 19.7 x 31.8 cm



PHOTO: RICHARD GOODBODY © 2008 DEBORAH HORRELL

because if you wanted to make glass the first order of business was usually to build a furnace.' Mack calls it a literal illustration of how far the studio movement has progressed in furnace technology over the past 50 years.

'The studio furnace began evolving from the moment it was built – artists modified the furnaces to meet their individual needs,' notes Mack. 'But today, because of the

Dog furnaces, which arrived at the museum shrink-wrapped on a pallet with no assembly required. Studio Glass Movement, there are companies solely devoted to building furnaces and studio equipment. Artists can focus on their craft because someone else is focusing on making the perfect furnace.'



PHOTO: © 1989 TOOTS ZYNSKY

Toots Zynsky (US, born 1951), 'City Lights', 1993, filet de verre, fused and thermoformed, 17.1 x 33 x 22.9 cm. Private collection, Hoffman-Hall

In honour of the anniversary, the Glass Art Society has chosen "The Glass City" as the site of its 2012 conference, June 13–16. Expected to bring as many as 2,500 artists and glass enthusiasts to Toledo, the conference also offers regional residents an opportunity to experience the movement that started in their city. Events to be held in conjunction with the conference include exhibitions and glassmaking demonstrations at galleries and special venues throughout the area.

CAI



Artwork springs from personal experience with cancer

By **Tim Feran**

Dispatch Entertainment Reporter

For artist Deborah Horrell, her latest work has a significance beyond the usual pride in creation.

Discovery/Recovery/Flight, which is on permanent display in the lobby of the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Research Institute at The Ohio State University, is derived from the Columbus artist's personal experience.

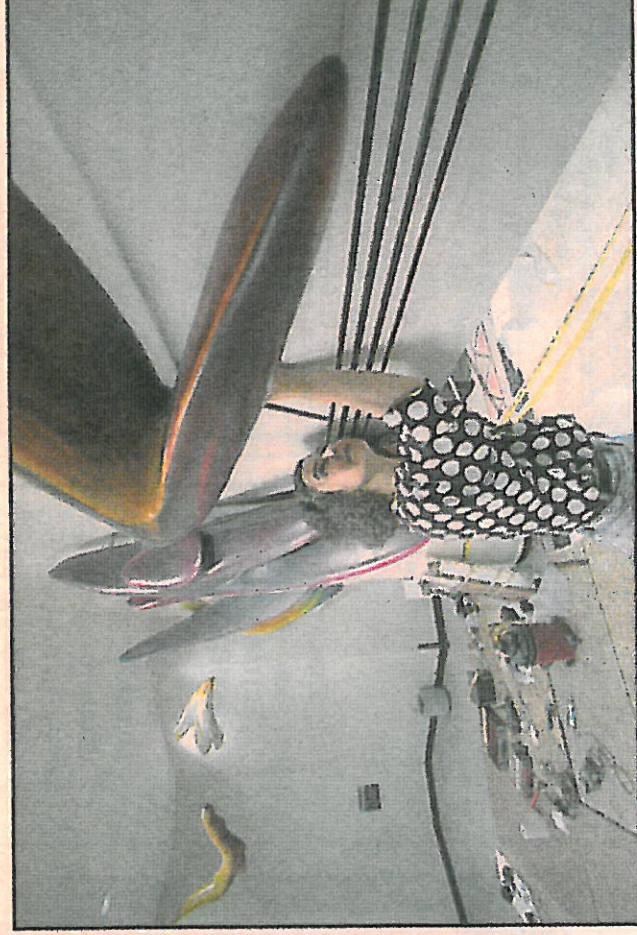
"I had breast cancer about 10 years ago, so my concern is rather intimate," she said, while helping workers from Scioto Erectors install the piece last week. "That makes me able to interpret the pain and struggle of the patients here."

The work is meant to illustrate the stages through which a cancer patient passes, she said. Its abstract pieces represent learning about the illness, dealing with it and finally escaping from its grasp.

"The central pieces are about turmoil — the forms are dark, chaotic — showing the emotional upheaval," she said.

"A lot of the forms are about flight and escape. They're meant to flow from a low point upward in a continuum of motion from the center point out."

Those feelings of turmoil were especially pronounced in her case.



Tom Dodge/Dispatch

Deborah Horrell checks out *Discovery/Recovery/Flight*

"I was living in Seattle, and at that time, radiation therapy was not common. I'm happy that people now don't have to struggle with the options as much as I did."

Her artistic struggle was far less serious, but a struggle nevertheless.

After a competition in which artists submitted ideas for their works, Horrell was given the go-ahead to make a model of her concept. Approval from the contest's judges finally set her into motion.

Funding for the work and the competition that led to it came from private donors, Bernard and Florine Ruben. Mr. Ruben is a member of the Ohio Cancer Foundation Board. The Rubens gave \$1 million to the hospital, a portion of which was earmarked for the lobby and artwork.

"It took six months to make," Horrell said. "And I had lots of assistants."

Although the work conveys feelings of flight, Horrell sculpted many

of the pieces out of large, heavy pieces of poplar. "One piece alone weighs 300 pounds."

The chunks of wood are so heavy, in fact, that the middle pieces had to be made of polystyrene and Bondo — normally used for auto repair — and painted with oil. The wall on which the pieces hang wouldn't bear the weight in the heavier medium.

Horrell sculpted the wooden pieces using several sizes of chain saws, grinders, power sanders and, ultimately, by sanding by hand. The pieces then were covered with aluminum and copper leafing, and Horrell scratched the coatings to give them the look of paint. Finally, the wood was laminated.

Although the idea was in part an outgrowth of her own experience, Horrell said she fabricated a model of the artwork only after talking to people at the hospital.

"It's very much a collaboration." Part of that collaboration is the artwork's parting, hopeful interaction with its intended audience.

Unlike the other pieces, which hang on or near the wall opposite the cancer center's entrance, the last piece — a powerful slab of wood that seems ready to take flight — sits on a ledge directly above the entrance.

"The final piece is intended to be seen by people who are leaving," Horrell said, smiling.

A quarter-century of quality

By **VICTORIA BLAKE**
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Every few months, it seems, one of Portland's many art institutions mounts a big-tent show. From the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art to Disjecta to the late Modern Zoo, the shows come like clockwork to celebrate an anniversary, to beat the money trees or to raise the battle cry for the next big thing. More art circus than art show, not always do the big-tent events impress, and rarely do they leave a mark that lasts beyond the sell-by date of the opening's hors d'oeuvres.

Not so with Marylhurst University's Art Gym's 25th anniversary show, which succeeds partly because it limits itself in scope. The show, called "drawing(s): 40+ artists/200 works," displays nearly 200 pieces by 40 artists, some of them newcomers to The Art Gym walls but most included in previous shows. All of the pieces are drawings of one sort or another, whether made by pencil, ink or hair on paper, postcards or Polaroids.

The limitation gives the show focus, but also depth. A work by Ty Ennis hangs next to one by Tad Savinar. Linda Hutchins shares space with Michael Brophy. One artist might be more accomplished with line, another more accomplished with color and shape.

The show crackles with the fusion and fission energy of the artistic chance encounter. Abstract pieces set off the figurative line, and realism casts a knowing nod to surrealism, all within the same gallery space.

Within such a rich context, highlights are chosen less by quality and more by taste. Four remarkable pieces by Pat Boas show a tail-like coil winding and twisting in on itself, a complicated, inscrutable Gordian knot that, despite the abstraction, seem to have a real-world weight. The



TORSTEN KJELLSTRAND/THE OREGONIAN

Artists Paul Sutinen (from left), Deborah Horrell, George Johanson and Kristan Kennedy participated in a public talk with Art Gym director Terri Hopkins (far right) in honor of the Gym's 25th anniversary show.

review

drawing(s):
40+ artists/200 works

Where: The Art Gym,
Marylhurst University, 17600
Pacific Highway

Hours: Noon-4 p.m. Tuesday-
Sunday

Closes: Dec. 11

twists of the knot are decorated in animal prints, from tabby cat to tropical bird, and the patterns blend into each other with an M.C. Escher fluidity. The pieces are a celebration of form for form's sake and, compared to other works hanging nearby — Henk Pander's eerily realistic ink drawings of airplane parts in a

mechanical graveyard, for instance — they seem playful and irreverent but not coy.

The coyness and humor is left to Stephen O'Donnell's meticulous representation of 19th-century fashion. His male models — hairy, flat chested, stiff legged — are placed in women's clothing, poured into them like soup into a plastic bag. He titles the pieces for effect. "1800 — Toilette necessitante des tetons peints (Attire necessitante rouged boobies)," for instance, showcases a model's apelike chest and small, man-sized nipples with a dress so low cut that most movie stars would be embarrassed to wear it. The figure acts surprised, a modern time-traveler transported into a compromising closet.

Perhaps the most telling piece in the show is the first the viewer

sees on walking into the gallery. Savinar's "All I Could Remember in Ten Minutes About 28 Years of the Portland Art Community" is a mental mind map using columns of names — of prominent galleries, art dealers, artists and art critics — connected with colored-pencil lines. The piece provides a good snapshot of the Portland art scene as experienced by Savinar in 2001, a Who's Who and what's what of the interconnected art world.

Like The Art Gym itself, the anniversary show makes no claims to be other than what it is. It will continue to do what it has become accomplished at doing: showing solid work from Northwest artists in a gallery space that does the work justice.

Twenty-five years of that is a pretty good start.

Kiln joy: a red-hot genre of glass

By HARVEST HENDERSON
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Something about its weight and fragility, its exacting yet fluid nature, gives the best glass work a unique standing, transfixing viewers on both sides of the tenuous juncture of art and craft. Yet while many people immediately recognize blown glass, shaped by an ephemeral combination of fire and breath, fewer are familiar with the equally mesmerizing, ancient technique of kiln-forming.

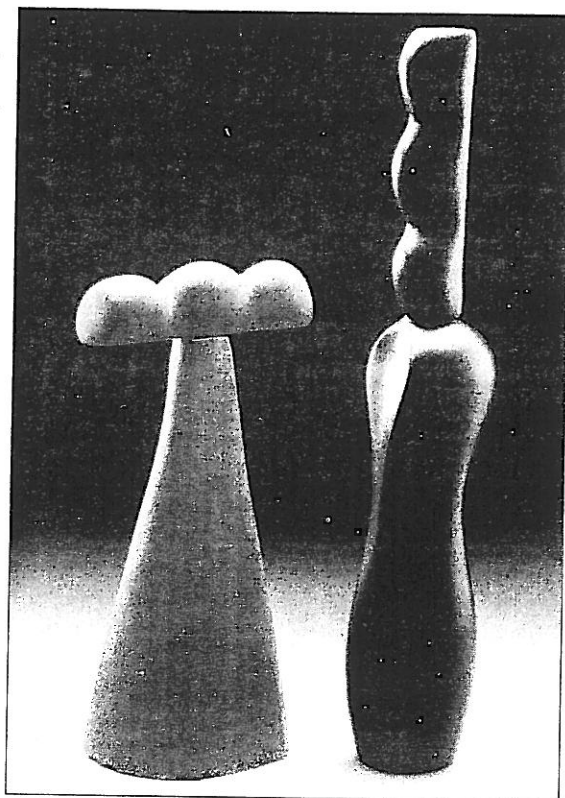
Kiln-forming — fusing or shaping glass in a kiln, usually in a mold and with vigilance to time and temperature — was practiced centuries prior to the Roman advent of glassblowing, and is resurging in popularity among contemporary artists.

At the Contemporary Crafts Museum & Gallery this month, four Oregon artists — Mel George, Scott Schroeder, Deborah Horrell and Jeremy Lepisto — make it clear why in a show called "Coefficients: A Selection of Contemporary Kiln-Formed Glass."

In George's world, ruled notepaper made of glass is smoothed by a tiny bauble of an iron. A glass bathtub no more than five inches long and filled with clear, blue glass water is accessible to imaginary bathers via a diminutive red ladder, and dioramic glass towels hang delicately on a metal towel bar, decorated with domestic symbols: fork, knife, dish.

George's work is a fluent translation of common objects into glass, and it is a fluency of both presentation and content. In "Wells," three small, glass inkwells on a simple wooden shelf depict declining levels of oil-black glass "ink" that allude to issues of resource depletion, showing that George's impish double-takes on scale and utility sheathe a sharper commentary on issues far larger than her diminutive works.

Lepisto's work is cleanly distilled and architecturally minded, like the graceful, straightened-boomerang shape of "Disintegrating Details," which describes the



Deborah Horrell's "Struck by Lightning" is one of many accomplished pieces at the Contemporary Crafts Museum & Gallery. The current show features four artists, including Horrell, who explore the possibilities of kiln-formed glass art.

underside of a bridge in thick, ultramarine glass.

Embedding graphics in separate layers of glass, Lepisto lends structured narrative and the illusion of depth to his glass works. Some pieces use separation between glass layers to create the impression of foreground and background, as in "Align Drawing 22," in which a man uses a rag to wipe grime from the very pane of glass encasing him. Others, like "Lost Reserve" and "Pause Before Passing," aqua- and ochre-hued towers inscribed with drawings of Anytown street corners and water

towers, fuse layered scenic elements into a seamless whole.

Horrell's figural bottles thrive on contrast and complementation. Some of the most striking contrast comes from her *pate de verre* work: brittle, gritty glass textures created by firing a paste of crushed glass particles pressed into a mold.

Other relationships are defined by form and color. "Lovers — The Demure & Bold" pairs two opposite and harmonizing bottle shapes: one milk-white with decidedly feminine curves; the other a tall, angular vessel of

review

Coefficients: A Selection of Kiln-Formed Glass

Where: Contemporary Crafts Museum & Gallery, 3934 Corbett Ave.

Admission: Free

Closes: Aug. 8

deep-space black.

A pair of contemplative monotype prints depicting two-dimensional representations of Horrell's vessels are a nice addition, but the piece that gives the most pause is her "Still Life — Lineage of White & Wedge," a grouping of a dozen glass and alabaster vessels defined by an absence of color contrast.

Schroeder's sculptural towers are monuments to vistas of pure feeling and recollection not found in a standard atlas. Each piece is half a cylinder narrowing toward the top, its focal point a central window or groove in the glass that draws the eye.

"Hope," the largest of Schroeder's works here, is a radiant turquoise column standing half a body's length high, with a window of serrated interior edges that contain a seed of desperation. In "Brookwood," a tiny staircase winds its way through a passage midway up the height of a muted, cherry-red glass obelisk.

Exhibition coordinator Lisa Conte and preparator Eric Franklin have skillfully arranged the works on display to make a crystalline labyrinth of the Contemporary Crafts gallery space, but Conte credits Schroeder with organizing the "Coefficients" show around the kiln-forming process and drawing together these particular artists.

Talent coheres these four artists. Their level of vision, wit, technical skill and subtlety create a bright dialogue within the Contemporary Crafts, and deftly continue a conversation in kiln-forming begun thousands of years ago.

**Deborah Horrell:
Of Dreams and Reality**

Elizabeth Leach Gallery
Portland, Oregon
August 7-30

Like soul mates cut from the same cloth, Horrell's suggested male and female figures hint at a primordial union in the spaces between them.

Entering an exhibit of Deborah Horrell's latest work feels like eavesdropping on a private conversation, or peeping into someone's bedroom window. A confidential story unfolds in these seemingly ordinary, vessel-like objects, poised in still-life vignettes that together become scenes in some steamy drama.

The mostly pairs of (2003-produced) abstract forms shape themselves into lovers who risk increasingly intimate levels of relationship, reinforced by titles such as *Lovers—Longing* and *Romantic's Surrender II*. "Of Dreams and Reality" lives up to its title by showing us that love—and these pieces of hers—asks nothing less of us than the perceptions and projections we bring to a place where opposites attract.

Horrell starts with cast glass with *pâte de verre*, pairing the former's effortless opacity and smooth surface with the latter's grainy translucency and torn-fabric edges. Together, they transcend the medium's inherent transparency to reach a sculptural common ground. It is not surprising to learn that the Portland, Oregon-based artist worked in clay, wood, and bronze before a 1994 Pilchuck Glass School residency dazzled her with glass.

The tension in Horrell's work derives from

contrasts in form and spatiality, color and luminosity. Abstract geometric and organic contours jut and arc, and ascend into conical shapes that invert a give-and-take. Like soul mates cut from the same cloth, the suggested male and female figures hint at a primordial union in the spaces between them. It's as if that negative space keeps silent what new lovers hold back and what, later on, doesn't need words to be said.

Italian painter Giorgio Morandi's (1890-1964) still-life studies of objects confused by negative and positive space have influenced Horrell's own attention to how her figures interact with each other. In *Lovers—The Cohesive*, the attraction between the two figures is clear in an imagined cocktail rendezvous. And yet there's a reserve (in spite of the male's peacock crown) in the female's spare form and the cool blueness of both.

Like these figures, you want to get closer, and that's when you notice the interplay of superficiality and depth in the surface's clear veneer, and a pumiced bubbling-up from beneath. The textures compel colors to be enticed and resisted. In the cast-glass *Lovers—The Longing*, the white of the female absorbs the blue-black of the male, while the latter reciprocates by reflecting her hues.

Things start to heat up in *Lovers—Languorous*, with its near-neon, fiery tones. And by *Romantic's Surrender II*, the couple's carnality yields a cardiac-inspired form lying spent at the feet of the now neutral-toned figures. However, nothing stays the same, as *Lovers—The Fated* expresses, with now-familiar inverted conicals ablaze with color.

We recognize our longings, loves, and losses in Horrell's work, which transforms ordinary forms into almost operatic characters. Though in the end they remain objects, their very ambiguity invites us to become a vessel, ourselves, for the dreams and realities that write our own dramas.

»» Claire Sykes is a freelance writer in Portland, Oregon.

LEFT Deborah Horrell,
Lovers—The Cohesive, 2003.
Cast glass, 11 1/2 x 7 x 3 in.



Visual Arts

Bottled intimacies

Glass sculptor Deborah Horrell's colorful vessels evoke telling metaphor

By HARVEST HENDERSON
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Deborah Horrell's glass sculptures — small groupings of colorful vessels, showing this month at Elizabeth Leach Gallery — strike the viewer in three ways: first as modern and pretty, then metaphorical, then as a narrative vehicle.

Each colorfully cast glass vessel from this exhibit, called "Of Dreams and Reality," stands alone as a representation of the human figure or spirit. But Horrell places the vessels in careful groupings of two or more, creating surprisingly intimate vignettes.

Horrell cites 20th century Italian painter Giorgio Morandi as a key inspiration and influence on her work. Morandi's classic still lifes of bottles arranged on tabletops emphasized the relationships of everyday objects. But to this influence, Horrell adds vibrant color, a mod-

ern twist and a metaphor about relationships.

The artist describes several groupings as lovers, as in "Lovers — the Demure and Bold," which is a pairing of two cast glass bottles. One is a milky shade, cast in a curvaceous, submissive posture, while the other is tall, black, squared-off and sleek. The two are obvious archetypes of feminine and masculine qualities. But it is the space between them that makes the sculptures work — the way that one form seems to cradle or shun another, imperfect matches in a medium as fragile as emotion.

Horrell crafts negative space as consciously as she does the objects themselves, creating a tension and ambiguity that establish her as more than just a skilled craftsperson. "Still Life — Purity of a Dream" finds four items perched atop an oblong platter with the ap-

pearance of congealed raspberry jam. Two of the four are cast glass: a tall, reddish, solid bottle and an organ-shaped, open-ended vessel lying on one side. The other two — translucent, daisy-yellow cup and double pyramid shapes — are *pate de verre*. *Pate de verre*, or "glass paste," refers to a process of kiln-fusing crushed glass particles to retain a grainy texture; Horrell grinds smooth the exterior of each *pate de verre* piece but leaves the interior and edges jagged, reminiscent of burnt sugar or shaved ice.

"Still Life — Purity of Dream" reads like a family portrait, from the shapes and sizes of each figure to the qualities each piece has or does not have in common with the others. Stand in front of it for a minute and the intricacies of human drama begin to play themselves out: It's suddenly natural to diagnose the underlying conflict in a pair of lovers from the posture of a glass bottle, for example. It's a lot to ask of a still life sculpture, but Horrell brings both metaphor and narrative home with crystal clarity.

REVIEW

Deborah Horrell

What: Glass sculpture

Where: Elizabeth Leach Gallery, 207 S.W. Pine St.

Hours: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Tuesdays-Saturdays

Closes: Saturday

Mark Hooper

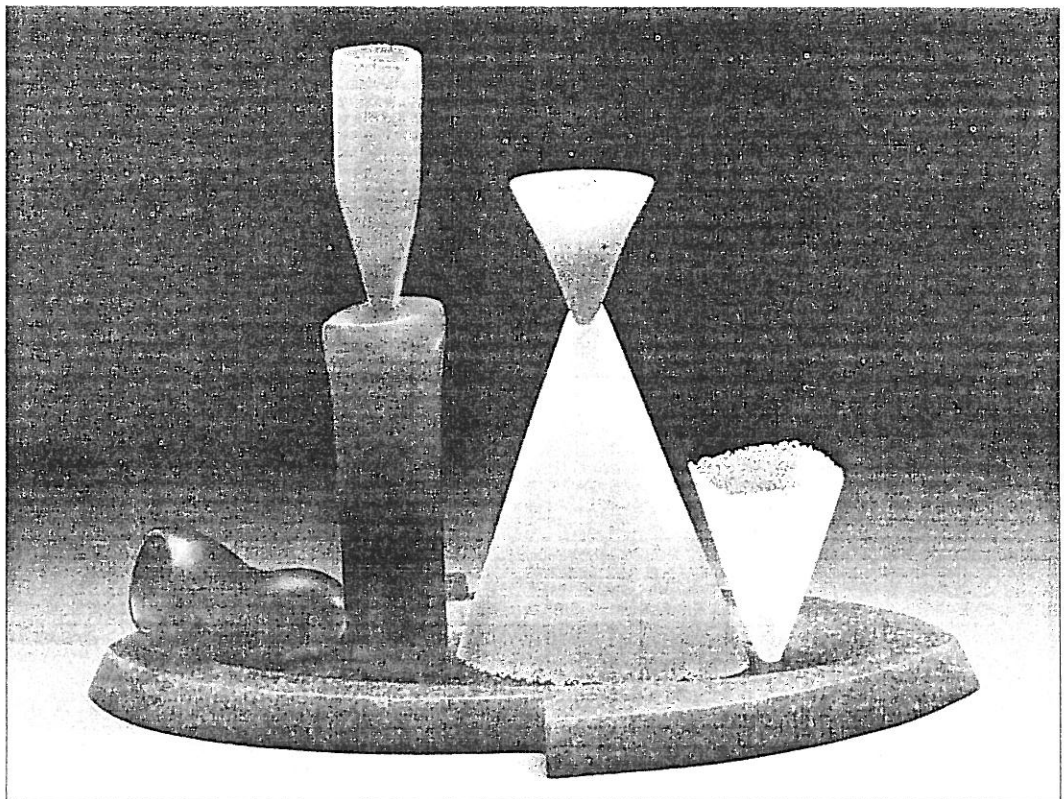
What: Photographs

Where: Pushdot Studio, 830 N.W. 14th Ave.

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Mondays-Fridays

Closes: Friday



Enigmas in glass: Deborah Horrell's glass sculptures are on view at the Elizabeth Leach Gallery.

Visual Arts

First Thursday

Each month, the First Thursday art walk just gets crazier and bigger. It's not merely a sampling of art in local galleries, but a public venue for free street theater and people watching that's more entertaining than spying on Jack Nicholson at the Hollywood-centric Staples Center in Los Angeles.

August weather promises that the crowds will again be out in droves, as the public soaks up the sun and even some art, too. Here are some shows to keep in mind while touring galleries next Thursday.

Alysia Duckler Gallery: It's a painter's paradise at the Duckler gallery this month. Julia Stoops combines abstraction and realism in a series of mixed-media works influenced by the events of Sept. 11.

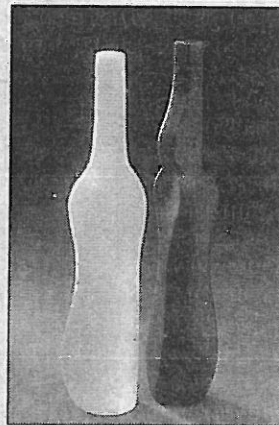
Brad Rogers mixes elements of Postimpressionism and Abstract Expressionism in a show that looks as if it's going to be a celebration of rich painterly application. (1236 N.W. Hoyt St.)

Elizabeth Leach Gallery: Kristy Edmunds' fine show continues its run through the month of August. But to complement Edmunds' monoprints, photographs and video works, Leach opens a new exhibit by the highly accomplished sculptor Deborah Horrell. A versatile artist, Horrell exhibits glass vessels arranged to resemble still-life compositions. (207 S.W. Pine St.)

Genuine Imitation Gallery: Located in the Old Town hub of artistic activity, the Everett Station Lofts, the Genuine Imitation Gallery continues to exhibit emerging artists you've probably never heard of (genuine they are, imitators they aren't).

Following last month's oddly inspiring show of photographs by Alicia J. Rose, the gallery presents recent paintings by Jason Greene. Influenced by both design and illustration, Greene offers colorful paintings featuring naive, child-like imagery. (328 N.W. Broadway No. 116)

- D.K. Row



Works by sculptor Deborah Horrell are at Elizabeth Leach Gallery.

03
SUMMER

mona now

CURRENT EXHIBITION July 12 – October 5, 2003

Five Part Invention

Elizabeth Sandvig | Julie Speidel | Anne Hironelle | M.J. Anderson | Deborah Horrell

Ingenious solutions to classic challenges

GLASS

Portland's Deborah Horrell, known for her work as a large-scale sculptor, made a decisive move toward smaller, more intimate work after



ABOVE | Deborah Horrell, *Still Life Lineage of White*, 2002, cast glass, pate de verre, alabaster, 13 x 36 x 8".

PHOTO BY PAUL FOSTER

a 1995 residency at the Pilchuck Glass School. It has maintained the conceptual depth found in her earlier architectural installations. However, the questions about life and death, human connectedness, independence, and personal transformation are now investigated on a very personal level. Horrell uses multiple groupings of vessels to provide a microenvironment of container forms that are stacked or set side by side. The negative spaces become as important, and as energetic, as the actual pieces in their physical relationship to each other.

Horrell says, "My focus begins with the vessel as a pure form. The vessel image has been a constant, and, the medium constant in its transitions. Clay, wood, bronze, alabaster and glass have offered me a variable. Each material has a distinct voice effecting the expression of the form.

The vessel is a figure of emotion.

The vessel is a figure of metaphor....

"Form, space, the rapport of the figures in space, and the pauses between, are carefully considered. Human interaction further informs postures and positions in these compositions. The structure of family determines placement on the horizon and the consequent dialogue within the still life. The breath between is critical to the conversation."



121 South First Street, P. O. Box 965
La Conner, WA 98257
PHONE: (360) 466-4446
FAX: (360) 466-7431
www.museumofnwart.org

Open daily, 10–5 p.m.

ADMISSION:
Members and Children, Free
General, \$2
Students, \$2

Oregon

Deborah Horrell and Sean Healy at Elizabeth Leach Gallery

The only connection between the work of Sean Healy and Deborah Horrell is the use of glass.

Both handle it in unorthodox ways. Horrell's work consists of commonplace objects in an uncommon presentation, Healy combines glass with resin, enamel, graphite, and steel to create quizzical wall pieces. Horrell emphasizes its translucence; Healy, its transparency. For both the material is an integral part of the content.

Horrell is a sculptor who worked in clay, wood and bronze before a residency at the famed Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington, introduced her to glass. More recently, during a residency at Bullseye Glass Company in Portland, she began working in a little used process called *pâte de verre*. (French for glass paste, the term refers to small particles of crushed glass mixed into a thick paste, pressed into a plaster mold, then fired in a kiln until fully fused.) Her current work

consists of translucent vessel forms with crystalline surfaces produced by *pâte de verre*. The grainy roughness of the vessels' texture and their sharp, jagged top edges inject a sense of danger into their beauty.

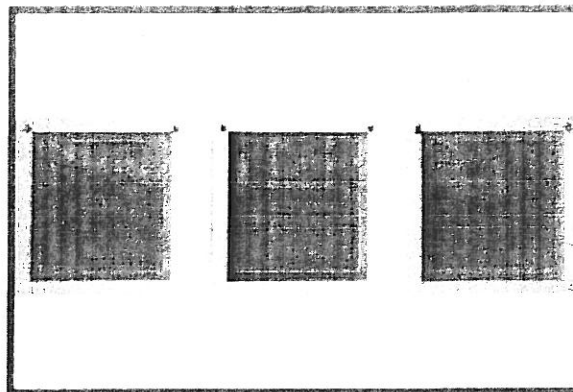
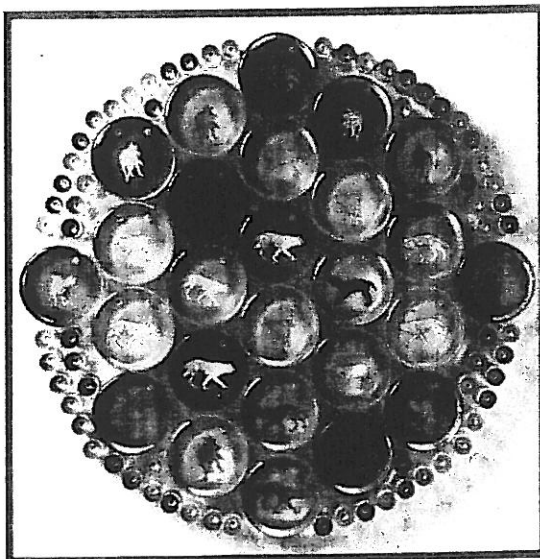
Horrell has chosen the vessel form for its metaphoric richness. She composes her vessels—bottles, bowls, vases—in arrangements of two or more for the associations of figures in space. She intends that the relationships, the positions and postures, the space between them all, refer to human interaction. With *Red Geometry*, consisting of glowing red and orange, open, cone-like forms, the association is one of couples. In each of three pairs, one of

the two is inverted. There is a correspondence of form between the paired vessels and a space between each pair, as if the couples are closely related to each other but separate from the others. To carry the human association further, the wide opening at the top of one form suggests the female and the inverted cone with its narrow top, the male.

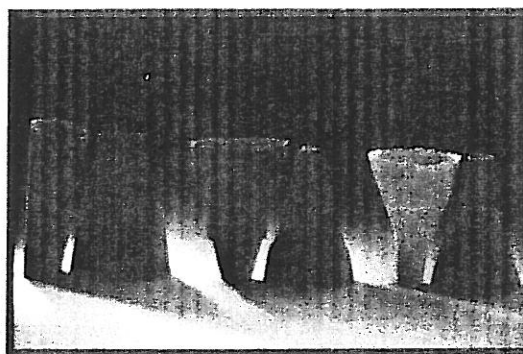
In a tribute to Giorgio Morandi whose paintings have both inspired and influenced her, Horrell has created several pieces, all titled *Still Life*, that are three-dimensional representations of Morandi's pale, close-toned still life paintings. Like the paintings, her still life subjects are bottles and other kinds of household vessels. The ghostly *Still Life-Lineage of White*, featuring a dozen separate vessel forms, echoes both the beauty of Morandi's art and the loss of its creator.

Several arrangements of smaller, molded forms rounded out the presenta-

Sean Healy, *Color Blind*, 2002, glass, enamel and graphite, 35" x 2", at Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland.



Top: Sean Healy, *Pretty Made*, 2002, photograph, resin, steel, 24" x 80" x 9".
Bottom: Deborah Horrell, *Red Geometry*, 2002, glass, 9" x 32" x 4", at Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland.



tion. Opaque, they are made from glass frit packed into the mold with an embedded contaminant. Placed in geometric configurations, one titled *Vessel Talk* took the form of a circle, and others lined up vertically or horizontally within small shelf supports and mounted on walls. Inspired by her bout with breast cancer, the massed objects, each hiding a contaminant or imperfection, are a reference to the randomness in the genetic code that causes one person's vulnerability to cancer and not another's.

Healy came to the public's attention with his eye-catching work in the 1999 Oregon Biennial. His wall-mounted reliefs, consisting of grids of transparent glass rods in which a viewer's peering eye could discern photographic images, brought him immediate gallery representation and a following. This exhibition included one of these signature pieces but focused on work that continues his interest in layered transparency but has enlarged its format and expanded the artist's repertoire.

Using the same process—images coated with resin and placed under glass—he has eliminated the rods and created pictures cum paintings. Among them, *Pretty Made*, a group of three pieces, began as photographs that were coated with resin and mounted on steel. One subject unified the three—a line of appliances in a retrograde kitchen. The camera moved incrementally across the appliances, showing in the first an edge of the refrigerator plus the stove, second, the sink, its make, *Pretty Made*, printed on its front

with a guttural window above, and third, an early dishwasher and the refrigerator. All are head on, shots in a toned-down, unrealistic color palette: green for the appliances, pale yellow for the walls, with a dash of red in the

curtains and window treatment. These, and a pair of similarly colored pictures of a kitchen stove in a corner (titled *Dimmer Dates*—ironic in that nothing is cooking on the burners and no one is to be seen), have a deadpan humor that infects most of

Healy's work. The sensuous appearance may bring about the initial response to this work, but it's the offbeat humor that is remembered.

With *Color Blind*, Healy enlarged the glass rod form to paperweight size. Embedded in each of an array of pastel-colored globes in a round configuration, was a line drawing of either a wolf, colored white or sepia, or a blue lamb. Viewers could decide for themselves whether "blind" referred to vision, ignorance, something hidden, or a trap—or, most likely, all of the above.

—Lois Allan

Sean Healy and Deborah Horrell closed in August at Elizabeth Leach Gallery. Also on view were works by Tony Evans and the concurrent exhibition *Digital Sample*, curated by Mr. Gutf.

Lois Allan is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

PATE DE VERRE - DEBORAH HORRELL

Pate de verre literally means “glass paste”. It is a technically specific process of glass making developed by the French in the late 19th century which produces a very subtle, often translucent form of glass. Pate de verre refers to small particles of crushed glass mixed into a thick paste, pressed into a plaster mold, then, fired until fully fused in a kiln. The resulting glass form can be thin or thick determined by the number of layers of glass paste applied by the artist. Color can be introduced either by adding colored glass particles or by mixing colored glass powder with clear glass. Additionally, specific images can be inlaid by working with glass powders, mixed to a workable consistency, then painted onto the mold surface prior to pressing or packing the mold with glass. Few artists work with this process today.

My pate de verre sculptures refer metaphorically to function, and invite touch. My interest in translucence is furthered through exploring thin glass walls potential with this process. Through the pate de verre process, my investigation of the vessel and luminosity continues.

VISUAL ARTS/REVIEW

The Oregon Biennial: not the usual suspects

Big names and representational art are mostly out. Formalism is in. A smart new direction? Or what were they thinking?

BY BOB HICKS
THE OREGONIAN

All hail the Oregon Biennial, both less important and more influential than it used to be.

Anyone looking for a sprawling, chaotic and energetic overview of Oregon art would be better off hustling around the commercial galleries than rushing to the 2001 Biennial, which opened Saturday at the Portland Art Museum.

But anyone interested in what the state's biggest art museum thinks about the region's art will find the Biennial an eye-opener. This is one powerful insider's smart, aesthetically restrained and rigorously honed view of the state of the state's art.

Curated by Bruce Guenther, the museum's new chief curator and curator of modern and

contemporary art, the exhibition of 64 pieces by 20 artists exudes an elegant, surprisingly warm formalism. It also adds some pertinent comments to the conversation about the nature of art in a place that is rapidly growing and changing.

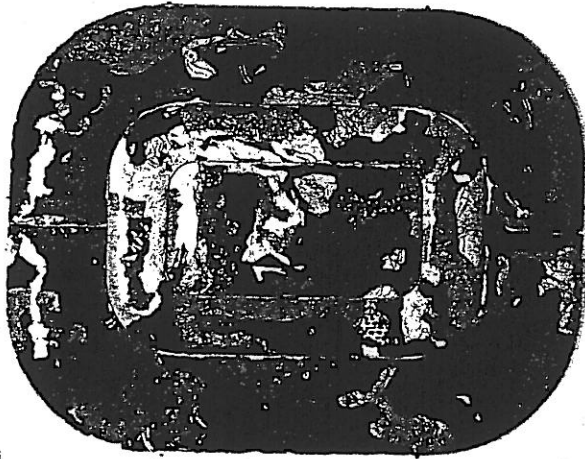
The game's changed for the museum's Oregon exhibition, which began in 1949 as an annual show. Last year's opening of the museum's Arlene and Harold Schmitzer Center for Northwest Art was a watershed moment. Suddenly the museum had a place to actually display its previously scattered, patchy and mostly hidden collection of regional art. At long last Oregon's big-name artists have a place where their separate visions of life and art can meet, mingle and begin to define what, if anything, the Northwest aesthetic might be.

That gives the Biennial something to build on and also liberates it. It doesn't have to be everything to everybody. It can be what it wants to be, and what it wants to be can change every two years.

Please see **BIENNIAL**, Page F2



"We," by Susan Hornbeak-Ortiz: in manipulated photographs, awkward earnestness and unresolved pain.



"Mosh Pit," by Mark R. Smith (detail): stuffed shirts, pants, socks and other clothes in a giant, ingenious explosion of color and energy.

Biennial: Exhibit favors abstract art

Continued from Page F1

Instead of just repeating what's already in the Northwest art center, Guenther's Biennial plays off it. Except for Lucinda Parker, whose intense, energetic abstract paintings soar above the squabbles of generation and fashion, this Biennial skips the big contemporary names already in the museum collection. Its new grouping of artists, many of them familiar to art gallery-goers, opens a sense of other possibilities, new directions, perhaps: a greater connection to the world of art outside Oregon.

What Guenther left out is illuminating. The exhibition is mostly about painting. But if what you like in art is an evocation on canvas of what you see in life, you're in for a shock: Remarkably for a state in which the human figure and other immediately recognizable objects are beloved, this show is devoid of representational art. And in a region where craftiness is next to godliness, the only craft artists are glassworker Deborah Horrell and weaver Hilður Bjarnadóttir, a native of Iceland whose most distinctive piece gives the tradition of crocheted sharp, postmodern twist.

Both craft artists push their work firmly into the realm of fine art. Horrell's abstracted vessels, in crystalline blues and oranges that shimmer like colored ice, are among the exhibition's most sheerly beautiful pieces. Yet unlike so much glass art, they aren't showoff stuff. And they exist on a higher intellectual plane than the mass of Oregon's early craft scene. These aren't utilitarian vessels — they're things to see and contemplate. They have a compelling purity — a clean, quietly breathtaking concern for shape and interaction.

The capper of Bjarnadóttir's three pieces is her intricate lab-leop crocheted grandmotherly linked doily patterns, surrounded by 30 quietly glowing skulls — a stark-yet beautiful image of what is, after all, a bitlerly demanding northern land. This is craft pushed forward into new conceptual territory, and also a nod to the waves of immigration that have altered and enriched the Northwest character. (And not just immigration from other countries, but from other parts of the United States. Oregon has always been a magnet for people seeking a new start, and only two of the Biennial's 20 artists are native Oregonians; three each were born in California and Washington. This constant influx is central to the region's identity, and to the constantly shifting nature of its art.)

The 2001 Biennial is no place for the self-right or the exuberant outsider. All 20 of the exhibition's artists are graduates of art schools, and many are absorbed in formal issues of shape and color. Sometimes theory overrides pleasure. Gwen Davidson's flat-planned assemblages display a dry, demanding rigor: the purity of geometry, how shapes balance and interact, how, in their abstract form, they might hint at the physical building blocks of culture. D.E. May's simple cardboard cutouts take the concept of construction a step further: They're like engineers' templates, patterns for objects to be built. Depending on your perception, they are elegantly simple or just simplistic.

A handful of painters combine strict formalism with a rich, lively, almost voluptuous love of color. Todd Ros' beguiling, minimalist wallpaper stripes take their color cues from the color combinations on

World War II aircraft, finding surprise and strength in the juxtapositions. Ann Shigi's elegant frames have the clear, clean, ritualistic lines of kimonos. The paintings are not so much soothing as cleansing, like formal gardens. Their serenity is broken and humanized by imperfections on the surface: uneven layers of paint, streaks of wayward black running against flat black. And Jennifer Hoover's "Himalaya Out the Window" is a bright delight — inside an orderly frame with a red stripe for a window sill and a ground of cool blue and purple stripes, an expanse of nothing but snowy white.

Other painters take a more robust or quirky approach. Cody A. Bustamante, who mixes the show's closest thing to a representational artist, and he's not very close. His big, brash paintings drop odd shapes — they might be submarines, or spacecraft, or maybe some fantastical aquatic mammal — against a simple rough backdrop of color. Riee Mahaffey's four oils on a wood panel set out to achieve what she calls "a conspicuous level of optical arousal," and they do so deliriously well. Each has a brilliant, almost lacquered sheen over a riot of interlocking circles resembling quilt patterns. The colors are lively and the shapes organic, sometimes almost molecular. And Jan Reeves' "NUF" drawings, shining in a cover of beeswax and done mostly in bold blobs of red, white and black are simultaneously epic and intimate: a series of squares pinned together 10 rows wide and five rows deep, creating a warm, pleasingly monumental banner.

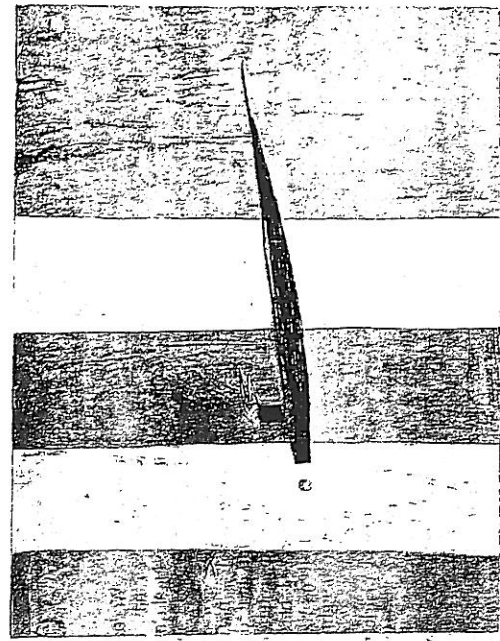
Inserted into the show like grace notes are Anna Fidler's four "Gardens Aquariums" paper collages, lively pieces that

celebrate color, shape and the eternal exotic optimism of living organisms. The pieces are genuinely sweet and even uplifting, never nostalgic or banal. In stark contrast is Susan Seaubert's series of nine small, spare tintype photographs: a sink, a caliper, a long bare room, a chemist. These recent works by a photographer noted for her sharp social conceptualism are dark, obscure, ruthlessly elliptical, and part of their strength lies in the vagaries of the tintype process itself. It's art that makes you work, and not everyone will feel the payoff is worth the effort.

A kind of awkward earnestness touches the conceptual photography of Susan Hornbeak-Ortiz, who mixes type with manipulated, fiercely cropped images of people. In "drink of me," a woman's head, upside down and hair flying out, drifts out like a mangled advertising image. Like wings to each side sit glowing red images of what looks to be the inside of a gaping mouth, except that instead of a tongue a vaguely human body seems slumped inside. Awkward and overcharged, the pictures have the intensity of unresolved pain.

Perhaps the show's most successful conceptual work is by Melody Owen, whose tall, roughly elegant grouping of three stacks of stark white beehives glowing with interior light stands near her "Crowns," a long wide tablescape of crowns cut out of white paper and staples together. With its tendrils and varying heights it takes on the aspect of a pristine fairy-tale mountainscape. At either end of this vast expanse of white is a single clear-glass vase, partly filled with brilliant red liquid. The whole thing shimmers with intimations of femininity.

Not much in this show hints



question of Guenther's essential role, not just in shaping this "Angel," by Mark R. Smith's two rowdy, soft sculptures, "Arena Recline" and "Mosh Pit," do. Covered with the kind of sterile clear plastic

How committed to Northwest art will the museum be in the long off-times between Biennials? Having found these artists, will Guenther and the museum take a role in nurturing their careers? In each succeeding Biennial, will he find new voices to add? Will the museum selectively buy Biennial pieces to keep its Northwest collection current? Or will the Biennial amble along as an interesting but ultimately not very consequential event that rolls around every two years?

With the new center for Northwest art in place, there's every reason to be optimistic. But the Northwest center is only the beginning of a conversation. Other voices are clamoring to be heard. The Biennial is one way to give them a listen — and then maybe a home.

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You can reach Bob Hicks at 503-221-8369 or by e-mail at bobhicks@news.oregonian.com.

at the robust, sprawling pioneer spirit of the Northwest, but Mark R. Smith's two rowdy, soft sculptures, "Arena Recline" and "Mosh Pit," do. Covered with the kind of sterile clear plastic your grandmother puts over her furniture, the huge wall-hangings are shaped like places where crowds of people jam in, and they're stuffed with old clothes — a mishmash of things that people at public events might have left behind. The result is an unexpected explosion of color and energy — ingenious art and a sure crowd-pleaser.

Brian Borello's large, clean charcoal of fragile eucalyptus and pine needles, Judy Cooke's Egyptian-influenced abstractions on rough, irregular-shaped wood, Tracy Harrison's intricate chromogenic prints of networks of organisms, and John L. Ryzczek's pop-influenced evocations of bulging-muscled superheroes round out the exhibit.

The Oregon Biennial 2001 has presented the state with a clear, elegant and very partial self-portrait that nudges it into some intriguing new directions. Underlying the exhibition is the

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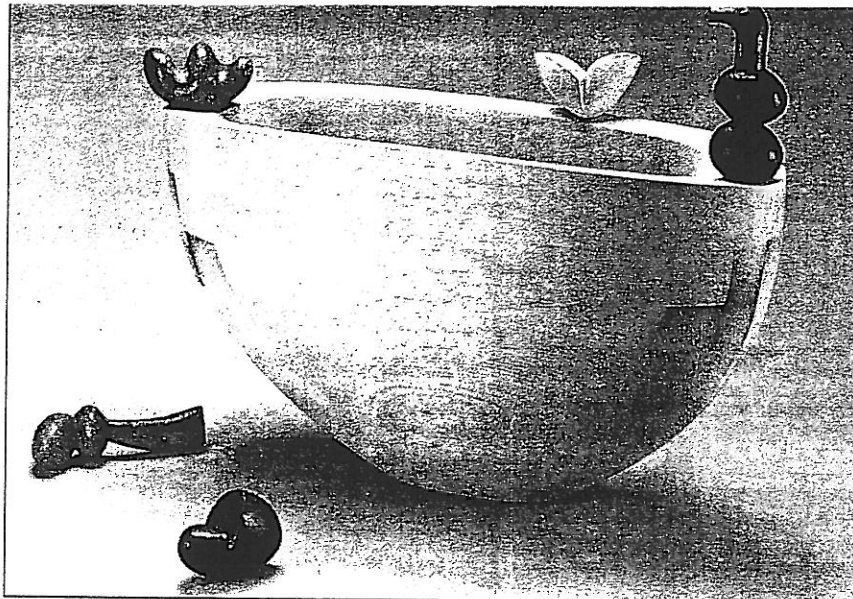
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visual arts



BILL BOCHHUBER

In "My Friends and I Were Remarking," Deborah Horrell blends high craft, whimsy and narrative. Her work is on view at the Art Gym.

REGONIAN, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1995

High-concept crafting

Deborah Horrell's idiosyncratic work blends surrealism and sexual politics

By RANDY GRAGG
of The Oregonian staff

In the tired old art-vs.-craft debate, artists in the Northwest have a bold tradition of switching sides.

We're blessed with "craftsmen" such as Frank Boyden, Robert Sperry and, sometimes, Dale Chihuly, who powerfully manipulate great artisan traditions into intensely inventive variations.

Yet, many of our "artists" — particularly sculptors — spend more time finishing their work than inventing it, buffing hollow ideas to an elegant camouflage of importance.

The Art Gym at Marylhurst College is offering an introduction to Deborah Horrell, a newcomer to Portland who is drawn to both the art and craft camps. Horrell is a prodigy of the famed ceramics department at the University of Washington School of Art. Some of her professors — Patty Warashina, Robert Sperry and Howard Kottler — for three decades produced some of the region's most exciting ceramic sculptors. A few — for instance, New Yorker Michael Lucero — even managed to hop the craft-artist high bar to be taken seriously as sculptors by the art world.

Since graduating in 1979, Horrell has done well for herself. She's shown at the American Craft Museum and frequently at university galleries with predilections toward more conceptually minded craft arts. Here, in Horrell's first major Portland show, curator Terri Hopkins has presented her newest work set in the context of flashbacks of earlier pieces.

Horrell's U.W. roots are clear in her tendency toward a highly idiosyncratic brand of sur-

review

Deborah Horrell

TITLE: "Recent Work With Flashbacks"

WHERE: The Art Gym, Marylhurst College, 10 miles south of Portland on Oregon 43

HOURS: Noon-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays

CLOSING: April 3

ADMISSION: Free

realism entwined with sexual politics. The earliest work in the show offers a meditation on stereotypes of female beauty through an unlikely frame: sendups of Japanese Ukiyo-e prints in which the normally elegant faces of geishas have been replaced with those of ducks.

Flawlessly drawn, sumptuously conceived and absurdly sexy, the prints give one a start that at first seems humorous, then slightly terrifying and, finally, cunningly banal.

Yet confusions between high concepts and high craft also surface early in Horrell's work. "House/Home/Being" offers four ceramic tiles covered in renderings, presented on a stand built in the shape of a house. The tiles' imagery unfolds like a dream: an isometric drawing of a house overlapping a vessel of stacked bones overlapping a shadow of a woman holding a skull, and so on.

Overly complex, the piece conjures a kinder, gentler Duchamp crossed with a slickly produced point-of-purchase display. Ultimately it satisfies the calling of neither impulse.

As a rule, Horrell is best when she's simplest, when she is drawing and when she is

creating discreet symbols rather than complicated narratives.

Her "Lexicon" series, for instance, strives for the softly austere elegance of Martin Puryear's minimalist sculptures. But her combinations of smoothly curved blocks of laminated wood with copper and lead plating bond about as well as oil and water.

Her "Semana Santa" series explores the sensually violent mix of Catholic iconography and aboriginal Latin American rituals, but has all the emotional mystery of tourist art. "My Friends and I Were Remarking" presents an odd array of carved characters perched on the rim of an oval vessel, but despite its playful shape, it remains more notable for its execution than its ideas.

Yet Horrell's series "Vocabulary III" fuses nearly all of this artist's eclectic interests in a series of 27 tiny, abstract drawings. Executed in copper and silver prismatic colors, the resulting radiant black forms seem to metamorphose before one's eyes, evoking a bounty of human organs, fruits and subtly feminine forms. Here, Horrell's canny draftsmanship enlarges these tiny images to the power of archetypes.

In her three-dimensional work, Horrell's best also comes courtesy of her pen rather than her hand, "Sala de Distalaciones," a series of intestinal, clear-glass vessels produced by artisans at the Pilchuck Glass School. But for their resemblance in theme and form to work by New York artists Kiki Smith and Louise Bourgeois, these are the strongest objects in this show, seamlessly fusing form and material into an art that was finished at the moment of its invention.