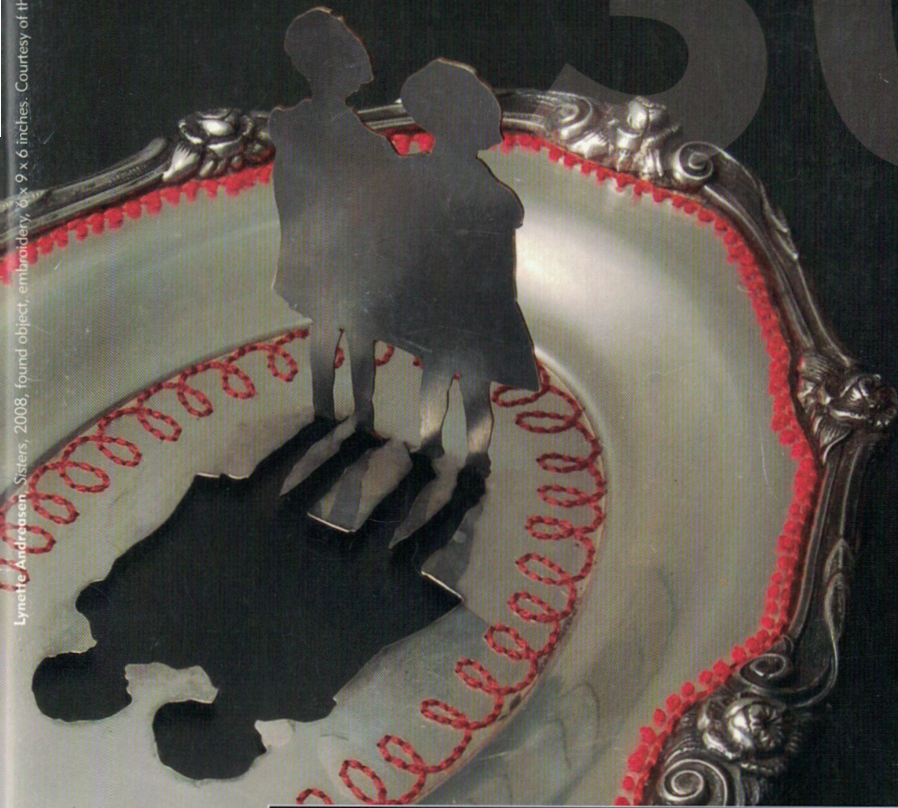


Lynette Andressen, Sisters, 2008, found object, embroidery, 6 x 9 x 6 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



30th ANNUAL

CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS

JANUARY 23 – MARCH 15, 2009



Mesa Contemporary Arts
AT MESA ARTS CENTER

ARTISTS

Lynette Andreasen (Mesa, AZ)
Lilyana Bekic (San Diego, CA)
Tom Budzak (Chandler, AZ)
Allyn Cantor (Cannon Beach, OR)
Si-Yun Chang (Bay Village, OH)
Shuching Chen (Tempe, AZ)
Mary Chuduk (Tempe, AZ)
Angela Cunningham (Somerville, MA)
Nick Deford (Tempe, AZ)
Dewey Garrett (Livermore, CA)
Sally Gilmore (Mesa, AZ)
Chad Gunderson (Tempe, AZ)
Marla Hattabaugh (Scottsdale, AZ)
Steve Hilton (Wichita Falls, TX)
Wesley James (Tempe, AZ)
Sun Kyong Kim (Carbondale, IL)
Soyeon Kim (Urbana, IL)
Janet Kurjan (Lake Forest Park, WA)
Donna L. Lish (Clinton, NJ)
Rebecca McEntee (Hermann, MO)
Dorothy McGuinness (Everett, WA)
Ann Morton (Phoenix, AZ)
Dominie Nash (Bethesda, MD)
Farraday Newsome (Mesa, AZ)
Helen Otterson (West Palm Beach, FL)
Kathy Pallie (San Rafael, CA)
Sarah Perkins (Springfield, MO)
Natalya Pinchuk (Richmond, VA)
Seth Rolland (Port Townsend, WA)
Jon M. Ryan (Wheaton, IL)
Scott Schuldt (Seattle, WA)
Casey Sharpe (Philadelphia, PA)
Teresa Sullivan (Portland, OR)
Sayaka Suzuki (Richmond, VA)
Jo Van Patten (Greenbank, WA)
Anneliese Vobis (Santa Rosa, CA)
Vera Wainar Kopecek (Phoenix, AZ)
Peggy Wiedemann (Huntington Beach, CA)
Peggy Wyman (Macomb, MO)

JUROR'S STATEMENT

Jurying an exhibition is a unique experience. Each opportunity offers a different combination of chance and discovery, merged with a curator's natural impulse to order and structure disconnected objects into a cohesive presentation. Here, a compelling breadth of submissions from around the country provided a clear survey of thematic concerns spanning contemporary craft. Individually, each selected object connects to the long-standing history of craft through material, process, objecthood or historical reference. Collectively, the exhibition reveals the depth and complexity of "contemporary craft," showing just how slippery, provocative and enticing craft is today.

To say that geometry provides a foundation for building surface and form in an object is obvious. In this group of submissions, however, elemental shapes from square to cube or column to grid occurred with a fascinating frequency. A quilter breaks, bends, stretches and overlaps squares. The square becomes a stack of cubes to form a ceramic teapot. Elongated further into columns and grouped together, several brooches simultaneously reference stone formations, the gritty glimmer of the surface of an urban sidewalk or street, and the buildings that make up a city block. Regardless of the material or process, works throughout the exhibition reveal an interest in the simplest of geometric forms, singly and in groups.

For a craft exhibition to reveal an interest in natural forms is not surprising. Craft is most frequently created through the transformation of a natural material such as wood, glass, metal, fiber or clay. The submissions, reveal that today, nature continues to serve as the inspiration for form and subject, as seen in a trompe l'oeuil teapot resembling bamboo or tree branches. At the same time, brightly colored and rounded forms are built up in other works, acidic and blown out colors used to create wall protrusions or objects resting atop pedestals. Unlike anything visible in the natural world, these stacked and morphed works instead recall strange internal organs or corpuscular shapes. The exhibition reveals concurrent yet divergent interests between human imitation of nature and human conceptualization of natural forms as important elements in current craft practices.

Thirty years ago, a strong interest in materiality erupted, a merger, in part, of the introduction of feminist handicraft processes into the art arena and craft's ongoing fascination with material transformation. A distinctive and strong interest in texture and surface frequently appeared in the submissions in an almost retro exploration of honesty of materials. From a clay slab that references a platter, looks like a cake yet is a simple exploration of the porous and viscous properties of clay and glaze to the theatricality of a handcrafted room-sized installation, a resurgent interest in "truth to materials" is clearly present in this survey. Much like thirty years ago, there is a decided interest in showing the mark of the hand on an object, and how the hand manipulates the materials through the process of making. Whether applied towards social commentary or aesthetic compositions, it is undeniable that, once again, there is a collapse of handicraft and immersive training in craft-based materials in visual culture.

Craft is not one thing; it is a subject that encompasses many kinds of objects, ways of working, and material approaches. Sifting through the submissions and making selections reinforced, for me, the power of craft as an expressive and expansive visual force. It was an honor and a privilege to view all the submissions, and an exciting surprise to be able to select work that runs the gamut of what constitutes several important aspects of craft practice in the United States today. I greatly appreciated serving as the juror for Mesa Contemporary Arts' *30th Annual Contemporary Crafts* exhibition, and thank the museum for their excellent work creating opportunities to show audiences the variety craft offers today.

Namita Gupta Wiggers, Curator
Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR

Teresa Sullivan
(Portland, OR)
What Goes In, 2007
Beadwork
3½ x 2½ x 3 inches



Sayaka Suzuki
(Richmond, VA)
Crest II, 2008
Pate de verre
(cast glass)
2½ x 4½ inches



Jo Van Patten
(Greenbank, WA)
Double Crossed, (detail)
2004
Textiles
49 x 27 x ½ inches

Anneliese Vobis
(Santa Rosa, CA)
Inner Landscapes,
2008
Acrylic felt, fabric
91 x 80 x 50 inches

