



contemporary craft

www.contemporarycraft.org

news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Contemporary Craft Continues to Break Down Stigma with Art in Upcoming Show
Three National Artists Explore Obscured Identities in SCC Satellite Gallery Exhibition***

PITTSBURGH, PA – January 11, 2016 – What are the mental and physical results of stigma and stereotyping? How do marginalized populations, often existing in the shadows of society, cope with the misconceptions and fear of those around them? And more importantly, how do they rise above it?

Featuring the work of three contemporary craft artists, *The Invisible One* – opening later this month at the Society for Contemporary Craft’s (SCC) BNY Mellon Center satellite gallery – encourages viewers to consider the implications of stigma cast onto isolated populations such as minorities, women, and those with mental illness. The exhibition offers a glimpse into the loneliness and confusion stigma generates, while simultaneously presenting hope for awareness, action, and understanding. Using art and creativity as a springboard for self-actualization and resiliency, the “invisible ones” become visible.

Presented in association with *Mindful: Exploring Mental Health through Art* at the Society for Contemporary Craft (September 18, 2015 - March 12, 2016), *The Invisible One* opens to the public on Friday, January 22 and runs through Sunday, April 24, 2016. The exhibition features the work of artists Michael Brolly (wood) of Philadelphia, PA; Andrea Donnelly (fiber) of Richmond, VA; and Rudy Shepherd (clay and mixed media) of New York City, NY.

In a unique style evolved from carving and texturing wood through sandblasting, the sculpture of Philadelphia-based artist Michael Brolly introduces a kinetic element in which the work appears to morph into something new as the viewer moves from one side to the other. Brolly notes that these changing views “speak to those who put on their face before coming into contact with others.” In his most recent body of work, the artist explores postpartum depression and domestic violence, personal narratives that many actively choose to hide. Through his manipulation of wood and light, Brolly’s works reflect the many selves that exist within an individual, often unnoticed at first glance, but revealed through time and deeper understanding.

Like Brolly, artist Rudy Shepherd questions what is lost when definitive labels narrowly define individuals. Reacting to the news media’s visual presentation of world tragedies, Shepherd creates works on paper with corresponding ceramic sculptures that reveal how our society asserts identities in limiting ways. His illustrations set the stage by reinterpreting current events and

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inviting a reaction outside of the typical context of contemporary media. Images are complimented by heavily marked and abstracted ceramic works considered by Shepherd to be “healing devices”—a necessary opportunity for reflection in society’s seemingly endless consumption of fear and trauma. The artist assumes the role of healer to demonstrate the way art can facilitate resilience and openness. Pittsburghers may be familiar with Shepherd’s *The Black Rock Negative Energy Absorber* from 2015’s Dollar Bank Three Rivers Arts Festival. The multimedia sculpture boasted the magical ability to absorb negative thoughts and feelings from viewers.

With a continued reference to the individual, Andrea Donnelly rounds out the multi-media show with large-scale tapestries such as *Holding In*, a hand-woven and dyed work measuring nearly eighteen feet wide depicting a lone, naked woman. Other works from Donnelly’s *Woven Ink Blot* and *Body Blots* series reference Rorschach tests and dual identities in a further exploration of psychological experience. Based in Richmond, VA, Donnelly finds purpose in her chosen media stating, “cloth, in its infinite variety and varied significance, is deeply linked to our histories and emotions through the body. Whether it’s woven to hang on the wall or to grace the neck and shoulders, I make cloth that creates connection.”

About Contemporary Craft:

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists since 1971, the Society for Contemporary Craft (SCC) offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and non-mainstream art, as well as a range of studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a retail store. Through its mission of engaging the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft, SCC offers meaningful art opportunities for more than 145,000 people a year through four core values: providing vital support for artists; filling critical gaps in public education; sharing cross cultural perspectives; and using art to build community. SCC is located at 2100 Smallman Street in the Strip District of Pittsburgh, PA. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The satellite gallery is located in the “T” station lobby of BNY Mellon Center in downtown Pittsburgh, and is open daily from 6:00 am through midnight. Exhibitions and informal, hands-on art activities in the Drop-In Studio are always free to the public. For more information, visit www.contemporarycraft.org or call 412.261.7003.

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

Rudy Shepherd
Healing Device, Phase 2 No. 3, 2015
Glazed Ceramic
7" x 6" x 5"
photo: Etienne Frossard



Andrea Donnelly
Body Blot, 2011
handwoven cotton, painted with textile paint
72" x 96"
photo: Taylor Dabney

Andrea Donnelly
Holding In, 2009
handwoven cotton, dyed and painted with textile paint
102" x 210"
photo: Andrea Donnelly

