

Herald St

Three Works

Ida Ekblad | Jessi Reaves | Diane Simpson

26th May - 3rd July 2021

(From entrance)

Ida Ekblad

THE SAND, THE BEER, THE BUTTS, THE GLASS, THE MATCHES, THE SPIT, THE VOMIT
2018

Plastisol and puff paint on canvas, artist frame
220 x 180 cm / 86.6 x 70.8 in, unframed
225 x 185 x 5 cm / 88.6 x 72.8 x 2 in, framed
HS15-IE6988P

Jessi Reaves

Floral ottoman with trapped table
2017-2019

Plywood, foam, fabric, paint, hardware, Barcelona chair, glass and steel
77 x 370 x 260 cm / 30.3 x 145.7 x 102.4 in
HS15-JR7185S

Diane Simpson

Boshi

1995

Enamel on perforated steel and spunbond polyester fabric
144.8 x 228.6 x 55.9 cm / 57 x 90 x 22 in
HS15-DS7269S

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In *Three Works* Herald St brings together three singular artworks, a painting by Ida Ekblad, a large Ottoman by Jessi Reaves and a Diane Simpson sculpture from 1995. These major works can be seen as highlighting common ground between the respective practices; fashion as an intersection between art, formal design and vernacular culture. All three artists' use of shape and substance challenges the definitions and expectations traditionally applied to 'craft'. Industrial processes rub up against the handmade, and the artist's hand intervenes in an object's pre-conceived design, resulting in works both personal and fugitive.

Diane Simpson's *Boshi* refers to a Japanese word for 'hat', and its form represents the shape of farmers' hats traditionally worn in East and South Asia. Simpson typically draws and sculpts from a single category of clothing at once, and so *Boshi* was made during a period in the early 1990s when she was exploring headgear such as bonnets, bowler hats, kerchiefs and hoods. Whilst each of these head coverings contains a particular set of cultural beliefs and rituals, the artist's interest is primarily in the formal language: the fabric, the shape, the drapery, and the tension and balance between these qualities. She begins by drawing on graph paper, which she then transposes into sculpture; in Simpson's practice, *Boshi* is unusual in its display not on the floor at a 45-degree angle, but mounted on the wall and viewed head-on like a painting. Constructed from enamel, steel and spunbond polyester (a web-like fabric often used in upholstery and medical clothing), the *Headgear* series represented the artist's move away from MDF, which she used almost exclusively during the 1980s. In combining soft, translucent fabric with industrial steel, Simpson interweaves architecture with design and fashion.

Jessi Reaves' *Floral ottoman with trapped table* similarly plays with and against the vocabulary of design. A steel and glass table – ordinarily denoting sleek, understated function – has been engorged by Reaves' crude, lumpen ottoman. This archipelago of hand-painted forms obstructs the table's utility, both brashly and joyously decorative while also verging on dysfunctional. You don't quite know whether to sit on it or not – is it painting? sculpture? furniture? Reaves has described these ottomans as 'overgrown blobby forms that have swallowed other pieces of furniture'. They flirt with a kind of monstrous subjecthood, and yet persist as objects fundamentally aligned with modernist design, while also trying to escape.

Ida Ekblad's signature use of Puff paint lends a sculptural quality to *THE SAND, THE BEER, THE BUTTS, THE GLASS, THE MATCHES, THE SPIT, THE VOMIT*, a work made in 2018 during preparations for the artist's solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zürich and Museo Tamayo. Usually used to paint and print on T-shirts, Ekblad mixes Puff with plastisol inks to produce a more haptic form of painting. Colour literally becomes relief, and up close the surface is often craggy, with grooves from where it has been daubed and then heat-treated to dry it. As well as a painter, Ekblad is a sculptor, publisher, curator, writer, designer and music producer, and thus her source material is richly varied, combining interests in vernacular crafts, folk art and graffiti with fashion, literature and history. This work emerges from a series Ekblad made of fragments of porcelain recovered from Norwegian shipwrecks that she found in historical archives. Pattern, shape and perspective have all been flattened yet heightened by her materiality – images that lay buried for centuries now leap at you in vibrant, sculptural colour.

Ida Ekblad (b. 1980, Oslo) lives and works in Oslo. In Spring 2021, Ekblad will have a solo exhibition in her home town at Kunstnerens Hus, Oslo. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: *Geneva Biennale – Sculpture Garden*, Geneva (2020); *A Collection in the Making. Art – Architecture – Design*, The National Museum – Architecture, Oslo (2020); *Fra Åre til Ovn*, Kunsthalle Zürich (solo, 2019) and *Blood Optics*, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (solo, 2019). Ekblad's most comprehensive monograph will be released in 2021.

Jessi Reaves (b. 1986, Portland) lives and works in New York. In early 2021, Reaves opened a two-person exhibition with Elizabeth Murray at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and completed a residency at The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. Recent group exhibitions include: *Akeem Smith: No Gyal Can Test*, Red Bull Arts, Detroit (2021); *Finding Our Way*, Lumber Room, Portland, Oregon (2021); *Slant Step Forward*, Verge Center for the Arts, Sacramento (2019); *Il est une fois dans l'Ouest*, Frac Nouvelle-Aquitaine MÉCA, Bordeaux (2019) and participated in the 57th Edition of Carnegie International at Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh (2018).

Diane Simpson (b. 1935) lives and works in Wilmette. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: *Diane Simpson: Sculpture, Drawing, Prints 1976–2014*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (solo, 2020); *Diane Simpson: Cardboard-Plus, 1977-1980*, Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middleton (solo, 2020); *Dress Codes: Ellen Lesperance and Diane Simpson*, Frye Art Museum, Washington (solo, 2019); *The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue*, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead and Frac Lorraine, Metz (2020) and participated in Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 2019.