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Judy Chicago

Chicago in Glass - a survey of Chicago's work in glass beginning with Rainbow Shabbat (1992), the magnificent stained-glass centerpiece of the Holocaust Project, and including the premier of her recent work completed in collaboration with the Dobbins - opens on September 9th, 2007. The accompanying catalogue includes a scholarly essay by David Revere McFadden, Chief Curator and Vice President for Programs and Collections of the Museum of Art and Design in New York.

Judy Chicago is an acclaimed figure in contemporary art, well-known for the convention-shattering content of her art in such monumental works as The Dinner Party, Birth Project, Powerplay, the Holocaust Project, and Resolutions: A Stitch in Time. In addition to the profound social and political content of her work, it is in part her fluency with a wide variety of media that is helping to elevate her into the highest echelons of important art masters. For more than forty years, she has created fine art in an unusually wide range of media including painting, drawing, printmaking, china-painting, ceramics, needlework and tapestry. More recently, with the aid of master glass artisans and technicians, including her current collaborators Norm and Ruth Dobbins of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Chicago adds glass to this powerful repertoire.

Stretching the conventional boundaries of glass art in both subject matter and technique, Chicago's glass oeuvre includes stained, etched, fused, cast and painted glass, all of which make use of the glass medium's unique textural and light refracting properties to add new dimensions to the expressive power of Chicago's iconoclastic art making. The exhibition at the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery will showcase Chicago's exploration of a number of these glass techniques, an exploration that began when the artist chose to conclude the Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light with the large, stained-glass installation titled Rainbow Shabbat because, as she said, "Light is Life". Also embraced by the survey are exquisite glass renditions of several of her more hallmark images.

The content in Chicago's recent glass work, like that in her other media, confronts simple notions of artistic beauty and, as with her entire oeuvre, is imbued with imagery that pushes and prods conventional thought and ideas about art. Some of the subjects might appear tough, though many would say they have a Blakian "terrible beauty". Her new glass work celebrates the expressive power of the human hand, the marvel of its inner workings and its ability to suggest meaning through gesture, by showing in some pieces the hands and forearms with the layers of skin pulled back, revealing the muscles, tendons and blood vessels inside.

Chicago began the series in the summer of 2003 as Artist-in-Residence at the famed Pilchuck Glass School near Seattle. With the Dobbins as collaborators, she gradually increased the scale of her two-dimensional pieces and also moved to three-dimensional forms. For the cast glass pieces, she began working with the Lhotsky glass foundry in the Czech Republic, a facility capable of working in a scale that cannot be accommodated by any American glass foundry.

The survey of Chicago's extraordinary work in glass demonstrates her tremendous versatility,



Grand Snake Arm 2, 2007



Large Fused Temporal Connection 2007



Twinned Veins 2006



technical brilliance and creative inventiveness—qualities that make her one of the most exciting artists of the new millennium.



Large Fused Handout/Handsoff 2006



Study #3 Flayed Arm 2003



Grand Flaming Fist 2006



Rainbow Shabbat (1992), centerpiece of the Holocaust Project

Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery

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