

CLAIRE OLIVER

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Judith Schaechter

Beauty and the Beef

May 22 - June 26, 2010

Opening Reception with the artist: Saturday, May 22, 6 - 8 pm

Claire Oliver Gallery is proud to present Judith Schaechter's *Beauty and the Beef*, a solo exhibition of new stained glass lightboxes. In this, Schaechter's fourth solo exhibition in the Gallery, the artist continues to expand the potentials of glass process and its painterly possibilities. Her work is comprised of multi-layered flash glass that has been cut, ground smooth and variously painted, sandblasted, filed and engraved; Schaechter's universal popularity could be attributed to the singularity of her work. In a field much better known for abstraction, her imagery relies on painstaking draftsmanship and the figure, giving new meaning to the stained glass genre precisely by adopting its historical function as didactic narrative.



Mad Meg (detail)
stained glass lightbox, 51 x 21 x 6 inches 2010

Using traditional copper foil and soldering techniques, Schaechter balances tradition and medium that harken back to the middle ages with an unmistakably contemporary style, aligned with those of underground comics and political satirists. To medieval theologians, the vibrant holy images depicted in their church's stained glass windows were brought to life by light, God's first creation and testimony to his presence. The religious aura often associated with traditional stained glass enhances the seductive power of Schaechter's work, yet the subjects of her practice could not be farther from the medium's original reasons for being.

With brilliant color and dazzling beauty, Schaechter seduces the viewer to look closely at her work. The artist states: "Beauty is what has always captured the viewer's attention and allows them to spend time with my work. Once involved, it is easier for them to read the content held just below the surface." By design, nothing in Schaechter's lightboxes allows for a straightforward narrative or a single meaning. Bizarre encounters abound; obsessive detail and kaleidoscopic color revolve with the intimate scale of maps, puzzles and game boards Schaechter has appropriated and reinvented in ways reminiscent of the paintings of Trevor Winkfield. Victorian tapestry, ukiyo-e woodblocks, Chinese propaganda and old allegorical prints, the meanings of which have long been forgotten, find their way into the work.

Schaechter continues to turn the world of stained glass upside down, making works that turn the mind of the viewer to the world of the here and now instead of the spiritual realm. "My main interests are sex and death with romance and violence the obvious runners up," says the artist. "I'm trying to be as cliché, sentimental and decorative as possible, not as a strategy for ironic commentary about sentimentality but because this is the stuff that time and time again I am drawn to, obsessed with and that I have faith in."



Nature
stained glass lightbox, 27 x 42 x 6 inches 2010

Judith Schaechter has lived and worked in Philadelphia since graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1983. Her work is included in the permanent collections of many important museums worldwide including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, U.K. She was commissioned by the Museum of Arts and Design, NY to create a permanent installation on the south façade of the building. Among other prestigious awards, Ms. Schaechter is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a USA Artists Fellowship, and two NEA grants.

For more information: www.ClaireOliver.com