

Robert Horvath

Artists Statement for White Gold

"Conventional scholarship shies away from divisive social issues," Christopher Reed writes in his *Art and Homosexuality* book published in 2011. This is why art must openly expose and challenge viewers. Today, American society is adjusting to new laws that grant gay and lesbian couples the ability to marry, more easily adopt children, file taxes jointly, and sponsor one another for legal immigration to the United States. Historically, passing controversial laws does not put issues to the rest; instead, the process re-ignites discussions that polarize us politically and socially. By passing anti-discrimination laws we have not erased the fact that minorities still are not treated equally, women are still paid less than their male counterparts, or that people of the LGBTQ community continue to be mistreated. We must not let these injustices remain unremarked in the wake of early legal victories.

This show is the first in a series of works for a proposed project, "Flamboyant Love: Rococo Sensibilities in Contemporary Gay Culture" which seeks to stimulate ongoing discussion of these issues by exploring the social discomfort still experienced in response to visual art that is grounded in queer notions of sexuality, responses that maintain the oppression and suppression of gay artists facing scrutiny from both social and academic realms. I plan to create a collection of large oil paintings on linen, fore-fronting visual and historical references to artworks of the Rococo style from the eighteenth century, focusing on the figurative porcelain compositions of the German and French regions.

For example, in Dresden, Meissen was the first successful brand of European porcelain, developed by Johann Friedrich Bottger in 1709. In time, European markets were able to sever their dependency on imports of Chinese and Japanese porcelain wares (so-called "china"). Meissen porcelain not only represented the ingenuity of a European manufacture with their so-called "white gold", it also allowed for the fabrication of new styles and objects. As a result, porcelain figurines become fashionable, a European "invention" that still enjoys widespread popularity to this day. Scenes from Greek mythology, costumed actors in famous theatrical roles, and scenes of flirtation and seduction were among the most popular motives represented in porcelain in mid eighteenth-century Europe.

Throughout the art history, aesthetic judgments went hand in hand with the mores of their time. The subject matter of artworks from the Rococo era demonstrates that the sensibilities of elite European art patrons ran to decadence, intemperance, luxury, lasciviousness, and individual hedonism. Highly fashionable male figures were often portrayed in a very effeminate fashion, which today would label them as patently homosexual. Whether they are understood to represent eighteenth-century 'fops,' 'libertines,' or merely avant-garde heterosexual stylists, they make today's viewer uncomfortable since our expectations are so different.

Many of the objects that porcelain factories such as Meissen and Sevres produced served as diplomatic tools among the competing politicians of the Prussian and Austrian states or within the French court. Ever more indicative of high value, the manufacturer created unique works assembled from hundreds of individually molded details and decorated with expensive raw materials. As examples of extremely lavish and extravagant objects that reflected a flamboyant lifestyle, I am interested in how these visual sensibilities translate and speak to our present gay culture. As the Gay Pride parade became an event for the general community to show support, the gay community turned it into a decadent debauchery full of hedonism and lack of moderation. Gay pride floats can be seen as large versions of Rococo porcelain soup tureens and multi-figural sculptural compositions made by the eighteenth-century porcelain factories. They lack moderation and a balanced aesthetic, becoming instruments that camouflaged over-sexualized behavior in plain view of the general public. Yet contemporary gay culture is not monolithic; the Gay Pride parades are caricatures of a lifestyle few follow, ignoring the variety and complexity of the vast numbers of real people who identify as gay. Surely the same was true of these privileged elites of the eighteenth century with their expensive porcelain trinkets.

In either period, this ostentatious sexual style of display engages the sensibilities of "Camp" art. It uses frivolity, self-indulgence, and theatricality, to draw the viewer in, but at the same time it strongly offends him/her. In her 1964 paper, *Notes on Camp*, Susan Sontag explained the difference between "Naive" and "Deliberate" Camp. Better-known "Kitsch" falls under the category of "Naive Camp," as it is unaware of its tastelessness. "Deliberate Camp," on the other hand, can be seen as a subversive form of kitsch, which deliberately exploits the whole notion of what it is to be kitsch. These works conform to the second designation.

Robert Horvath

Resume

Education

2002

M.F.A. Painting, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL

1999

B.F.A. Painting / Printmaking-Magna Cum Laude, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls TX

Solo Exhibitions

2017

White Gold - Bert Green Fine Art, Gallery, Chicago, IL

New Works (Sabbatical Exhibition) - Basile Gallery, Iupui, Herron School Of Art And Design, Indianapolis IN

2014

Excitotoxisms - Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago, IL

2013

New Is Better – 924 Gallery, Indianapolis Arts Council, Indianapolis IN

Braincandy – Mt.Comfort-Space For Champions, Indianapolis IN

2012

Paintings And Porcelain – Greiner Gallery, Hanover College, Hanover IN

2011

Intangible Enchantment - Basile Gallery, Herron School Of Art And Design, Indianapolis, IN

2010

Recent Works - Jolie Laide Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

Selections From Recent Works - Le Meridien Hotel (Starwood Group Hotels), Philadelphia, PA

2009

Replicators - Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago, IL

2008

Hypnotize - Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA

2006

Massive Luxury Overload - Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago, IL

Recent Works - Gallery 300 - Illinois Institute Of Art, Chicago, IL

Recent Works, Niaa, Northern Indiana Arts Association, Munster IN

2005

Unattainable - Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago, IL

Unattainable 2 - Aron Packer Gallery, Three Oaks, MI

2004

Too Good For Love, Lyonswier Gallery, New York NY

2002

Deliciously Viscous, Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago IL

Group Exhibitions

2015

Finders Keepers, IMOCA, Indianapolis, IN

Supernatural, New Harmony Gallery Of Contemporary Art, New Harmony IN

Hoosier Salon Vs. IMOCA, IMOCA, Indianapolis, IN

2014

Holiday Exhibition, Heartland Gallery, Indianapolis, IN

Faculty Exhibition, Herron School Of Art And Design, Iupui, Indianapolis

2013

Mythos Creature, 02 Gallery, Harrison Center, Indianapolis IN

2012

Art From The Heartland, Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN

2011

Silent No More, Marsh Gallery, Herron School Of Art And Design, Indianapolis IN

December Group Exhibition, Kuaba Gallery, Indianapolis, IN
2010
Lm05 - 5 Year Anniversary Exhibition , Le Meridien Hotel, Philadelphia, PA
Tri-State Show, Jolie Laide Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Art From The Heartland, Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN
Rapture Of The Tiny: A Small Art Show, Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA
Faculty Exhibition, Herron School Of Art And Design, Iupui, Indianapolis
2009
Young Painters Competition For The William And Dorothy Yeck Award, Hiestand Galleries, Miami University, Oxford
Oh Decoy, Creative Alliance At Patterson, Baltimore, MD
Visionary 6.6.09, Herron School Of Art, Indianapolis IN
The Annual Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Illinois University, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
2008
Ahh....Decadence, Sullivan Galleries, School Of The Art Institute Of Chicago, IL
Art La, International Art Fair, Los Angeles CA
Euphoria, The Loft At Liz's Gallery, Los Angeles CA
East Of Eden, Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, Los Angeles CA
Mass Consumption, Mesa Art Center, Mesa AZ
Works On Paper, Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles CA
Nova, International Art Fair, Chicago, IL (Represented By Packer Shopf Gallery)
The Annual Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Illinois University, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
2007
Biennial 24, South Bend Regional Art Museum, South Bend, IN
Bridge International Art Fair, London, England
Acquisition Exhibition, The Illinois Institute Of Art, Chicago, IL
Paper Now, I-Space, Chicago, IL
The Annual Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Illinois University, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
2006
Bridge International Art Fair, Miami Beach, FL
The 2006 Midwestern Biennial, Rockford Art Museum, Rockford IL
Midwestern State University Painting Alumni Invitational
Exhibition, Wichita Falls Art Museum, Wichita Falls, TX
The Annual Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Illinois University, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
2005
Domestic Disturbances, Evanston Art Center, Evanston IL
Go Figure, Jet Artworks, Washington DC
Identity-Sexuality-Gender: Contemporary Art From The Collection Of Thomas Robertello, Kinsey Institute, Bloomington IN
The Annual Faculty Exhibition, Eastern Illinois University, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
The Eiu Faculty Exhibition, Bicentennial Art Center & Museum, Paris IL
2004
Meat Market, Lyonswier Gallery, New York, NY
Faculty Exhibition, Tarble Art Center, Charleston IL
2003
Scope Art, Los Angeles CA
Painting 101, Lyonswier Gallery, New York, NY
In the Eye of the Beholder, Northern Illinois University Gallery, Chicago IL
2002
Visual Investigation, Hiestand Gallery, Miami University, Oxford, OH
Absolut Vision 7, commission for Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago IL
Luscious Two, Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago, IL
MFA Thesis Exhibition, Krannert Art Museum, Urbana, IL
2001
Today In 8 Parts, I - Space Gallery, Chicago, IL
Artists Against AIDS, Annual Exhibition, Champaign IL
1998
Contrast and Comparison, Traveling Print Invitational Exhibition

1997
29th Annual Juried Fine Arts Awards Exhibition, Denton , TX
1996
28th Annual Juried Fine Arts Awards Exhibition, Denton , TX
grants/fellowships
2007
Vermont Studio Center Fellowship
2005
Vermont Studio Center Fellowship
2002
Alternate Fellow, Kate Neal McKinley Fellowship, University of Illinois,
Urbana-Champaign,
1999
University of Illinois Art & Design Fellowship, Urbana-Champaign IL
Priddy Foundation Scholarship, Wichita Falls TX

Publications

Ahh..., Decadence, Exhibition Catalog, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Sullivan Galleries, 2008, pages 22 and 24
Paul Klein: Art (9/05/08), image pg 13
http://www.artletter.com/html/artletter_09_05_08.html
THE, LA's Monthly Magazine for the Arts, September 2008, image page 19
Eastern Illinois University, Department of Art, Faculty, catalog
New American Paintings, 77th Edition, Fall 2008
Time Out Chicago, Issue No.91, November 23-29, 2006, pg.66
New American Paintings, 65th Edition, Fall 2006, cover page and pages 3,54-57
Concentrics, A publication of the Evanston Art Center, Fall 2005, pg.3 and cover image
John Brunetti, Domestic Disturbances, Evanston Art Center publication
Myrna Petlicki: A Male View of "Domestic:" Life, Pioneer Press, Evanston Review,
Diversions B9, Oct 20, 2005, B3
Fred Camper: "Appearance Are Everything", Chicago Reader, Feb 4, 2005, Section 2, pg.23
Chicago Reader, January 21, 2005, Section 2, pg.20 (image)
CAC Chicago Artists' News, Volume XXIX, No.9, October 2002, pg.6-7
Gallery Guide, Chicago/Midwest, June/July/August 2002, pg.9 and cover page
New American Painting, The MFA Annual 2002
The Octopus, Champaign-Urbana' Free Alternative Weekly, March 16-22,2001, cover image

Visiting Artists / Demonstrations

2006
Webster University, St.Louis, MO
2005
University Of Notre Dame, South Bend IN
2004
University Of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign IL
(conducting senior painting critiques)
Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati OH
(demonstrations of painting techniques)
2003
Eastern Illinois University, Charleston IL
2001
Eastern Illinois University, Charleston IL

Residencies

2007
Vermont Studio Center
2005
Vermont Studio Center

Gallery Affiliations

Aron Packer Gallery, Chicago IL (aronpacker.com)

Bert Green Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA (bgfa.us)

Professional Experience

2014-present

Associate Professor of Painting, Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University Purdue University Indiana, Indianapolis, IN
2010-2014

Assistant Professor of Painting, Herron School of Art and Design, Indiana University Purdue University Indiana, Indianapolis, IN
2004-2010

Assistant Professor, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston IL

2002-2004

Visiting Assistant Professor, Miami University, Oxford OH

2000-2002

Graduate Instructor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign IL

Selected Collections

Joanna Cassidy, Los Angeles, CA

Jessie R. de Santiago, West Hollywood, CA

Steve Reinstein, Los Angeles, CA

Charles J. Wilson, Chicago IL

Carolyn Jacob, Chicago IL

Robert & Sandra Goff, Fredericksburg, TX

John Janott, Chicago

Thomas Robertello, Chicago IL

Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX

Kiss Me Cosmetics, New York