

HIONAS GALLERY

Press Release

Jessica Stoller *Lend Me Your Eyes*

March 9th- April 7th, 2012

Opening Reception: Friday, March 9th, 6-9 pm



Untitled (2011). Porcelain, china paint
8,5 x 10 x 17 in.

New York, NY (February 16, 2012) - Hionas Gallery is pleased to announce **Lend Me Your Eyes**, the first New York solo exhibition by sculptor and ceramicist **Jessica Stoller**. Stoller's sculptures range from table-top figures and busts to large scale multi-piece works. In this solo endeavor Stoller continues using clay as a vehicle to explore issues of idealized beauty, vanity and the subjugation of the female body using porcelain as her primary media, a material inextricably linked to desire, secrecy and commodification.

A number of Stoller's figurative works are partially masked, their eyes either hidden from view or altogether absent, hence "Lend Me Your Eyes," which calls on us to witness these haunting works of art – each with its own contorted, marred and/or embellished form – with some degree of empathy for the subject.

From Marie Antoinette's breast cup to the Venus of Willendorf, Stoller evokes forms and objects of the past, in the process drawing on the vast and complex lineage of the female form rendered in clay. Referencing martyred saints, current events, and contemporary and historical fashion practices, Stoller utilizes otherwise forgotten processes, such as china painting and lace draping (turning fabric into clay) in unconventional ways, both of which have varied roots, from European monarchs to ceramic hobbyists. Stoller employs these practices and techniques to create stunning appliqués: flesh-like fabric ribbons, oozing painterly drips, and tiers of lace, doilies, and ceramic chain, all of which, despite their modest size and demure appearance, simply command awe from onlookers.

For *Lend Me Your Eyes*, Stoller also presents two brand new ceramic sculptures, each comprised of a complex arrangement of objects and influences. The first is *Garden Gait* (2011), created at the Kohler Arts & Industry residency in Wisconsin, where Stoller worked for two and a half months using the high-end plumbing company's industrial processes and specialized facilities. Influenced by the troubling and not-too-distant practice of foot binding in China, Stoller's resulting work presents an idyllic scene of a

darkened pond fitted with multi-piece sculptures of lily pads, lotus flowers and "golden lotus" feet, rising from within like deformed pistils.

The second of her most recent works is *Selfless/Selflesh* (2012), consisting of seemingly disparate porcelain objects laid out and assembled with the utmost care. The work recreates iconography ranging from 16th-century Vanitas genre paintings to Saint Agatha of Sicily's excised breasts. With these icons Stoller constructs a multi-tiered still life, combining them with sculptures of delicate female hands that bear curling, embellished nails, and augmented breast cakes piled with porcelain frosting. The resulting assemblage composes an arresting tableau of historical and contemporary symbolism.

The gallery will hold a public opening reception for *Lend Me Your Eyes* on Friday, March 9, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.

About the Artist:

Jessica Stoller was born in 1981 in Michigan. She is presently an Artist in Residence at the Museum of Arts and Design's Open Studio Program in New York. Stoller's work has been widely reviewed, in such publications as *The New York Times*, *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, and *N. Pandora Feminist Journal*, among others. Recent U.S. exhibitions include *Bronx Calling: AIM Biennale*, The Bronx Museum, NY; *Fresh Figurines: A New Look at a Historic Art Form*, Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA; *New Work: Jessica Stoller*, The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, PA; and *Reconstruct/Deconstruct History*, Like the Spice Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, to name just a few. A Daimler Chrysler Emerging Artist Nominee and former Resident Artist at the Kohler Arts & Industry Program, her work is also included in numerous private collections. Stoller received her BFA from the College for Creative Studies in 2004 and MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2006.

About Hionas Gallery:

Hionas Gallery is a 500 sf. exhibition space located at 89 Franklin Street in a classic TriBeCa storefront. The gallery invites contemporary and emerging artists, working in all variety of media, to participate in monthly solo exhibitions to showcase their latest work and artistic vision. The gallery space resides in the storefront of the personal fitness studio, Peter Anthony Fitness, also owned and operated by Peter Hionas. Gallery owners Peter and Maria Hionas officially opened the gallery in June 2011. "We have been avid collectors of contemporary art since 1991," says Peter Hionas. "It's a modest storefront we have here, but also really spacious and versatile. I see us as operating in the tradition of the old Betty Parsons Gallery in midtown, or the original White Cube in St. James's; small spaces that just show great art."

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