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Above:
Mark Newport's
Every-Any-No Man,
2005, acrylic yarn
and buttons,
120 x 26 x 6 in.
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On the cover:
A still life of
ceramic works in
Ron Nagle's studio,
photographed by
Elena Dorfman.
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Hawaiian fiber artist Marques Marzan, Jonathan Adler's easy-to-live-with designs, Berkeley's Shibumi Gallery, Arnie Zimmerman's swarming installation at RISD and a book review by Lois Moran are among this issue's offerings.

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Julian LaVerdiere brings a craft/art background to the seemingly magical realm of production design for films and commercials. Jeremy Lebensohn looks into the process behind the illusion.

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In Wisconsin, Jody Clowes critiques Viola Frey's ceramics at the Racine Art Museum and Charles Rohlf's furniture at the Milwaukee Art Museum, while in Washington, DC, Sarah Tanguy appraises the narrative work of four artists in the Renwick Gallery's biennial invitational.

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Two TV producers find their groove with Just Folk, a California gallery devoted to folk and outsider art. Leslie Andrea Westbrook gives some backstory.

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Considering...
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The Wide World of Craft
Meganne Fabrega finds Portsmouth, NH, a coastal city, to be a welcoming destination for craft, offering a sense of history and abundant cultural happenings.

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From the Stacks
In the April 1973 *Craft Horizons*, Allan Peterson wrote about Albert Paley's outsized jewelry, the focus of his early career. Christine Kaminsky documents the Rochester artist's subsequent achievements in monumental sculptural and architectural metalwork and the recognition it has brought him over more than three decades.

Online
Editor's Letter
"Communication—Fraught or Not," the current letter, is appearing on our website, americancraftmag.org, to allow more space for Letters in this issue.

Right:
Christyl Boger
Sea Toy, 2007, glazed
earthenware, gold luster,
28 x 26 x 16 in.



Each artist skillfully joins individual details and moments into penetrating vignettes, with marked contradictions of form and content.

Staged Stories

By Sarah Tanguy

Renwick Craft Invitational 2009
Renwick Gallery
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Aug. 7, 2009 – Jan. 3, 2010
Washington, DC
americanart.si.edu/Renwick

From the glistening sensuality of Christyl Boger's earthenware nudes, to the existential limpness of Mark Newport's knitted superhero costumes, the fluid interplay of life forms in SunKoo Yuh's porcelain sculptures and the ethereal musings of Mary Van Cline's glass tableaux, the Renwick Gallery chose four disparate bodies of work for its fourth Invitational. As the title, "Staged Stories," indicates, the exhibition maps a narrative trend with theatrical underpinnings. Rather than using a traditional storyline with a beginning, middle and end, each artist joins individual details and moments into penetrating vignettes, with marked contradictions of form and content.

In Boger's fantasias, the forms of aquatic inflatable toys disrupt the idealized perfec-

tion of her figures and hint at their vulnerability. The natural poses—whether reclining or crouching—and fleshy surfaces lend an erotic realism to the neo-classicized bodies modeled through the coil and pinch method. At the same time, the additional surface decoration of gender-coded, pink and blue passages and floral and bodily accents in gold luster evokes the delicate intricacy of Baroque porcelain figurines. But their scale, slightly under life-size, and their simultaneously inward and outward gaze remove them from the conventional realm of status symbol and decoration and thrust them onto the viewer's stage. In contrast to the sculptural ensembles of Bernini and Michelangelo that inspire her, her figures can only aspire to the gods and their entourage cavorting in Baroque fountains.

Male stereotypes meld with childhood memories and daily realities in Newport's brightly colored, hand-knit re-creations. Here the driving force is the comic book superhero, which he turns into an ambivalent symbol of adult protection. At once humorous and spooky, some outfits draw directly from comic books, like *Batman 2*, 2005, while others, including *Every-Any-No Man*, 2005, are Newport's inventions. A feminine touch—that his grandmother taught him complicates his decision to knit, as does knitting's association with women's work—replaces notions of invincibility. The meditative practice, along with the use of cheap acrylic yarn and acnelike bobbles, further deflates the action-figure fantasy. Dangling from hangers, the costumes offer instead the promise of warmth and disguise.

Yuh's ceramic totems reveal inner musings and psychological states. Often rising from low platforms, tight stacks of cartoonish fauna, flora, humans and objects suggest both daily frenzy and symbiotic connection. In *False Start*, 2006, a critique of the Iraq War, jumps in scale heighten the suspense of a machine gun-bearing soldier unaware



Far Left:
Mark Newport
Raw Hide Kid, 2004,
 acrylic yarn, buttons,
 72 x 26 x 6 in.

Left:
SunKoo Yuh
Fortune Pig, 2007, glazed
 porcelain, 25 x 16 x 15 in.

Bottom:
Mary Van Cline
*The Ocean of Memory
 Within*, 2008, photosen-
 sitive glass, pâte de
 verre, 30 x 60 x 6 in.



of a woman strapped with explosives. Cross-cultural sources inspire his practice, including his glazing technique that draws on Tang Dynasty funerary sculpture. Frequently culling ideas for plot and character from preliminary drawings, Yuh carefully builds up his clay forms. Then he cedes control to the kiln, firing twice, once before and once after applying as many as 40 layers of high-fire glazes. The final compositions, with colors bleeding over crackled surfaces, evoke by turn, humor, sadness and menace.

Like Yuh, Van Cline conflates Eastern and Western influences. In particular, aspects of Japanese Noh theater and classical Greek statuary mark her immersive, mixed-media tableaux that feature black and white photographs set in between panes of optical

glass or onto photosensitive glass within an architectural context. In *Cycles of Relationship of Time*, 2000, the transparent image of an isolated cove occupies the center of a Shinto-shrine-inspired form, where a draped woman looks down on a man in a fetal pose. Including several pâte de verre components, the work is pierced in the middle and topped with a stylized torii gate, traditionally the portal to sacred ground. But this same opening also thwarts the sense of timelessness by returning the reality of the gallery into focus. Here as elsewhere, Van Cline's enigmatic dramas create serene meditations on the passage of time that extend fully into the viewer's space.

In "Staged Stories," guest curator Kate Bonansinga not only identifies the narrative

as an important marker in contemporary craft, but also highlights artists who draw inspiration from the past. As they passionately engage the history of their field and explore the physical nature of materials, they find new ways to riff on tradition and bring out its vast potential. Their stories of transformation trigger lasting impressions of personal and universal experience. *Sarah Tanguy is an independent curator and critic, as well as a curator for the Art in Embassies Program, based in Washington, DC.*

✦ The catalog, text by Kate Bonansinga, is \$24.95 from the Renwick Gallery.

More reviews on americancraftmag.org.