



museum of arts and design

**THIRTY YEARS OF COILLE HOOVEN'S
PSYCHOLOGICALLY CHARGED PORCELAIN SCULPTURES
PRESENTED IN FIRST NEW YORK SOLO EXHIBITION**

Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart
September 22, 2016–February 5, 2017



NEW YORK, NY (September 20, 2016) – The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) presents *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart*, the artist's first solo exhibition in over two decades and her first-ever solo museum exhibition in New York. The exhibition spans more than 30 years of Hooven's 50-year career working in porcelain to create psychologically charged sculpture that explores domestic-centered narratives. One of the first ceramists to bring feminist content to clay, Hooven uses porcelain to honor the history of women's work, confront gender inequality, and depict the pleasure, fears, and failures of partnering and parenting.

"For Coille, the raw clay becomes a manifestation of the unconscious out of which she coaxes characters, objects, and vignettes with a tender urgency," said MAD's William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator Shannon R. Stratton. "Mining fairy tales, fables, myths, and religious parables, Hooven often takes universal symbols—everything from Eve to a security pillow—and recasts them into a personal and feminist narrative. Coille's delicate, diminutive work boldly embraces a subject and style historically marginalized in art for being too personal, trivial, or even vulgar."

"I liken my work to dream interpretation," explained Hooven. "It is both literal and symbolic, intended to invoke a feeling that lingers. The shoe is a shoe, but also it is an animal, a vehicle, and a stage for the play within."

Hooven's 55 sculptures on view range from teapots and vessels to figurative busts and dioramas, and they mine the domestic psyche to produce vignettes that resonate with familiarity despite an undisguised use of the fantastical. Developing her own vocabulary of archetypes, she regularly revisits certain creatures and forms: a domestic palette of aprons, pillows, shoes, and pies, as well as a cast of characters that includes mermaids, fish, snakes, and anthropomorphic beasts that appear part-dog, part-horse, and part-human. While these creatures may appear familiar and amiable at first, tension lurks underneath. Inspired by Jungian psychology, Hooven's sculptures conjure a vision of the unconscious—both the joy and buoyancy of dreams, as well as the discomfort and despair of anxiety and doubt.

Coille Hooven studied at the University of Illinois under David Shaner and graduated in 1962. That same year, at the age of 23, Hooven submitted a piece to the Museum of Arts and Design (then the Museum of Contemporary Crafts) for the *Young Americans* exhibition. From there, she built up the ceramics program at the Maryland Institute College of Art before moving west to Berkeley, California, with her two small children. At the time, Berkeley was the stronghold for experimental work in clay, and Hooven joined an artistic community that included Peter Voulkos and Robert Arneson. Unlike many of her peers, Hooven worked independently of academia and made a maverick career in California as both a studio potter, designing and making functional wares, and an artist working in porcelain sculpture to create the figurative work on display in *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart*. In 1979, Hooven became the second woman to be in residence at the Kohler Co. plant in Kohler, Wisconsin, as part of its renowned Arts/Industry residency program.

Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart is part of MAD Transformations, a series of six exhibitions presented this fall that address artists who have transformed and continue to transform our perceptions of traditional craft mediums. Building upon the exhibition *Voulkos: The Breakthrough Years*, which celebrates the work of an artist known for drastically changing the way clay is categorized as an art material and as a discipline, the MAD Transformations exhibitions consider fiber, clay, and jewelry and metals—disciplines (along with glass and wood) that form the bedrock of the Museum of Arts and Design's founding mission and collection, and that continue to morph in the hands of contemporary artists today.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart is curated by William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator Shannon R. Stratton, with the support of Curatorial Assistant and Project Manager Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy.

Support for *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart* is generously provided by Michele and Marty Cohen, Marge Levy, and Friends of Coille Hooven.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

ENCOUNTERS

Curator-Led Tour of *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart* and *Chris Antemann: Forbidden Fruit*
Thursday, October 20, 2016 – 6:00 pm
Free with KLM Pay-What-You-Wish Admission
5th floor galleries

Discover the new exhibitions *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart* and *Chris Antemann: Forbidden Fruit* with William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator **Shannon R. Stratton** and feminist scholar

Jenni Sorkin as your guides. These exhibitions showcase more than 30 years of work by Coille Hooven and the recent collaboration between Chris Antemann and MEISSEN to explore the recontextualization of porcelain as a medium to convey domestic-centered narratives.

At the conclusion of the tour, visitors will be invited to join the 6:30 pm curator-led tour of *Voulkos: The Breakthrough Years*, with Windgate Research and Collections Curator **Elissa Auther** and artist **Arlene Shechet**. The tour will be followed by the panel discussion *Voulkos, Then and Now*.

TALK

Talk and Book Signing with Jenni Sorkin: Pond Farm and the Summer Craft Experience

Friday, October 21, 2016 – 7:00 pm

\$10 general / \$5 members and students

The Theater at MAD

Jenni Sorkin, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, will be speaking about the legacy of Bauhaus-trained potter Marguerite Wildenhain (American, b. France, 1896–1985). Drawing on Sorkin's recently published book, *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community*, the talk reframes Wildenhain's legacy within the history of summer craft programs, functional pottery, gender bias, and craft pedagogies. Far from being an isolated field, ceramics as practiced by Wildenhain offered a sense of community and social engagement, which, Sorkin argues, crucially set the stage for later participatory forms of art and feminist collectivism.

The talk will be followed by a book signing of *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community*. This program is organized in conjunction with the exhibitions *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart* and *Chris Antemann: Forbidden Fruit*.

Jenni Sorkin, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, holds a PhD in the History of Art from Yale University. She has written numerous in-depth essays on feminist art and issues of gender. In May 2016, she gave a keynote address, along with Catherine de Zegher, at the international conference "Penetrable / Traversable / Habitable: Exploring spatial environments by women artists in the 1960s and 1970s," held in Lisbon, Portugal, at the Centro de Arte Moderna, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. Most recently, she co-curated, with Paul Schimmel, *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947–2016*, the inaugural exhibition at Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles, which ran from May to September 2016. Also in 2016, she published her first book, *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community* (University of Chicago Press), which examines gender and postwar ceramics practice at Black Mountain and other utopian communities.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields and presents the work of artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill. Since the Museum's founding in 1956 by philanthropist and visionary Aileen Osborn Webb, MAD has celebrated all facets of making and the creative processes by which materials are transformed, from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies. Today, the Museum's curatorial program builds upon a rich history of exhibitions that emphasize a cross-disciplinary approach to art and design, and reveals the workmanship behind the objects and environments that shape our everyday lives. MAD provides an international platform for practitioners who are influencing the direction of cultural production and driving twenty-first-century innovation, and

fosters a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design. The Museum will be celebrating its Diamond Jubilee 60th Anniversary this year.

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Coille Hooven, *The Couple*, 1981. Photo by Steve Kahn.