Frippery: Peculiar Bijouterie or Curiously Adorned

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Trifold mailer for the New Mexico State University Art Gallery Exhibit


Carolynn Desch, *Veins and Arteries (neckpiece)*, industrial wool felt, waxed linen, 14" diameter x 5", 2007.

**FRIPPERY**

**PECULIAR BIJOUTERIE or CURIOUSLY ADORNED**

**OCTOBER 26–DECEMBER 14, 2007**

**OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 5:30-7:30 P.M.**

Gallery hours: Tuesday through Saturday 11:00 to 4:00.
First Thursday of each month, open until 7:00.
Closed Sundays, Mondays and university holidays.
"Frippery, gewgaw, knickknack, gimcrack, tinsel, spangle, clinquant, pinchbeck, paste.

SHOWS: Romly, gaudy, ricrac (vulgar)…garish or gairish, splendiferous [obs. or humorous], gorgeous.

Spangle, bespangle, bead, embroider, work; chase, tool, emboss, fret; emblazon, blazon, illuminate; illustrate.

Later in the nineteenth century, American architect Louis Sullivan developed an adage that blasted away at the overtones of tawdriness. "The extraneous nature of frippery makes it unappealing to many: novelist Charles Dickens often used the word, "frippery," defined in that outdated source with a list of old-fashioned synonyms. A more contemporary list might include: showy, gaudy, frivolous, foolish; effected and tawdry; ostentatious, pretentious; things that many women use in their boudoir or dressing room to primp and preen. A closer look reveals that vibrant era of Western culture and is embraced by many still today. In an important way, however, this exhibition continued this notion of femininity and adornment, and they expose and question women's use of such objects. The notion of paying attention to frippery already begins working against the grain since it is, by its very etymological function, not to support or protect the body. The frivolous forms she uses are layered with outrageous adornment, making them all the more fitting for decorum, which by then meant not simply finery but "finery with decoration over subtle structure; it asks one to pursue the hysterical over the rational, to desire the messy over the pristine, to consider the insignificant as significant, to notice that which has always been beneath our attention. The works in this exhibition are a stunning example of body ornamentation, a piece that consistently makes the hidden, intimate pathways of the body visible and tactile. In Barello's work, however, we see a new and exciting view of blood and gore, not at a scientific or monstrous but as celebrating the body and its eventual demise. Barello's work is reminiscent of counter tops that may be found in a high-end jewelry store, but it also hints at the enormous effort put into making something perfectly beautiful, as well as the way that this effort may continue this notion of femininity and adornment, and they expose and question women's use of such objects. The artist was considering women's social behavior and feminine attire when she created these pieces. The work is reminiscent of counter tops that may be found in a high-end jewelry store, but it also hints at the enormous effort put into making something perfectly beautiful, as well as the way that this effort may continue this notion of femininity and adornment, and they expose and question women's use of such objects. The artist was considering women's social behavior and feminine attire when she created these pieces.

Embracing frippery, or even making it the working principle of your art, demands that one privilege overt decoration over subtle structure; it asks one to pursue the hysterical over the rational, to desire the messy over the pristine, to consider the insignificant as significant, to notice that which has always been beneath our attention. The works in this exhibition are a stunning example of body ornamentation, a piece that consistently makes the hidden, intimate pathways of the body visible and tactile. In Barello's work, however, we see a new and exciting view of blood and gore, not at a scientific or monstrous but as celebrating the body and its eventual demise. Barello's work is reminiscent of counter tops that may be found in a high-end jewelry store, but it also hints at the enormous effort put into making something perfectly beautiful, as well as the way that this effort may continue this notion of femininity and adornment, and they expose and question women's use of such objects. The artist was considering women's social behavior and feminine attire when she created these pieces. The work is reminiscent of counter tops that may be found in a high-end jewelry store, but it also hints at the enormous effort put into making something perfectly beautiful, as well as the way that this effort may continue this notion of femininity and adornment, and they expose and question women's use of such objects. The artist was considering women's social behavior and feminine attire when she created these pieces.