

Ann Agee

Domestic Translations

March 20 – April 18, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, March 20, 6-8 pm



P·P·O·W is pleased to present *Domestic Translations*, an exhibition of new work by multi-media artist Ann Agee. Drawing on manifestations of home, Agee creates installations that explore notions of interior life, material culture, feminism and personal history. Interested in investigating the limitations of appropriation, mimicry and manufacturing, Agee employs familiar motifs – from household objects to modernist architecture – that she at once subverts, infusing them with her own personal and familial narratives.

Among the works on view will be two installations of Agee's hand painted wallpaper, one featuring a recreation of the home of the British neoclassical architect John Soane, and the other depicting the interior of her parents' home in Japan, which echoes the childhood house in which she was raised. The eclectic and highly stylized Soane house stands in contrast to the carefully balanced 50's modernist, Minge-influenced interior, offering two visions of domesticity, one formal and one functional. Together, the two large-scale works provide the framework for the exhibition, inviting visitors to encounter the sculptural ceramic works on view.

Agee challenges our definition of craft through elevating utilitarian objects to the level of artwork – in taking a frame, vase or plate, for example, and turning it into a ceramic sculpture. Many of the works are stamped with *Agee Manufacturing Co.*, a signature of sorts, exemplifying Agee's desires to replicate, copy and mimic pre-existing forms; the stamp creates a mirage that the work is a multiple and not unique when in fact, replicated or not, all of Agee's works are unique. This play between art, material and function, is a constant point of exploration for Agee, and much of her work playfully tows the line between object and artwork, form and function, handmade and readymade.

Many of Agee's works meditate on the traditional role of women in the house, and the way in which they construct and influence an interior. Agee has created a series of opulent vases, floral mirrors, and abstract standing sculptures, which will be interspersed with welded steel chairs. Various referencing 1930s decorative arts, Rococo ornamentation, mid-century modern and abstract sculpture, the works offer an astute alternative to appropriation.

The exhibition will explore notions of cultural appropriation through the lens of travel, commenting on the way in which traveling is an extension of the domestic sphere – a short break away from the home. Agee has created guidebooks to her exhibition in six languages: Swedish, Somali, Punjabi, Tamil, Bulgarian and Korean. While traveling herself, Agee became inspired by the commerce of a "place" through souvenir shops and stands, which offer their own cultural critique, free of curatorial restraints. Scattered about the gallery, pieces on view will be large and small scale, some in blown glass containers, fabrics, perfume bottles, and tiny replicas of her own works that collectively act as souvenirs from the residue of memories.

A recreation of Agee's ceramic installation, *Lake Michigan Bathroom (1992)*, will be on view, last seen in New York at the New Museum in 1994 in the *Bad Girls Show* curated by Marcia Tucker. In its original conception the work was made of industrial cast vitreous china, now it is made of porcelain, stoneware coils and slabs, which reinstates Agee's interest in replicating by hand industrial techniques to further explore how culture venerates objects that are replicated and reproduced.

Ann Agee lives and works in Brooklyn. She has had installations at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA, and her work has been included in notable ceramics exhibitions, including *Dirt on Delight*, Institute of Contemporary Art, PA and the Walker Art Center, MN, and *Conversations in Clay*, Katonah Art Museum, NY. In 2011 she was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and has also been the recipient of The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, among others. Her works are included in the permanent collection of notable institutions including: The Brooklyn Museum of Art, NY; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; The RISD Art Museum, RI; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Henry Art Museum in Seattle, WA; The Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan, WI; and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami, FL.