

MONTREAL
ART MUSEUM

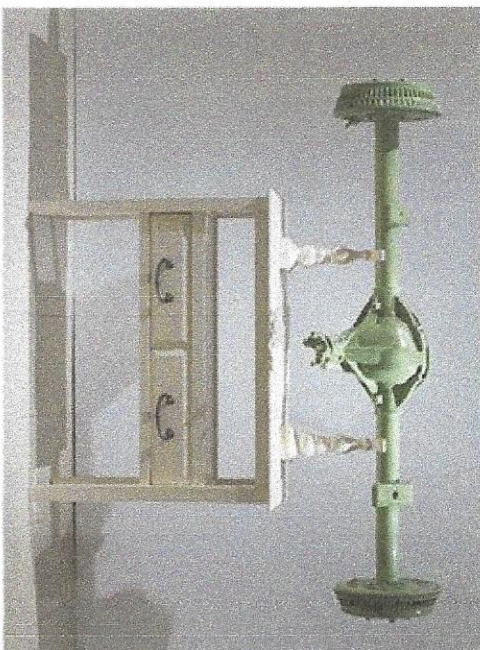
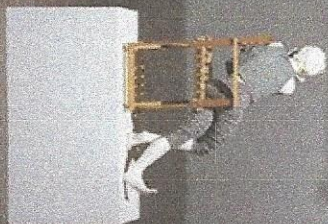
REVIEWS

“PORCELAIN: BREAKING TRADITION”

by Iva Teuŝigariu

Broken plates, white vases, decorative figurines—okay—but a full-size reproduction of a Cindy Sherman self? That’s something I hadn’t expected to see made out of such a delicate and clearly underutilized material.

The idea of the exhibition was to surprise with the versatility and applicability of ceramics and porcelain in the production of contemporary art, and that it did—as well as anyone. Porcelain is not what we might think of as limited



Installation view of *Porcelain: Breaking Tradition* with Iva Teuŝigariu. **Specialty** (center) and **White** (right) by Iva Teuŝigariu. **Broken Plates** by Iva Teuŝigariu. **White Chair** by Iva Teuŝigariu. **Broken Plates** by Iva Teuŝigariu. **White Chair** by Iva Teuŝigariu.

By its very tradition of dinner-table limpy artists have made accessible work with it throughout the ages—July Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* (1978–79) comes to mind, not to mention Shary Boyle—but what this exhibition makes clear is that there are more than just these two exceptions. At a time when universities are closing their ceramics departments, porcelain remains the material of choice for a growing number of artists.

Caracas-based Olivier Lambert and François Silligues brought together 16 of them for the exhibition. The risk with that number of participants led together exclusively by a material is that the exhibition might seem like a mish-mosh. Ironically, but it was far from it. Somehow, in the flow from work to work, over the large gallery’s flat wooden floor, the artists’ names and subjects—as individual as they may be—dove-tailed into one another like links in a chain.

Laurent Crake makes anthropomorphic white vases and jars that, in their curlics and forms, represent moments in history—the assassination of the Romanovs in 1918, for example, represented by Russian Imperial-style

vases graced with booby holes. Grenetan Tang creates whimsical, colorful, mango-inspired, ultra-real-looking objects that in fact have porcelain as Anne Semadeni’s double-magnifying-glass-like figure of broken plates reminiscent of childhood—they are decorated with Prince and Beatrice Potter characters—matched with images of the figures when they are reassigned roles.

François Morelli’s monumental *Contestation* (2008), made up of colorful, hand-painted, and laser-cut metal (XXXXX), a supertechnical jargonist address book, communally, human achievements and the forces that and separate us. The real-life mentioned person was created by Camille a deity for me, whose meticulous reproductions of holy relics objects in the most fragile material created a delicious contrast, both physical and conceptual.

Roanatheroom of the innovative vulcanite designed and served for the unanticipated possibility of something taken for granted.