

CLAIRE OLIVER

513 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001

Beth Lipman: *Precarious Possessions*

January 17 - March 9, 2013

Opening reception with the Artist Thursday, Jan. 17 from 6-8 p.m.

I find it harder and harder every day to live up to my blue china.

- Oscar Wilde

In the Victorian era, more *was* more; not a single surface was left unadorned, and every opportunity was taken to show off one's wealth. An interior dressed in heavy fabrics and busy patterns, along with copious arrangements of objects within the home, signified affluence as well as high moral fiber. Turning this practice on its head, Beth Lipman's work takes the language and object treatment from this time period and re-ignites the message for today's beau monde. Using a historic lens to examine contemporary relationships between people and their belongings, the Artist's chosen medium of clear, mouth-blown glass addresses the issues of possession beyond reach and our inability to see our own indulgence.



In her solo exhibition, *Precarious Possessions*, we see the continuation of the Artist's exploration of this concept on a grand scale. Lipman's new works explore aspects of growth and decay, desire and consumption, and the literal embodiment of ourselves in our possessions. In "Pitcher with Vines," a traditional, iconic "laid table," seemingly unstoppable wild kudzu vines devour and destroy as they overgrow a cluttered shrine to consumption. Confronting the viewer with a massive pile of discarded bottles, champagne glasses, half-eaten fruit, bread, and various and sundry detritus from modern life, "Flotsam and Jetsam" climbs the walls of the gallery and invites discovery and contemplation of the things we hold dear. In "Sideboard with Blue China," a large-scale homage to the ultra-extravagant, historic sideboard by Bulkley and Herter (held in the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and exhibited at the New York City Crystal Palace in 1853), Lipman combines symbols of human predation with aspects of the human body. Presented together, these three works allude to our failure to achieve the moral and aesthetic superiority that our possessions connote.



In observing Lipman's sculpture, where we are inclined to covet, we are met with unattainability; the medium belies the subject it depicts. Rendered in transparent glass, these objects are fragile, confusing, and seemingly intangible--what once was sturdy and familiar is now ephemeral and untrustworthy.

Beth Lipman's work is held in the impressive collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, the De Young Fine Arts Museum, San Francisco, the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, and the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, among others. She is the recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and the United States Artists Berman Block Fellowship.

For more information, please contact the Gallery at (212) 929-5949 or info@claireoliver.com.