

JOEL OTTERSON

Needleworks

September 11 – October 31

Reception for the artist: Friday, September 11, 6-8PM

Maloney Fine Art is pleased to present "Needleworks," Joel Otterson's third exhibition with the gallery, which explores two new bodies of work; two-dimensional beaded "paintings" and three-dimensional hand-blown glass "flesh cups" which serve as a homage to the diversity, dexterity and tradition of sewing, stitching and embroidery.

Joel Otterson is a sculptor who for 30+ years has worked his way through the house and remade everything inside it. His hybrid mash-ups of our domestic environment question our relationship to the home and to each other. His work addresses the gender of objects, their place in culture and what it means to be American.

Many celebrated antecedents, from Austria's Wiener Werkstätte applied arts fabrics, Chinese embroidery, haute couture fashion to 18th and 19th century samplers, inspire Otterson. Materials used include wool, cotton and silk fabrics, combined in complex and sophisticated ways; along with cotton, silk, cashmere, and metallic threads. These contemporary samplers of dissonant yet harmonious combinations, incorporate beads, individually crafted ceramic pieces, found jewelry, semiprecious stones, coral, amethyst, bone, plastic, metal and wood, often creatively used as pavé embroidery on Persian rugs, mounted on wood.

With a nod to the painter James McNeil Whistler, Otterson entitles many of the works with musical parallels; *Green Sonata*, a symphony in green, *Rosa Toccatà* (from Italian toccare, "to touch"), is like a virtuoso piece of music, emphasizing the dexterity of the artist's fingers. Otterson's samplings are his version of a sampler gone atonal.

In addition to his beaded opus, Otterson acknowledges the "needlework" art of tattooing with *Flesh Cups*, a series of hand-blown glass cups, in the Venetian style. Incorporated into each cup is a narrative rendered in enamel, taken from Russian Criminal Tattoos. These *Flesh Cups* mark a return to Otterson's 1992 work *History of Rock 'n' Roll Dinnerware*, a gobbing of rock and roll logos and imagery onto European Continental 18th Century style dinnerware.

Otterson received his BFA from Parson's School of Design in 1982 and started exhibiting at Nature Morte Gallery in New York's East Village. In 1987 he had a solo exhibition in MoMA's project series. Otterson was the artist-in-residence at Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, Washington, in 1995 and 2015. His work was included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial, the Hammer Museum's "Made in L.A." in 2012, and most recently, in "Man-Made: Contemporary Male Quilters," at the Craft & Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles.

His work is included in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Hammer Museum, The Cincinnati Art Museum, The Jewish Museum, The Israel Museum and many other public and private collections internationally.

Otterson currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

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Joel Otterson "Green Sonata" 2014 Crystal, glass, plastic beads on canvas, 20" X 10"