

IN/ANIMATE



RECENT WORK BY MYRA MIMLITSCH-GRAY

IN/ANIMATE



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Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art
State University of New York at New Paltz

RECENT WORK BY MYRA **MIMLITSCH-GRAY**





Flip Top, 2013
Silver
13.5 × 6 × 2.5 in.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD 7
Sara J. Pasti

HOMEWORK 9
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray

DOMESTIC DISRUPTIONS 11
Akiko Busch

SPLIT ENDS 17
Daniel Belasco

PLATES 21

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST 58

BIOGRAPHIES. 62

EXHIBITION HISTORY 64

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS 69

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 70

COLOPHON 72



Something for the Table, 2013
Silver
2.5 × 12 × 8 in.

FOREWORD

Sara J. Pasti

Since its inception, The Dorsky Museum has presented exhibitions of work by SUNY New Paltz senior art faculty. Known on campus as master educators, these and other faculty members are also accomplished artists whose work has been recognized nationally and internationally. It now gives me great pleasure to introduce the work of Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, an esteemed colleague who has been a professor in the Metal Program at SUNY New Paltz since 1993.

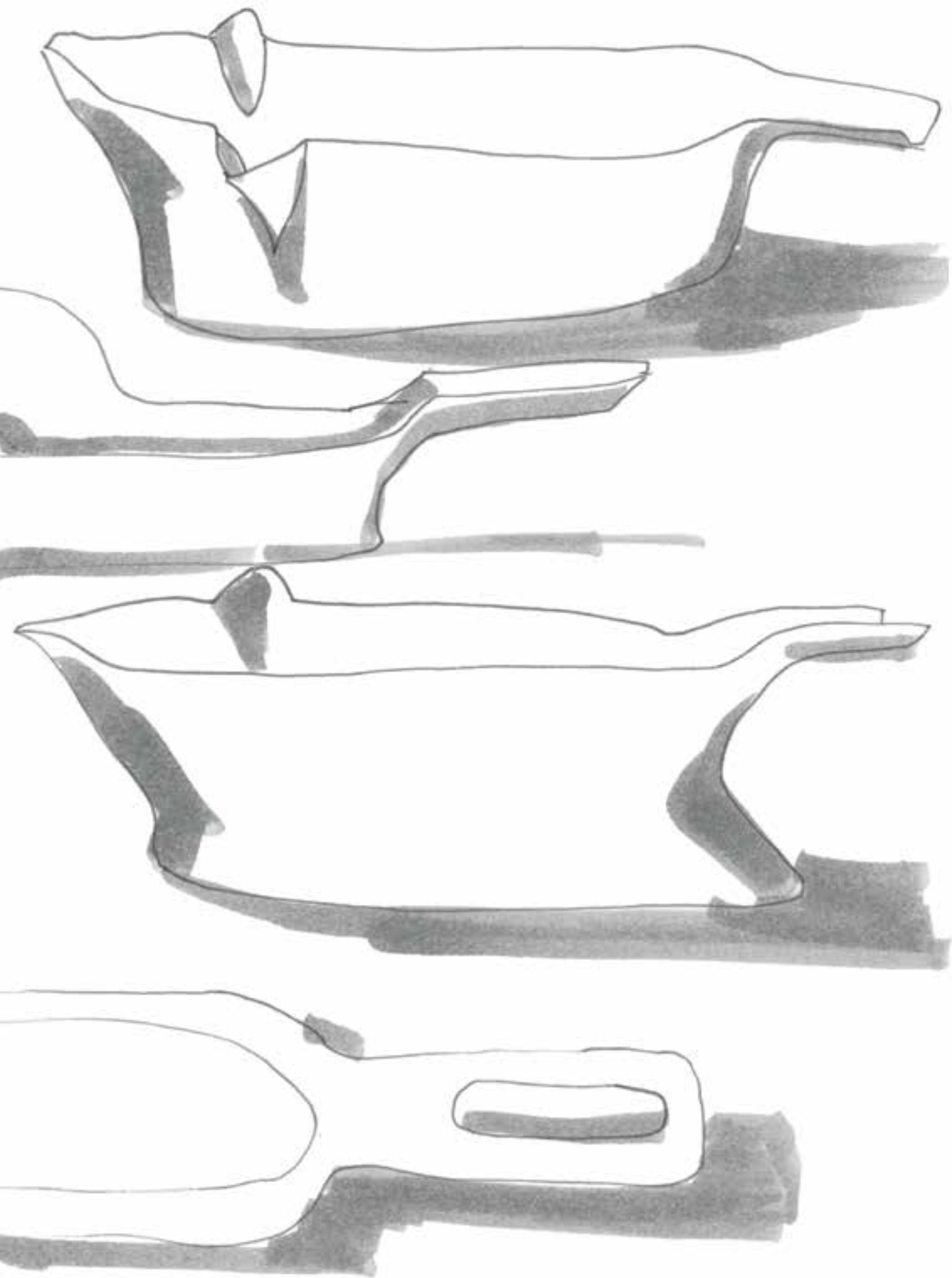
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray has been widely admired for her ongoing spirited interventions in the practices and discourses of contemporary craft. An expert in her field, she earned her Master of Fine Art degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1986. Since that time she has received numerous awards for her work, including induction into the College of Fellows of the American Craft Council in 2016, a United States Artists Fellowship in Crafts and Traditional Arts in 2012, and a residency in the Arts/Industry program at the Kohler Company in 2007, among others. Mimlitsch-Gray is also a well-respected educator, having received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998.

Mimlitsch-Gray has also received recognition in the field of fine arts, extending the boundaries of craft through her formal inquiry into the expression of emotion. Like a drawing, painting, or sculpture, Mimlitsch-Gray's work arouses powerful feelings. While finely made using traditional craft techniques, these objects are not functional art. Objects that resemble metal pans or bowls or other household objects are distorted and reconfigured in surreal fashion, rendering them "useless" for any purpose other than contemplation or inspiration.

As works of art, Mimlitsch-Gray's works are amusing, frustrating, gorgeous, playful, disarming, and insightful in the stories that they tell about our relationship to the objects in our lives. I have been unable to look at the objects in my own kitchen in the same way since becoming acquainted with her work. These days I often expect my frying pan to drape itself over the edge of the stove, and my serving platters to crawl across the table with surprising purpose. For these special insights into both my household objects and into myself, and for her work in organizing the *In/Animate* exhibition and catalogue, I am grateful to Myra Mimlitsch-Gray.

Thanks also go to Akiko Busch for her excellent essay and curation of this exhibition. A respected writer about design, culture, and nature, Busch was recommended by Mimlitsch-Gray and enthusiastically welcomed by the museum staff because of her unique insights into contemporary craft. In addition I wish to thank Brad Collins of Group C for his design of this publication, Daniel Belasco, The Dorsky's curator of exhibitions and programs, and Bob Wagner, The Dorsky's preparator, for their shepherding of this project to its beautiful conclusion. Additional thanks to Dorsky staff members Janis Benincasa, Wayne Lempka, Amy Pickering, graduate assistant Mary Beth Fiorentino, and curatorial intern Amanda Henneberry for their participation in all of The Dorsky's exhibitions and programs. What we do would not be possible without their efforts.

The museum is also indebted to President Donald Christian, Provost Lorin Arnold, and Interim Provost Stella Deen at the State University of New York, to the SUNY New Paltz Foundation Executive Director Erica Marks and her staff, and to Shelly Wright, Mary Kastner, and the staff in the SUNY New Paltz Office of Communications and Marketing, for their ongoing support. Last but not least, I wish to thank the members of The Dorsky Museum's Advisory Board, who support the museum's exhibitions and programs in ways too numerous to count.



HOMework

Myra Mimplitsch-Gray

Craft is *for* something. This notion has challenged me deeply over time.

My earliest training was rooted in craft, with its certain technical requirements, learned expertise, and presumed outcome of a thing that does something. In the 1970s I joined in the family project to build a house, an A-frame with plans pulled from the magazine *Mother Earth News*. As the youngest, I was given simple tasks—among them, the straightening of double headed nails to be repurposed in scaffolding. I forged the spikes on an anvil fashioned from scrap wood and stored them in coffee cans, enjoying their gathered density, order, and the sound of metal in the can. The result was immensely satisfying. Over the course of a decade I grew to swing hammers, sledges, pickaxes, and the like, gaining confidence and appreciation for handwork of all kinds.

It takes a hammer to make a hammer. I am not one to throw away a shovel when the handle can be replaced. There is a stubbornness that comes with skill, and I can sometimes be drawn to absurd lengths simply because I can fix something or improve it. While nourishing, this is discrete from my creative research.

Craft is for something that can be easily identified, or not. “What is it for?” This is often asked about my work. Its purpose is to provoke the question.

Early in my career, I examined craft’s place in artistic expression. I sought to find my connection to a vast history of makers and cultures defined by artifacts that comprise the field of metalwork and jewelry. I mined the decorative arts and placed myself in the position of a



Speckled Dreyfuss, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
4.5 × 8 × 3 in.

I grew to swing hammers, sledges, pickaxes, and the like, gaining confidence and appreciation for handwork of all kinds.

postmodern journeyman, acquiring mastery while deconstructing the model. Through study and experience I grew to understand the significance of the discipline and to admire those whose work embodies its standards. My work exists as homage and critique as it engages traditional objects, their purpose and presence in contemporary society.

Exploring craft's social function and identity continues to motivate my investigation of new forms. I locate the pieces I make in the domestic sphere: mantel, sideboard, table. Their implied purposes drive the content of my work.

Materials—enamel, iron, silver, steel—and surfaces—wrought, tarnished, rusted, mirrored—can be instrumental, suggesting variant social contexts and contracts. I am currently studying enamelware, which by its nature is utilitarian, with associations to the kitchen, the campfire, and the laboratory. A range of forms and surfaces signify different aspects of service and society, serving as models of efficiency and durability. While enamelware's glassy skin is primarily practical, it presents a clinical distance and a point of departure for my investigation.

In/Animate presents divergent yet connected bodies of work. In some series, a familiar object is realized abstractly—exaggerated and surreal— while retaining its connection to domestic utility. In other work, the process of making is documented in the object. Sketch, action, and image are frozen together in the constructed metal outcome. The content is the action and the moment; the object is a document of this realization.

My research engages facture—how a thing is made—as an idea, image and object. I conceptualize material conditions to construct fictions, parodies, and portraits. Fabricated and transfigured, my work reflects the polemic between the actual and the implied as it asserts craft's role in reifying this discourse.



Pulled Pitcher, 2010
Copper, tin
2.25 × 3 × 1.5 in.

...the forms of the things we live with shift and mutate through our use and our affection.



Strappy Vessel, 2011
Copper
13 × 12 × 9 in.

DOMESTIC DISRUPTIONS

Akiko Busch

Changeability has always been central to the work of Myra Mimlitsch-Gray. A collection of copper pots folds back into itself, forming a mantel of its own. The lip of a chafing dish seeps onto the table on which it sits. A silver candelabrum **[FIG. 1]** spills across the surface it rests on, the precision of its form and purpose becoming ambiguous as it drifts and pools. Nothing in the domestic landscape remains static.

Such malleability suggests a number of things, among them the innate volatility in our tools of sustenance and the inevitable transformations—individual, social, cultural—of household rituals and traditions. We find that even things meant to contain are capable of overflowing their own confines. But this pliability also implies that the forms of the things we live with shift and mutate through our use and our affection.

A different manner of intimacy emerges in Mimlitsch-Gray's most recent mutations. Evoking tableware only distantly, these works are more abstract and their historical references more subdued. The pieces seem to have been redirected, no longer leeching out into the exterior domestic environment, but into some visceral interior landscape. A recognized master of hollowware, she now turns her attention to the hollowware of the body. Making palpable references to flesh, limbs, folds of skin, and systems of arteries, the artworks here intersect unexpectedly with corporeal expression in a manner that addresses substance in a deeply intrinsic way.

Mimlitsch-Gray's material transfigurations are both raw and refined. Cavities and recesses—traditional forms of containment—now evoke the body. What might be a spoon becomes a lip. A tray could be a tongue. **[FIG. 2]** Dangling ribbons of twisted copper **[FIG. 3]** suggest a vascular system. A candelabrum might just as well be a dead possum or a disfigured heart with a profusion of ventricles.



Mimlitsch-Gray pushes these inquiries the farthest with enamel, a material new to her work. That she has recently shifted her attention from silver, brass, copper, and iron to this fluid medium makes sense. Fabricated in steel and coated in vitreous porcelain enamel, much of her new work has a surface treatment that recalls traditional ceramic and metal spatterware. But while evoking the durable, practical character of its predecessors, the patterns of random spillage and mottled, marbled, speckled surfaces take on a different meaning when appearing on Mimlitsch-Gray's amorphous forms. The celestial sketches in *Galaxy Ware*, 2014, [FIG. 5] suggest both the splash of some interior viscera and the spray of infinite constellations in some distant universe. As familiar as an old coffeepot on the stove, as remote and mysterious as the night sky, as weird, foreign, and familiar as the arrangement of our own corporal selves, the piece also evokes poet Pablo Neruda's ode to his plate, which he refers to as "the world's most vital disc, planet and planetarium."¹

From polished silver to utilitarian enamel, these elegant disfigurements confront presentation, class, utility, and service. While some of them reflect a solace—a sense of tangible ease—the small tears, ruptures, and creases in others evoke brief acts of violence. Mimlitsch-Gray speaks openly about the challenges, indeed discomforts, of learning to manipulate and shape a new material, and that sense of disquiet and uneasiness emerges in much of this work.

In this group of works as a whole, material and meaning alike have been twisted and stretched. *Clove Oval*, 2010, [FIG. 4] has weight and solidity, but has been disrupted. *Something for the Table*, 2010–2013, [P. 6] alludes to the comforts of a hot water bottle, but appears stopped, unfinished, or breached. A crack in a brass vessel might suggest a cleft in bone or skin. *Processed Stock*, 2012, [FIG. 7] evokes a collar that has unexpectedly been extended, stretched, and compressed by some undefined, and possibly unknowable, force.

Accommodating both the ceremonial and the casual, a number of these pieces also suggest specific functions, though what they might be remains a mystery. Some ask to be picked up and held. *Torn Pita*, 2012 [FIG. 6]; *Double Bean*, 2014 [P. 16]; *Birki*, 2014 [P. 18]; *Splitsies*, 2014 [P. 50];

Thumbthing, 2014 [P. 73] invite the hand, and in doing so, tease out the preoccupations we have with touch, habit, and ergonomic fit, simultaneously referencing the random and arbitrary quality of the eccentric shapes, at once rational and absurd, of the tools we devise for ourselves. These pieces are austere and voluptuous, abstract and animal. Sensuality and rigor converge. Most of all, though, they compress that space that we assume exists between what we are and the things we use.

Mimlitsch-Gray refers in conversation to the pieces in this exhibition as "concretized gestures," a term that may speak to their sense of innate animation. The rips and fissures of domestic life, along with its comforts, are all here. Continuity and incision, fluidity and disturbance are simultaneous conditions. Such is the binary identity of these realms, animate and inanimate alike.

In her book *Evocative Objects* Sherry Turkle, professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, examines the way in which ordinary objects can serve as centerpieces of emotional life. She tracks "the dynamic relationship between things and thinking."² Suggesting that such concrete approaches have equal validity to abstract thinking, she says, "We think with the objects we love and we love the objects we think with."³

That sense of deep exchange and engagement is in evidence here. Maker, user, and viewer all gather at Mimlitsch-Gray's table. What confronts us most of all is some coalescence of body and thing and thing and body, a mutability of the animate and inanimate that, in the end, reflects the profound intimacy forged between people and the objects they use.

Notes

¹ Pablo Neruda, translated by Ken Krabbenhoft, *Odes to Common Things* (Boston, MA: Bulfinch Press, 1994), 107.

² Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 9.

³ Turkle, *Evocative Objects*, 5.



4



5



6



7

Figures

- 1** *Melting Candelabrum*, 2003. Silver. 5 × 22 × 18 in. Rotasa Collection Trust **2** *Stretched Platters*, 2013. Porcelain enamel on steel. 3 × 26.5 × 6 in.
3 *Loops*, 2007–2016. Copper, brass. Dimensions variable. **4** *Clove Oval*, 2010. Copper, brass. 4 × 14 × 8 in. **5** *Galaxy Ware*, 2014. Porcelain enamel on steel. 2.75 × 13 × 8.5 in.
6 *Torn Pita*, 2012. Copper, brass. 1.75 × 5.75 × 5 in. **7** *Processed Stock*, 2012. Copper. 26 × 12 × 2.75 in. Private Collection, New Haven, CT.



Double Bean, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
2 × 13 × 7 in.

SPLIT ENDS

Daniel Belasco

The tension between the mundane and the mythic has animated Myra Mimlitsch-Gray's immaculate metalwork over the past 30 years.

Her well-known *Bisection* series, 1989–1995, is distinctive for its fusion of conceptual art and traditional craft. Similar to fiber artist Elaine Reichek and conceptual artist Barbara Bloom, Mimlitsch-Gray appropriated commonplace household goods and handicrafts to expose the repression, stratification, and injustice within familiar domestic appurtenances, as in *Pair of Spoons* [Fig. 2] from 1991. Works in this highly regarded series are in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and other important collections.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Mimlitsch-Gray has embarked on an entirely new direction over the past decade. “While I know objects always have an embedded historical reference, I have made a concerted effort to find a new formal vocabulary for things on the table that do not rely on these evident trappings,” Mimlitsch-Gray explained in an interview.¹ She is working to translate her formal references to craft and function into a new vocabulary free from the theory that has taken over the dialogue around making in recent years.

On this new journey Mimlitsch-Gray has traded familiar stylistic and typological stereotypes for eccentric processes and romantic connotations. Her most recent works in silver, bronze, copper, and brass are reinventing the Surrealist object for the 21st century, provoking unexpected sensations and emotional associations to become portals to the unconscious. Strange and beautiful, they fuse the formal elegance of Brancusi and the psychological dissonance of Giacometti.



The starting point is technique. Mimlitsch-Gray uses the actions she must engage in to complete her intensely physical work as metaphors to generate strange objects. Like the earlier generation of process and post-minimal artists such as Richard Serra and Eva Hesse, Mimlitsch-Gray exults in the actions of making art, repeating the verbs “score, split, splay, slice, stretch, smooth” and more throughout a recent publication.²

The act of splitting, in particular, has been preeminent throughout her work, from her breakthrough series *Book of Tools*, 1985–1986, [FIG. 1] in the *Bisections*, and in her present work. At first splitting was a means to expose a hidden interior, and had a revelatory purpose, to drive the dark practices of sexism and ethnocentrism from the shadows.

More recently, splitting for Mimlitsch-Gray has been connected to growth, development, and sustenance. The artist recognized this in the title *Mitosis*, 2007, [FIG. 4] which she gave to a work in her series of misshapen cast iron pans that resemble cells in the process of fission. *Pulled Pitcher*, 2010, [P. 11] for example, has a split that creates a new function. Here the artist has torn off and folded a top layer of a vessel, thus making a useful handle. Another key recent work

The tension between the mundane and the mythic has animated Myra Mimlitsch-Gray’s immaculate metalwork over the past 30 years.



that explores the semantics of splitting is *Split Slab*, 2012, [FIG. 3] a silver piece 18 inches long. A form is divided lengthwise, like a wheel of brie sliced for a fruit filling. The two pieces have become wings folded out and pressed facedown against a surface. The scale and facture relate to tableware, but the topography is all wrong.

A signature work in the current group is *Clove Oval*, 2010 [P. 56]. Made from copper and brass, it is 14 inches long, about the size of a Shaker box. The seemingly solid volume has a cleave at the top, so that one third appears to be peeling off. Balancing that subtle outward movement is a second, smaller cut on the opposite side of the work, where a shape resembling a tab is sheared from the surface. Together, these two cuts evoke both a violent act, like the blow of an axe, or a benign interface, inviting touch. The repeated “ov” sounds in the title echoes ova, Latin for eggs. In this reading, *Clove Oval* looks like an idea just being born.

In the series *Something for the Table*, 2010–2013, which addresses objects in the context of the home, Mimlitsch-Gray appropriates the table as a rhetorical space of display, arguing that it is equivalent to the wall and floor as a neutral surface for the presentation of art. When located on a table, many of these pieces materialize metaphors that relate to food. Works like *Torn Pita*, 2012 [P. 15]; *Silver Chiclet*, 2013 [FIG. 6]; *Splitsies*, 2014; [P. 50]; *Birki*, 2014; [FIG. 5]; and *The Flap*, 2014 [FIG. 7], appear, and sound, almost edible, like cakes, pastries, or burritos. We want to not just touch her work, but to consume it. Exploiting the multiple significations of the forms and positions of her art, Mimlitsch-Gray’s new type of Surrealism is darker, more ritualized and psychologically self-referential than ever before.

Notes

¹ Benjamin Lignel, ed., *Art Jewelry Forum’s Best of Interviews* (Mill Valley, CA: Art Jewelry Forum, 2014).

² Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, *Staging Form* (Memphis, TN: Metal Museum, 2014).



Figures

- 1** *Book of Tools*, 1986. Steel, silver, paper, fabric. Closed: 8 × 8 × 1 in. **2** *Pair of Spoons*, 1991. Silver, copper, found objects. 6 × 6 × 1.25 in. each. Collection of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art. **3** *Split Slab*, 2012. Silver. 2.5 × 18 × 5 in. **4** *Mitosis I*, 2007. Cast ductile iron. 16 × 24 × 1 in. **5** *Birki*, 2014. Porcelain enamel on steel. 3.5 × 10 × 4.75 in. **6** *Silver Chiclet*, 2013. Silver. 2.5 × 10 × 5 in. **7** *The Flap*, 2014. Porcelain enamel on steel. 3 × 9 × 4 in.

PLATES



Freestanding Skillet, 2007
Cast ductile iron
13 × 23 × 2 in.



Galaxy Ware, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
2.75 × 13 × 8.5 in.



Grey White Swirly, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 12 × 8 in.



The Chin, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5.75 × 6 × 5 in.



Oval (in) Oval, 2010
Copper, tin
4 × 6 × 5 in.



Monsanto, 2007
Cast ductile iron
1 × 17 × 8 in.



Patched Vessels (set of 4), 2012–14
 Porcelain enamel on steel
 2.75 × 3.5 × 4.5 in.
 3 × 2.25 × 1.75 in.
 6 × 3.25 × 2.5 in.
 4.5 × 5 × 2 in.



Limbs (pair), 2007
 Cast ductile iron
 24 × 10 × 9 in.



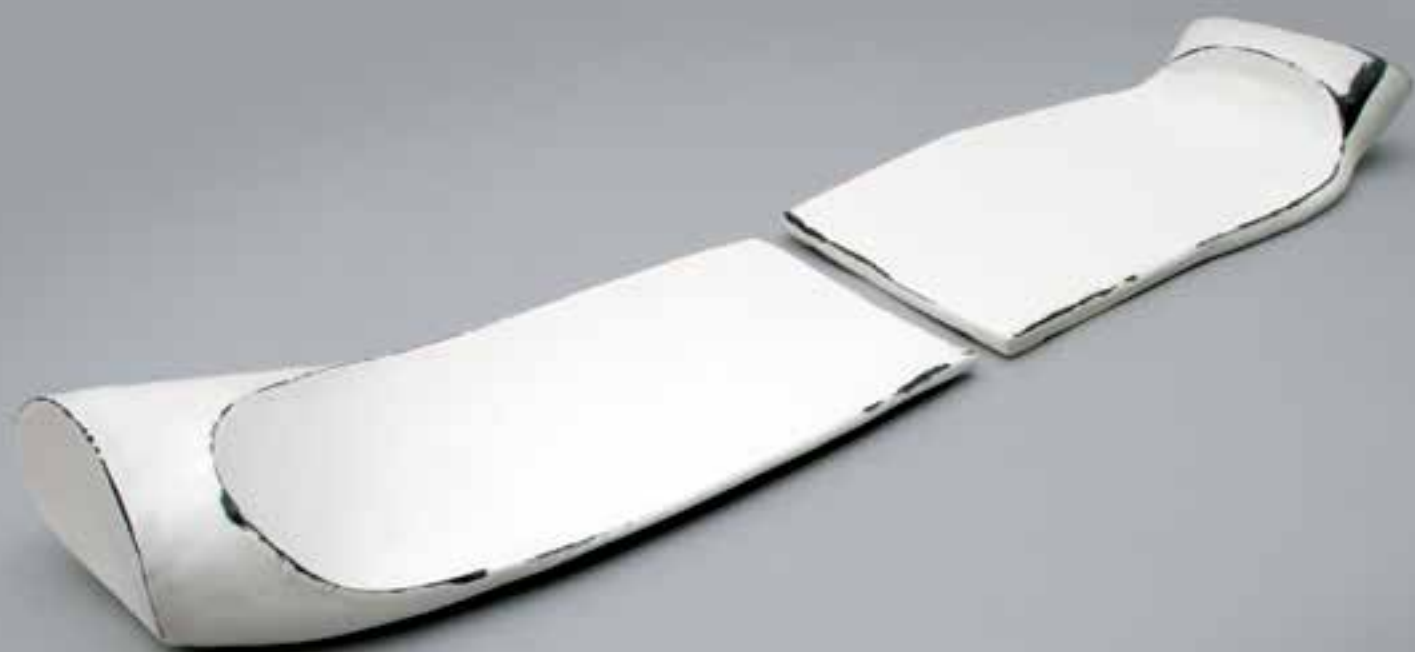
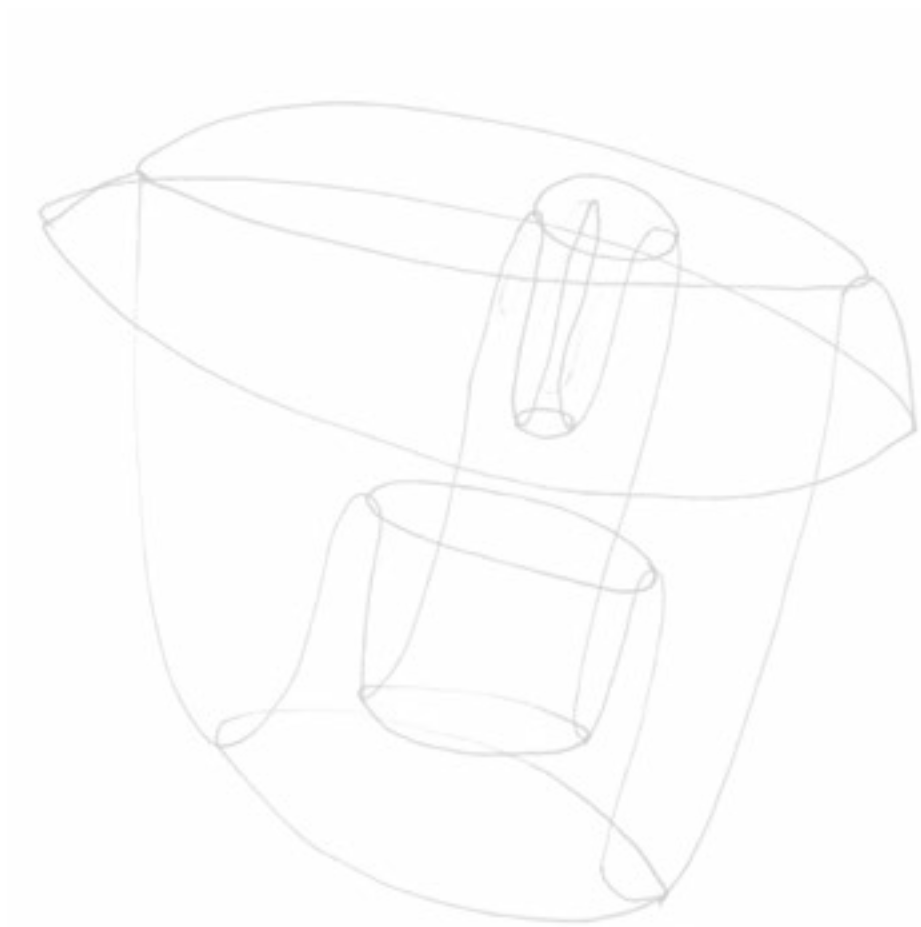
Oval Server, 1997
Copper
4 × 41 × 28 in.



Upset Edge, 2013
Bronze
19.5 × 19.5 × 5.25 in.



Food Plinth, 2000
Copper
22 × 22 × 3 in.



Stretched Platters, 2013
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 26.5 × 6 in.

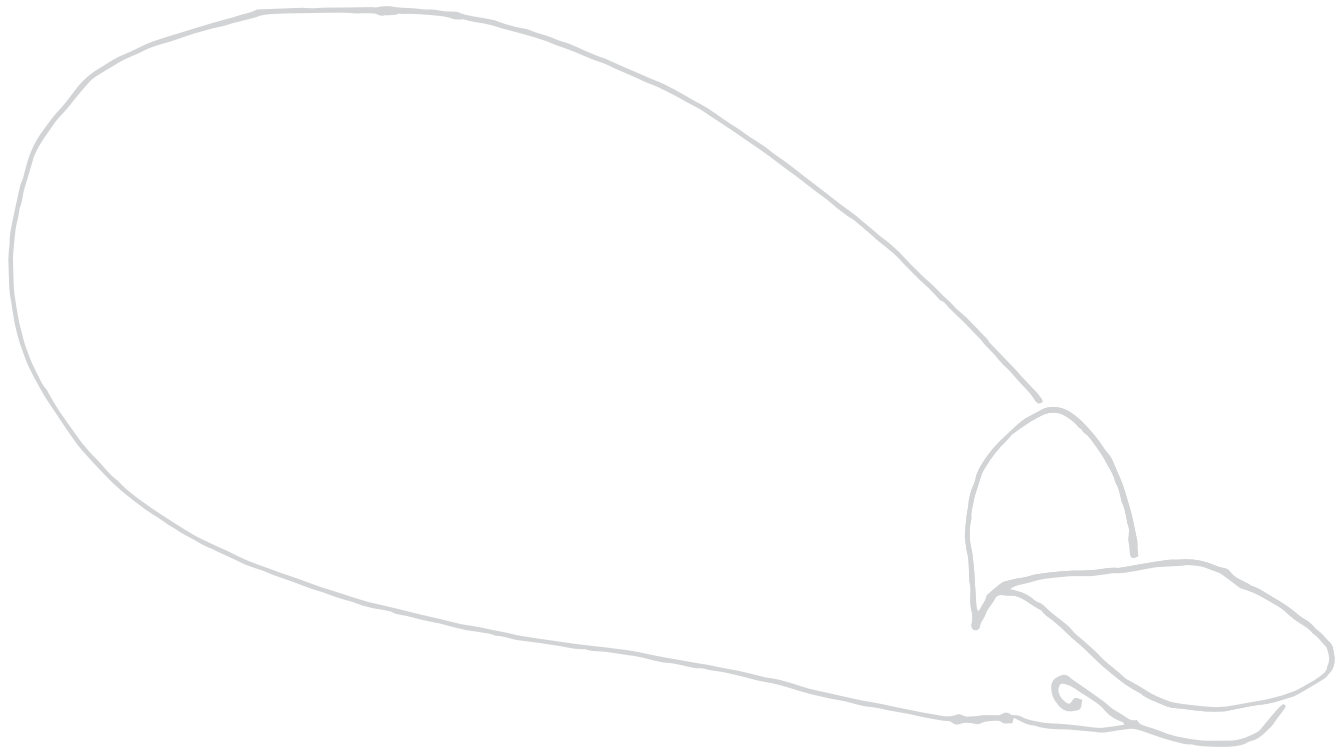
Red and White Pitcher, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5 × 9 × 7.5 in.



Trunk Sections, 2007
Cast ductile iron
25 × 14 × 7 in.
22 × 9 × 7 in.
13 × 8 × 7 in.



Kent Cylinder, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
13 × 6 × 6 in.



Split Slab, 2012
Silver
2.5 × 18 × 5 in.



The Flap, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 9 × 4 in.



Flared Ovals, 2007
Cast ductile iron, brass
12 × 16 × 38 in. each



Brass Oval, 2007
Brass
11 × 21 × 8 in.



Driftware, 2006
Silver, 18k
5 × 9 × 12 in.



Cordial Cups (Set of 8), 2006
Silver, vermeil
3.5 × 1.75 in. each



Pair of Cups, 2005
Silver
2.5 × 3 × 4 in.
2.5 × 3 × 3.25 in.



Silver Chiclet, 2013
Silver
2.5 × 10 × 5 in.



Milled Server, 2013
Silver
23 × 5.25 × 2 in.



Brat Pans, 2007
Cast ductile iron
20 × 96 × 2 in.



Processed Stock, 2012
Copper
26 × 12 × 2.75 in.
Private Collection
New Haven, CT



Peel, 2016
Copper
4.25 × 28 × 6 in.



Splitsies, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5 × 12 × 6 in.



Humpty Dumpty, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
1.25 × 11.25 × 6 in.





Rolled Out Tube, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 12 × 6.5 in.

Study of Milled Server, 2012
Brass, tin
27 × 5 × 2 in.

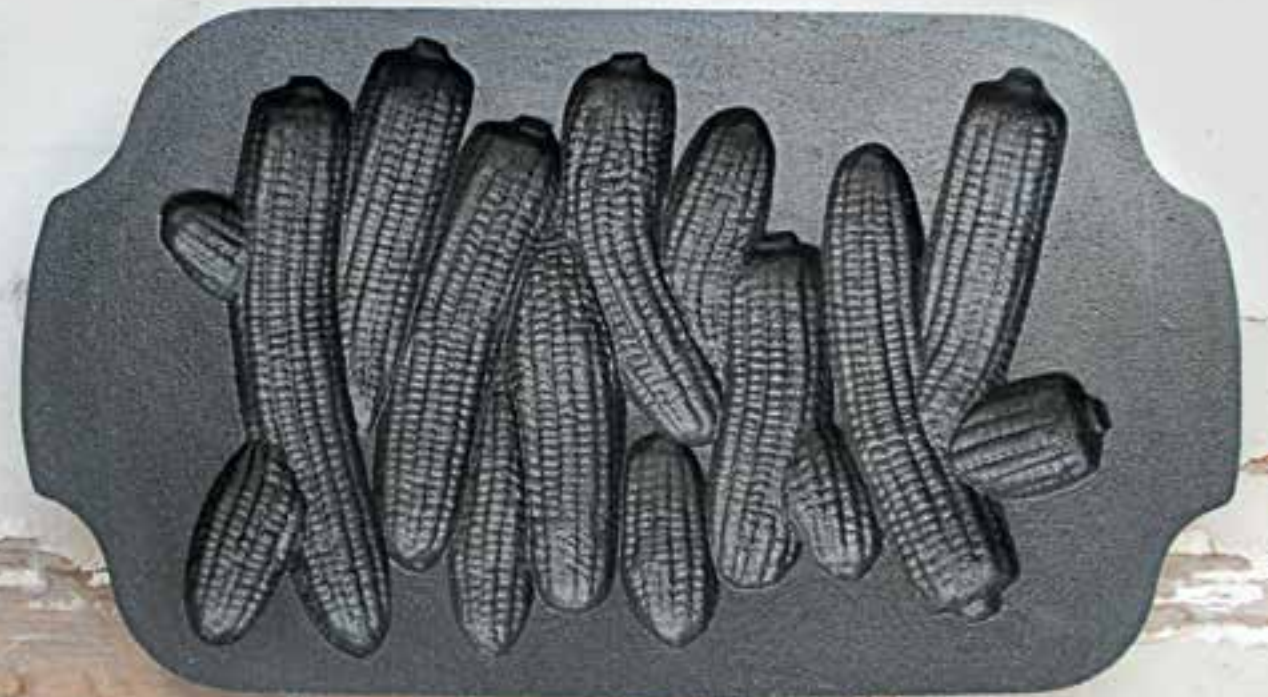


Black and White Double Spout, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5.5 × 4.5 × 3.5 in.

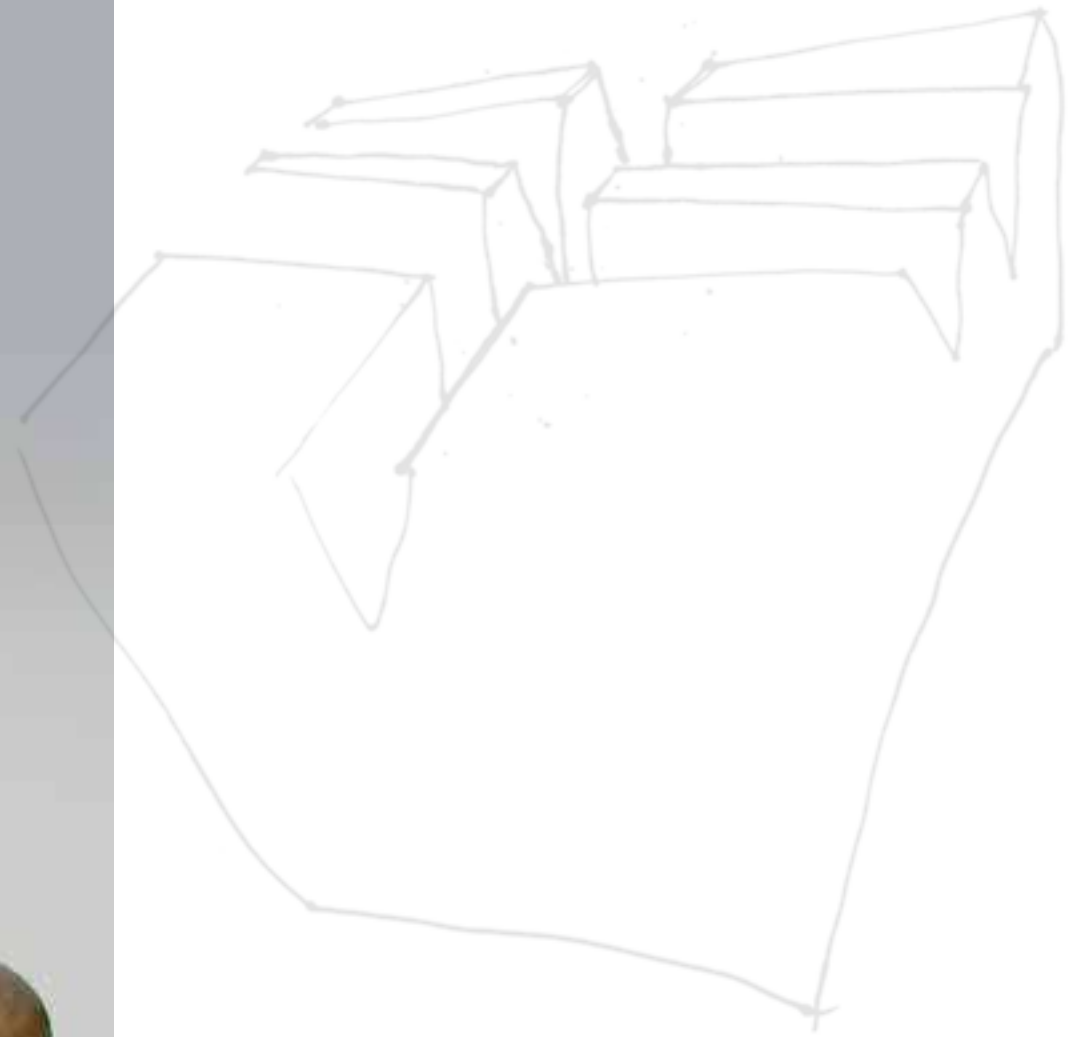


Mitosis II, 2007
Cast ductile iron
16 × 24 × 1 in.

Four Handed Skillet, 2007
Cast ductile iron
15 × 25 × 2 in.



Modified Corn Pone Pan, 2007
Cast ductile iron
8.5 × 15.25 × 1.25 in.



Clove Oval, 2010
Copper, brass
4 × 14 × 8 in.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Listed Chronologically

All works courtesy the artist unless otherwise noted



Drawn Spoon, 1990
Silver spoon
23.5 × 1.25 × .5 in.
p. 2



Pair of Spoons, 1991
Silver, copper, found objects
6 × 6 × 1.25 in. each
Collection of the Samuel
Dorsky Museum of Art; p. 17



Oval Server, 1997
Copper
4 × 41 × 28 in.
p. 28–29



Freestanding Skillet, 2007
Cast ductile iron
13 × 23 × 2 in.
p. 20–21



Limbs, 2007
Cast ductile iron
24 × 10 × 9 in. each
p. 27



Mitosis I, 2007
Cast ductile iron
16 × 24 × 1 in.
p. 18, 64–65



Food Plinth, 2000
Copper
22 × 22 × 3 in.
p. 31



Pair of Cups, 2005
Silver
2.5 × 3 × 4 in.;
2.5 × 3 × 3.25 in.
p. 43



Cordial Cups, 2006
Silver, vermeil
3.5 × 1.75 in. (each)
p. 43



Mitosis II, 2007
Cast ductile iron
16 × 24 × 1 in.
p. 54



Modified Corn Pone Pan, 2007
Cast ductile iron
8.5 × 15.25 × 1.25 in.
p. 55



Monsanto, 2007
Cast ductile iron
1 × 17 × 8 in.
p. 25



Driftware, 2006
Silver, 18k
5 × 9 × 12 in.
p. 42



Loops, 2007–2016
Copper, brass
Dimensions variable
p. 13, back cover



Brass Oval, 2007
Brass
11 × 21 × 8 in.
p. 40, 41



Trunk Sections, 2007
Cast ductile iron
25 × 14 × 7 in.; 22 × 9 × 7 in.;
13 × 8 × 7 in.
p. 34



Clove Oval, 2010
Copper, brass
4 × 14 × 8 in.
cover, p. 14, 56–57



Oval (in) Oval, 2010
Copper, tin
4 × 6 × 5 in.
p. 25



Brat Pans, 2007
Cast ductile iron
20 × 96 × 2 in.; 12 parts
p. 46



Flared Ovals, 2007
Cast ductile iron, brass
12 × 16 × 38 in. each
p. 38–39



Four Handled Skillet, 2007
Cast ductile iron
15 × 25 × 2 in.
p. 55



Pulled Pitcher, 2010
Copper, tin
2.25 × 3 × 1.5 in.
p. 11



Strappy Vessel, 2011
Copper
3 × 12 × 9 in.
p. 12



Study for Milled Server, 2012
Brass, tin
27 × 5 × 2 in.
p. 52



Patched Vessels (Set of 4)
2012–2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
Dimensions variable
p. 26



Processed Stock, 2012
Copper
26 × 12 × 2.75 in.
Private Collection,
New Haven, CT; p. 15, 46–47



Split Slab, 2012
Silver
2.5 × 18 × 5 in.
p. 17, 36



Double Bean, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
2 × 13 × 7 in.
p. 16



Galaxy Ware, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
2.75 × 13 × 8.5 in.
p. 14, 23



Grey White Swirly, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 12 × 8 in.
p. 22



Humpty Dumpty, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
1.25 × 11.25 × 6 in.
p. 51



Torn Pita, 2012
Copper, brass
1.75 × 5.75 × 5 in.
Inside front cover, p. 15



Flip Top, 2013
Silver
13.5 × 6 × 2.5 in.
p. 4, 70–71



Milled Server, 2013
Silver
23 × 5.25 × 2 in.
p. 45



Kent Cylinder, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
13 × 6 × 6 in.
p. 35



Poured Tin Oval, 2014
Tin
3 × 5 × 4 in.
p. 68



Red and White Pitcher, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5 × 9 × 7.5 in.
p. 33



Rolled Out Tube, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 12 × 6.5 in.
p. 52



Silver Chiclet, 2013
Silver
2.5 × 10 × 5 in.
p. 19, 44



Something for the Table, 2013
Silver
2.5 × 12 × 8 in.
p. 6



Stretched Platters, 2013
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 26.5 × 6 in.
p. 13, 32



Speckled Dreyfuss, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
4.5 × 8 × 3 in.
p. 9



Splitsies, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5 × 12 × 6 in.
p. 50



The Chin, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5.75 × 6 × 5 in.
p. 24



The Flap, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3 × 9 × 4 in.
p. 19, 37



Upset Edge, 2013
Bronze
19.5 × 19.5 × 5.25 in.
p. 30



Birki, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
3.5 × 10 × 4.75 in.
p. 18



Black and White Double Spout, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
5.5 × 4.5 × 3.5 in.
p. 53



Thumbthing, 2014
Porcelain enamel on steel
1.5 × 11 × 8 in.
Inside back cover



Peel, 2016
Copper
4.25 × 28 × 6 in.
p. 48–49

Pictured in text but not in exhibition:

Melting Candelabrum, 2003
Silver
5 × 22 × 18 in.
Rotasa Collection Trust
p. 13

Book of Tools, 1986
Steel, silver, paper, fabric
Closed: 8 × 8 × 1 in.
p. 17

BIOGRAPHIES

Myra Mimplitsch-Gray

Myra Mimplitsch-Gray earned her Master of Fine Arts degree at Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1986, and her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Philadelphia College of Art in 1984. A Professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, Mimplitsch-Gray received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998. She is the recipient of the 2016 American Craft Council Award and has been inducted into its College of Fellows. Other awards include the 2014 Individual Artist Fellowship in Crafts/Sculpture from the New York Foundation for the Arts; the 2012 United States Artists Glasgow Fellowship in Craft and Traditional Arts, and Individual Artist Fellowships from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation (1995), the National Endowment for the Arts (1994), and the New York Foundation for the Arts (1997, 2005).

In 2014 the Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee named Mimplitsch-Gray “Master Metalsmith” and presented her first museum retrospective, *Staging Form*. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at venues such as Sienna Patti Contemporary, Wexler Gallery, and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and is currently on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Yale University Art Gallery.

Publications include: *Staging Form* (Jenni Sorkin; Metal Museum, 2014); *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft* (UNC Press, Chapel Hill, 2010); *Craft in America—Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects* (Random House, 2007); *100 Treasures* (Cranbrook Art Museum, 2004); *Skilled Work—American Craft in the Renwick Gallery* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998); *Women Designers, 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference* (Yale University Press, 2000); and *One of a Kind: American Art Jewelry Today* (Abrams, 1995). A feature article, “Of Hammers, History and Household: The Metalwork of Myra Mimplitsch-Gray,” by David McFadden, was published in *Metalsmith*, Spring 2005.

Daniel Belasco

Daniel Belasco is Curator of Exhibitions and Programs at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz. At The Dorsky, Belasco has curated numerous exhibitions, notably *Bradley Walker Tomlin: A Retrospective* (2016), *Grace Hartigan: Myths and Malls* (2015), *Dick Polich: Transforming Metal into Art* (2014), and *Mary Reid Kelley: Working Objects and Videos* (2014), which won the AICA-USA Prize for Best Time-based Format, Second Place. From 2007 to 2012 Belasco was Henry J. Leir Associate Curator of The Jewish Museum, curating *Shifting the Gaze: Painting and Feminism* (2010) among other exhibitions. In 2010 Belasco also co-curated (with Sarah Lewis) *The Dissolve: SITE Santa Fe's Eighth International Biennial*. A specialist in postwar and contemporary art, he has written on painting, video, and other subjects in *Art in America* and for other publications. Belasco holds a PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU and teaches contemporary art and museum studies at SUNY New Paltz.

Akiko Busch

Akiko Busch writes about design, culture, and nature for a variety of publications. She is the author of *Geography of Home*, *The Uncommon Life of Common Objects*, and *Nine Ways to Cross a River*. *The Incidental Steward*, her book of essays about citizen science and stewardship, was published by Yale University Press in 2013. She was a contributing editor at *Metropolis* magazine for 20 years, and her essays have appeared in numerous national magazines, newspapers, and exhibition catalogues. Currently she is on the faculty of the MA Design Research program at the School of Visual Arts and is a visiting teacher at Bennington College. Her work has been recognized by grants from the Furthermore Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, and Civitella Ranieri. She lives in the Hudson Valley.

Sara J. Pasti

Sara J. Pasti has served as the Neil C. Trager Director of the Samuel Dorsky Museum at SUNY New Paltz since 2009. Before coming to The Dorsky, Pasti served as Director of Curatorial Affairs at the University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery and held leadership positions at other visual art organizations in Seattle, New York City, and the Hudson Valley.



EXHIBITION HISTORY

Solo Exhibitions

- 2016** *In/Animate: Recent Work by Myra Mimlitsch-Gray*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz NY
- 2014** *Master Metalsmith: Myra Mimlitsch-Gray*, The National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN
- 2013** *Something for the Table*, Sienna Gallery, Lenox, MA
- 2009** *anti/icono/clastic*, Wexler Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 2007** *Force Times Distance*, Sienna Gallery, Lenox, MA
- 2005** *Drifting*, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
- 2004** *Interpreting Utility*, Gallery 81, New Haven, CT
- 2003** *Conflation*, Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak, MI
- 2000** *Studies in Chain Mail*, Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
- 1998** *Magnification: 500x*, Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak, MI
- 1994** *Myra Mimlitsch-Gray: Objects and Sculpture*, Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak, MI
- 1992** *Myra Mimlitsch-Gray: Metalwork*, Moreau Galleries at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2016** *On Function*, Institute of Visual Arts, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, WI
- 2015** *Unique by Design: Contemporary Jewelry in the Donna Schneier Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Re: Collection, Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Arts/Industry: Collaboration and Revelation, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
- 2013** *RE: Position*, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto
Twenty-First Century Heirlooms, Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI
- 2012** *Re-Fresh*, Brooklyn Metal Works, Brooklyn, NY
Custom Hardware: Work by Myra Mimlitsch-Gray and Jennifer Woodin, Kingston Museum of Contemporary Art, Kingston, NY
- 2011** *Jewelers of the Hudson Valley*, Forbes Gallery, New York
No Object Is an Island: New Dialogues with the Cranbrook Collection, Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI
- 2010** *Vanitas: Contemporary Reflections*, Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA
Eat Drink Art Design: Trailblazing Tableware from the MAD Collection, Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Wrought & Crafted: Jewelry and Metalwork 1900 to the Present, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Form Follows Function or Does It?, Gallery I, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, AR
- 2008** *Raising the Bar: Influential Voices in Metal*, Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh, Scotland; Ruthin Craft Centre, Denbigshire, Wales; Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, England
The Thinking Body, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; The Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, CA
True Grit: Frames, Flirtations, and Fixations, McColl Center for Art + Innovation, Charlotte, NC

2007–9 *Craft in America: Expanding Traditions*, Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR; Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR; Mingei International Museum, San Diego, CA; Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston, TX; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, OK; Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA

2007 *Cross Over: Combining Traditions, Metals and Sculpture*, Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron, Akron, OH

Being Open, Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI

2006 *The coffee was very slow in coming*, Paul Kotula Projects, Ferndale, MI

Re:pair and Imperfection, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago

Think Again! The Presence of the Past in Contemporary Art, Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI

2005 *120 Definitions of Temptation: International Invitational Exhibition*, Cheongju International Biennale, Cheongju Arts Center, Cheongju City, Republic of Korea

2004 *100 Treasures*, Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI

Crafts Now: 21 Artists Each from America, Europe, and Asia, Kanazawa World Craft Forum, Kanazawa, Japan

Jewelry Beyond Jewelry, Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, NJ

2003 *Evocative Objects: Contemporary Studio Metalsmithing*, Bannister Gallery, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

2002 *Making Meaning: Metalsmithing, Objects and Contingencies in the New Millennium*, Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Display Use Only, Kirkland Arts Center, Kirkland, WA

2001 *A View by Two: Contemporary Jewelry*, RISD Museum, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

2000 *Women Designers in the USA, 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference*, Bard Graduate Center Gallery, New York

The Renwick Invitational: Five Women in Craft, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC

Commemorative Medals/Trophies: The Politics of History, Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

1999 *Handfraught: Myra Mimplitsch-Gray and Anne Newdigate*, The Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada

Contemporary Crafts of New York State, New York State Museum, Albany, NY

Craft Forms, Wayne Art Center, Wayne, PA

1998 *Twelfth Silver Triennial*, Deutsches Goldschmiedehaus, Hanau, Germany; Städtisches Museum, Göttingen, Germany

Raised From Tradition: Holloware Past and Present, Seafirst Gallery, Seattle

1997 *Craft Mediating Culture*, Elsa Mott Ives Gallery, New York

Do Not Touch: Objects by Mary Douglas, Myra Mimplitsch Gray and Mike Hill, City Gallery at Chastain, Atlanta, GA

1996 *Signals: Late Twentieth-Century American Jewelry*, Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Montréal, Québec; Parsons School of Art and Design, New York

Issues and Intent: Contemporary American Metalwork, Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA

New Jewelry from USA, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland; Hipòtesi Gallery, Barcelona; Lesley Craze Gallery, London; Art Box, Waregem, Belgium; Gallery Ademloos, The Hague, Holland

1995 *Schmuckszene '95*, Sonderschau der 47, Internationale Handwerksmesse, Munich

1994 *One of a Kind: American Art Jewelry Today*, Mobilia Gallery, Cambridge, MA; Joanne Rapp Gallery/The Hand and the Spirit, Scottsdale, AZ; Milagros Gallery, San Antonio, TX

The Lure of the Physical, Art Museum of Greater Lafayette, Lafayette, IN

1993 *Sculptural Concerns: Contemporary American Metal Working*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN; American Craft Museum, New York; Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS; Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL; Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN; Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI; California College of the Arts, Oakland, CA

Vanity, Value, Virtue, Gallery 210, University of Missouri, Saint Louis, MO

The Weight of Gold, Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA

The Year of American Craft: Trends and Traditions, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, IN

1992 *Borne with a Silver Spoon*, The National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN; Aaron Faber Gallery, New York; Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak, MI; Joanne Rapp Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ; Katie Gingrass Art Gallery, Milwaukee, WI; New Art Forms Exposition, Chicago; Concepts Gallery, Carmel, CA; Schick Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

Expressions: Jewelry in the 90s, The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH

1991 *Silver: New Forms and Expressions III*, Fortunoff, New York; The National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN; Union Art Gallery, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA; List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, RI; Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs, MS

Copper III, Old Pueblo Museum, Tucson, AZ

1990 *Art and Ideology: The Social Function of Craft*, Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI

1989 *Biennial '89*, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE

1988 *Blood on the Fence: New Metalsmithing*, Indianapolis Art League, Indianapolis, IN

1987 *Marcel Duchamp: The Legacy Continues...*, Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia, PA

1986 *Contemporary Metals USA II*, Downey Museum of Art, Downey, CA

Curatorial Projects

2015 *Adorned Spaces*, Society of North American Goldsmiths Conference, Boston, MA

2012 *Insight/On Site: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Historic Huguenot Street*, Historic Huguenot Street, New Paltz, NY

2011 *Persen: Place & Things*, Persen House, Kingston, NY

2005 *Juxtapositions: Selections from the Metals Collection*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, SUNY New Paltz, co-curator with Jamie Bennett and Metal MFA students

2002 *Markers of Contemporary Metal*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, SUNY New Paltz, co-curator with Jamie Bennett and Metal MFA students



PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Art Museum of Greater Lafayette,
Lafayette, IN
Untitled (Torso), 1992

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian
Design Museum, New York
Corners, 2006

Cranbrook Art Museum,
Bloomfield Hills, MI
Candelabrum: Seven Fragments, 2003
Handwrought Copper Tray, 1997

Detroit Institute of Arts, MI
Stopper, 1998

Mary Schiller Myers School of Art,
University of Akron, OH
Cup With Exaggerated Lip, 1998

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Brass Knuckles, 1993
Timepiece, 1989

Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC
Handwrought Brass Tray, 1998
Purge, 1993

Mitsubishi Materials Corporation, Tokyo
Handle Fragment Study, 1995

Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Melting Teapot, 2005
Timepiece, 1990
Untitled (ring), 1993
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Candlesticks, 1991

National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh
Melting Sticks, 2007

Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA
Teapot Study in Copper, 1990

Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI
Bauble, 1993
Pitcher, 1998

Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American
Art Museum, Washington, DC
Bel Canto, 1998
Sugar Bowl and Creamer III, 1996

Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art,
SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
Pair of Spoons, 1991

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Fish Server, 2000
RCA Study Piece, 2004

Yale University Art Gallery,
New Haven, CT
Compote, 2003

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Akiko Busch

First and foremost, I would like to thank Myra Mimlitsch-Gray for the invitation to work with her to select, organize, and shape the group of works shown here.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the generous support of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz. Thanks are due especially to Sara Pasti, the Neil C. Trager Director of the museum for graciously offering Myra Mimlitsch-Gray the opportunity to showcase her recent work and to Daniel Belasco, Curator of Exhibitions and Programs, whose assistance—conceptual, editorial, material—all proved invaluable. Thanks go as well to the entire Dorsky Museum staff for its ongoing help in assembling and installing the pieces shown here, and to Amy Pickering for her help in proofreading this catalogue.

Also instrumental in supporting this exhibition were Mimlitsch-Gray's academic and professional colleagues who encouraged her experimentations. She especially thanks artists Jamie Bennett, Barbara Seidenath, and Veleta Vancza for sharing their knowledge of enameling processes; Cullen Hackler of the Porcelain Enamel Institute for his specific technical expertise and advice; and Kathleen Browne who made the large kiln at Kent State University available for a test drive.

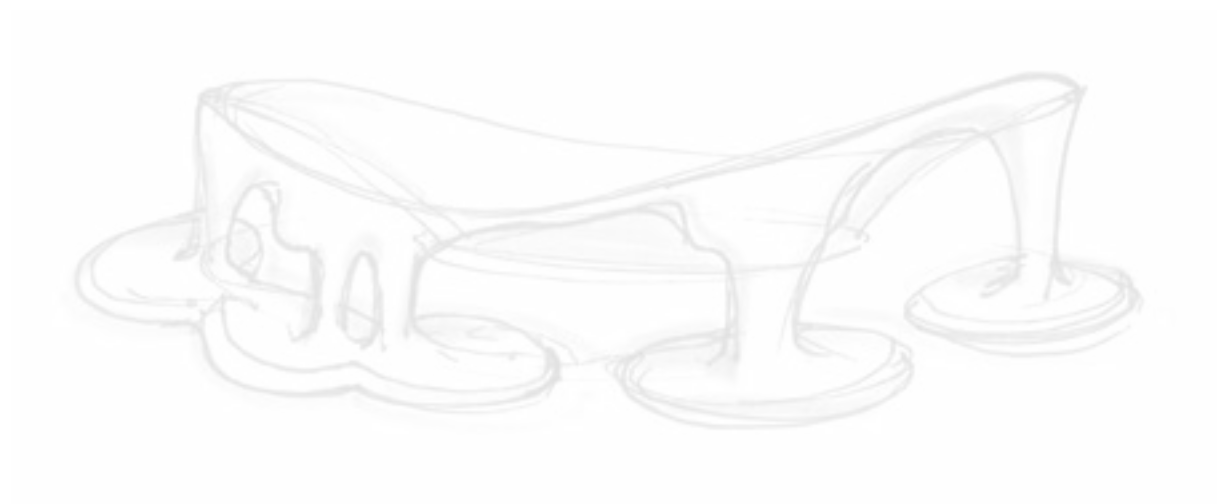
Brass Oval, Brat Pans, Flared Ovals, Four Handled Skillet, Freestanding Skillet, Limbs, Mitosis I and II, Monsanto, Modified Corn Pone Pan and Trunk Sections were created in Arts/Industry, a long-term residency program of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Arts/Industry takes place at and is funded by Kohler Co.

Appreciation also goes to private lenders who were generous enough to loan work in their collections for this exhibition. Immense gratitude is likewise extended to art director Brad Collins and designer Lynne Talbot at Group C in New Haven for the way in which they have conferred their own order and elegance on the work in the pages of this catalog.

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COLOPHON



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