

# Galerie Francesca Pia

## **CRAFT**

*Works and Ordinary Objects by Artists and Anonymous Craftsmen*

Curated by Nicolas Trembley

**Arrange Whatever Pieces Come Your Way**

James Benning

**BLESS**

JB Blunk

**Atelier E.B with Marc Camille Chaimowicz**

Kazunori Hamana

Yukari Hirotsu

Ulrike Müller

Mai-Thu Perret

Sofu Teshigahara

**Sogetsu Ikebana School**

Grès de Puisaye

**Anonymous textiles and baskets**

**Opening April 19, 5–8**

**April 20 – May 27, 2022**

This exhibition includes ceramics, textiles, basketry, Ikebana, stained glass, and brass (and also a film). Certain pieces are contemporary artworks and others utilitarian objects.

In the entrance, James Benning's installation with stained glass includes a quilt inspired by Missouri Pettway. Born in 1909 in Alabama, she was an American artist associated with the Gee's Bend quilting collective, a craft community of Black African descendants of slavery who were active in the civil rights movement.

In the main room, eight large platforms present works and ordinary objects by artists and anonymous craftsmen.

African indigo blankets from *Fulani* weavers in Mali and *Asante* Kente cloth from Ghana are shown with Boro textiles made by Japanese farmers with recycled fabric. They are similar to the bedcovers produced by the rural people *Shui* in Southern China.

Three contemporary female collectives working with textiles and fashion are present: Atelier E.B, (Edinburgh/Brussels), is the company name under which the designer Beca Lipscombe and the artist Lucy McKenzie sign their collaborative projects. BLESS, (Paris/Berlin) is conceived by Desiree Heiss & Ines Kaag and Arrange Whatever Pieces Come Your Way, (Glasgow/Wiltshire), by Sheelagh Boyce & Annabelle Harty.

Mai-Thu Perret and Ulrike Müller each produced rugs and tapestries handwoven in Mexico.

One platform shows a rare sculpture by Sofu Teshigahara, (1900–1979), a Japanese artist and Ikebana master who founded the Sogetsu School in 1927. He wanted Ikebana, the art of flower arrangement, to be accessible to everyone, regardless of their social or economic status. A dry Ikebana by Zurich teacher Lea Ruprecht has been conceived for the exhibition.

A large vase by self-taught ceramicist Kazunori Hamana is also on view. His work reconnects with the simplicity and humbleness of vernacular traditions.

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A second platform is devoted to ceramics and JB Blunk (1926–2002), an American sculptor, painter and jeweler. His pieces were made in Bizen, Japan and California. They are rough, cracked and irregular, demonstrating a resistance to mass production.

Japanese artist Yukari Hirotani shows two modest woodfired bowls with a technique called Yakishime, using only clay and no glaze.

A group of utilitarian jars in Grès de Puisaye refers to a type of sandstone that is found in France and reminds of the Mingei aesthetic, the Japanese Folk Crafts movement.

Baskets and basketry are also represented with a Swiss vernacular grain sieve in wicker and several *Hanakago* vases for Ikebana weaved in bamboo. A basket in ceramic was produced by Mai-Thu Perret.

In the last room, James Benning's film *On Paradise Road* is projected. It is a portrait of the interior of his own home, constructed with measured, fixed-frame shots. It focuses on domestic scenes and ordinary objects but also features works by Benning created after those by outlier artists Bill Traylor and Jesse Howard. Benning's facsimile paintings pay tribute to these figures and their legacies, while honoring their roles as anchors within an alternate history of art.

The exhibition goes beyond simply showcasing crafts and their beauty. It explores the political and feminist implications of crafts and the ways in which it can be used to challenge and subvert dominant power narratives in art.

– Nicolas Trembley