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From: Mindy Solomon Gallery

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Utilitarian? Beautiful? You Can Decide at Mindy Solomon Gallery.

The words utility and beauty might seem contradictory. Utility brings to mind functional, bare bones, spartan and ordinary. Beauty on the other hand conjures up higher ideals: attractive, exquisite and magnificent. The participating artists working in a variety of media are able to join the two together. From **Mernet Larsen's** exquisitely rendered paintings capturing a moment in time, to **Patricia Sannit's** archeologically inspired sculptural forms, art conveys form both solid and ethereal.

The painter **Mernet Larsen** tries to evoke a sense of permanence and solidity, freezing time to distill the essence of ordinary events made tangible. Her subjects are not stilled like a photograph but embedded memories into her subconscious, making them more monumental. Larsen understands her paintings are contrived devices, statements that memory must be constructed, invented, not uncovered. Larsen's paintings also provide bold graphic inspiration that plays well against a cacophony of formal objects that speak to the possibility of functionality.

Joseph Pintz's earthenware vessels bespeak of a simpler Shaker-like simplicity. They seem to be chiseled and have a casual formalness. Strongly influenced by his German immigrant parents who came to the U.S. in the 1950s to start a new life;

"My grandparents all worked with their hands—a farmer on my father's side and blacksmith on my mother's. Transplanted from their native culture to the suburbs of Chicago, the old and new world began to blend together. I was born the third of four children into a working class family. Both my parents love to cook and take great pride in their flower and vegetable gardens. Nearly every meal was eaten together at home around the dinner table, featuring fresh vegetables or those we had canned. The physicality of these processes brought us together. Through experiences like this, my parents taught me the values of working with your hands and being self-sufficient."

The stubborn physicality of Pintz's pots forces one to slow down and pay close attention to the meal, the moment, and the company around the table. By creating a dialog between the vessel and the user, the value of quality and aesthetic experience over efficiency is reinforced.

Ingrid Bath's ceramic objects also highlight the tactile and plastic nature of clay. Her methods of constructing work are integral to the final presentation. The repetitive nature of pinching and coiling, allow for meditation during creation. Traditional methods of hand building are employed to emphasize the scope of possibility within the medium. By making objects out of a fragile and precious material, Bath expects the delicate nature of the work to elicit a heightened awareness and sensitivity to the viewer. The artist feels that "by paying attention to and finding beauty in simple acts, I ask the viewer to reconsider the role and function of these activities and objects as I beautify and memorialize them as artwork."

Patricia Sannit also chooses to work with reductive forms; informed by past cultures, her vessels and sculpture with dry, weathered surfaces evoke artifacts that were recently unearthed. Her art reflects her interest in the relationship of human experience across cultures and through time, and in the stratification of soils that reflect the history of human cultures as part of the layers of the earth. Sannit's travels to Africa's Rift Valley and the Lucy site, where our species' oldest history is exposed in eroded escarpments, and through parts of Europe and Central America where history is demonstrated through architecture and industrial development have been major influences. These experiences have provided the means for the artist to feel more connected to the long chain of human continuity and her part in it.

Christian S. Tonsgard is a Massachusetts based ceramist whose sleek porcelain pots reveal a level of sophistication and represent a sculptural solution to a utilitarian purpose, stacking and overlapping to create monumentality of subject when not in use. Tonsgard feels "I have always been in search of my

own place, working towards a sense of how my work and by extension how I can fit into the greater workings of the world. Home design and décor have always interested me. I strive to create objects that fully envelope the concepts behind functionality as well as aesthetic integrity. I continue to postulate this question to myself-how can functional pottery be as utilitarian as possible while still providing a greater sense of aesthetic pleasure?"

Each of the artists presented in this exhibition share a common thread-the ability to create a permanency from concept and imagination. Whether these objects imply or actually serve a functional purpose, there is a vibrant connection to the here and now.

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Utility and Beauty:

Mernet Larsen, Ingrid Bathe, Patricia Sannit, Joseph Pintz, Christian S. Tonsgard

Artist's Talk:

November 20, 2010 - 6:00 pm

OPENING RECEPTION:

November 20, 2010 - 6:30-8:30 pm

**Mindy Solomon Gallery
124 2nd Ave NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701**

Wednesday - Saturday: 11 am – 5 pm, Sunday & Monday: Closed, Tuesday: By appointment

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NOTE: High Resolution Images are available at: <http://www.mindysolomon.com/press.php>