



Beth Lipman, *Still Life with Metal Pitcher* (detail), 2007. Glass and mixed media, 85 x 109 x 96 in. From "Shattering Glass."

## KATONAH, NEW YORK "Shattering Glass"

Katonah Museum

"Shattering Glass," curated by Ellen J. Keiter and Katonah Museum executive director Neil Watson, is part of a larger effort to upgrade glass—and craft materials in general—to art material. Blurring the line between minor and high art, the inevitable result of contemporary art's increasingly pluralistic, hybridized ethos, this remarkably beautiful show for the most part avoided the preciousness and kitsch so often associated with glass, melding art, design, and craft into something more than mere eye candy. The showstopper, Beth Lipman's *Still Life with Metal Pitcher* (2007) is a glittering installation of clear glass vessels and objects of all kinds arranged on a circular table. Crowded together, wine glasses toppled, transparent fruits heaped on epergnes, flowers strewn about, the crumpled milky glass tablecloth

itself an illusionistic tour-de-force, Lipman's memento mori conjures a 17th-century Dutch still-life painting brought into ravishing, life-sized three-dimensionality. Other highlights included Josiah McElheny's *Mirrored and Reflected Infinitely* (2004), a mirrored cabinet of pristine, hand-blown silvered vessels in endless replication. Based on a conversation between Isamu Noguchi and Buckminster Fuller, it answers the question: Can a three-dimensional object exist without a shadow? Dante Marioni contributed another receptacle installation, an impressive wall of hand-blown, crystalline glass forms delicately edged in black like a drawing and suggesting a museological display of vessel types.

Several works explored figurative forms, including Angelo Filomeno's glossy black skeleton reminiscent of recumbent medieval tomb statuary, part gorgeous, part macabre, accompanied by a pair of sleek cock-

roaches. Two clouded, freestanding statues of robes without figures by Karen Lamotte were less compelling. But Arlene Shechet's signature, Buddhist-inspired pale blue crystal ropes, which appeared woven into the wall, were memorable. Sydney Cash's clear glass shelf etched with an arabesque pattern followed a more abstract vein. Lighted and installed in a corner several feet above the floor, the template cast a tall bisected shadow in which each half mirrored the other—one with a light ground, the other dark, creating an immaterial, luminous drawing.

The show also featured hybrids of abstraction and representation. Ann Gardner strung a vertical cascade of suspended opaque shapes that resembled elongated, schematic pods into a curtain of sorts. Therese Lahaie contributed what might be landscapes in motion, shimmering cross-sections of earth and sea, air and light, made of patterned fabrics

rotated by a motor set behind mottled, blue, tan, and olive glass rectangles. Sharon Loudon attached hundreds of clear, black, and red glass rods shaped into doodles to the walls, floors, and ceiling of the museum's entry. Each doodle suggested a figure, and the whole became a high-spirited, three-dimensional drawing. Richard Klein's trademark spectacles, accompanied by transparent ashtrays pressed into an imposing rectangular block, gave off unexpected patterns that brushed a painting in light. Outside, Bill Fitzgibbon's LED piece, programmed so that the windows on the otherwise unbroken street façade—a diamond shape and a slightly smaller square—flashed colors in a dazzling light show that stopped traffic on the street. "Shattering Glass," among other things, argued persuasively for the return of craft to concept.

—Lilly Wei