

KEEP AN EYE ON THE BOWL: THE ART OF JOAN SCHULZE

Ruth's Table Gallery

October 7 - December 30, 2021

Ruth's Table Viewing Room

October 24 - December 30, 2021

PRESS RELEASE



Ruth's Table gallery is pleased to present *Keep an Eye on the Bowl*, a solo exhibition with a mixed-media quilt, collage, and fiber artist Joan Schulze.

As a contemporary artist, Schulze bridges abstraction and minimalism, fine arts and crafts, East and West. Named a "pioneer of the art quilt movement," Schulze has revolutionized the field of fiber arts with new quilting forms and techniques, embrace of digital tools and processes within the traditional craft form, and non-conventional visual language fused with her poetic verses, modern art, and broad cultural influences from around the world.

This exhibition brings together twenty-one works from 2002 to 2021 that represent Schulze's pursuit of the possibilities of quilting and collage through experimentation. The title of the exhibition, *Keep an Eye on the Bowl*, is a reference to the Schulze's ongoing series of works inspired by an antique Chinese tea bowl gifted to Schulze during one of her visits in China. This body of work immortalizes the precious object and pays homage to the culture it comes from.

Juxtaposing, overlapping, dissecting, and repeating visual content of her work, Schulze creates non-conventional compositions that look beyond the traditional quilt blocks foreground to more impressionistic imagery.

The lines formed by intricate piecing are enhanced by added stitched lines, graphic details and calligraphic markings that invite the viewer to discern and engage in its messages. One of the striking examples is *A Long Time Ago* executed in a dramatic black-and-white palette with images of a rotating bowl against the backdrop of crumpled newspaper pages and dark smudges that suggest residuals of ashes from a smoking kiln.



A number of works in this collection offer a different direction, where colors stand out and influences from contemporary art are visible, with playful references to geometric abstraction and a distilled earthy palette of beiges, greens, grays, and creams.

Throughout, the images are created using a distinctive image transfer method developed by Schulze, where she applies glue onto photocopied images and attaches the paper to silk fabric. Through variations of this application process, she manipulates the fabric to assume various qualities and look either smooth or textured, opaque or transparent, with *Disappearing Bowl* and *13 Bowls* offer striking examples.

The idea of experimentation is taken to a different scale in the monumental hangings from her *Opus* series that rely on improvisational packing tape collages and drawings and offer a sharp contrast to the poetic imagery of other works in the exhibition.

Schulze quilts and collages represent a break from traditional craft form in pursuit of reinvention. With a penchant for technique and innovation, Schultze blurs disciplines, takes risks and chances in plotting her quilts, a free style that is open and spontaneous, a core characteristic of Schulze's approach to her craft and poetry.

About Joan Schulze:

Joan Schulze has gained international prominence in the fiber arts as a studio artist, teacher, lecturer and juror. Most admired and written about are her often experimental and ground-breaking work in the quilt medium. Over the decades she has exhibited internationally, been published in prestigious catalogs and publications, and is included in the collections of the Museum of Arts & Design in New York, the National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery/ Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., the Oakland Museum of California, numerous Kaiser Permanente facilities, Adobe Systems, Inc., the John M. Walsh Collection of Contemporary Art Quilts, and many other important public and private collections in the U.S., Europe, and Japan.

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Image: Joan Schulze, *The Paris Bowl*, 2021. Silk, paper, cotton; glue transferred images, machine quilted. 42"x51".

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More information about the exhibition is available in Curatorial Statement.

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