

Between Seeing and Knowing

by Anna Boothe and Nancy Cohen



Image courtesy of Accola Griefen Gallery.

Anna Boothe and Nancy Cohen's installation, *Between Seeing and Knowing* is a surprising 3D installation comprised of dozens of kiln-cast and sand-cast glass pieces sprawling over a 10 by 25 foot wall space. Sitting on a bench placed across the gallery for viewing, one feels a little like a child arriving at the beach and discovering manifold objects to arouse his or her curiosity. The objects reference sea-life, symbols from ancient history, body parts and sensuous fruit or flowers. Mostly the forms elude definition, however, like household objects rendered by Gertrude Stein.

Boothe and Cohen created the piece while completing a collaborative residency at the Corning Museum of Glass in 2012. Interested in 14th to 19th century Tibetan Thangka paintings, the two artists worked to create a large-scale glass installation that would interpret the rich imagery while existing in a space between ancient metaphor and personal imagination.

Intuitively proximate to Buddhist philosophy, the piece is about the inter-relatedness of things. Each glass part appears sentient and in direct communication with the others. In a Thangka painting, none of the forms are meant to be isolated but work together to invite the viewer to take the painting in at once, as a whole. Similarly, all of the pieces in Boothe and Cohen's installation contribute to a sense of continuous breath or movement, which is enhanced by light reflecting through the glass.

One viewer remarked that the installation reminded her of reading, “The Dream of the Red Chamber,” a Chinese classic novel that encompasses an entire Chinese Dynasty’s history. She remarked that the piece was like the book, not only because of its ancient imagery but also because of its panoramic quality and the consequent sense of undertaking an adventure.

Moving through the piece, *Between Seeing and Knowing* is like going on an adventure—an adventure that is historical, deeply personal and fresh. The show will be up at the Accola Griefen Gallery on West 27th street through October 12th.

By Elizabeth Crawford