

N E W S R E L E A S E

***"SUBVERSIVE CRAFTS" ON VIEW AT MIT***

Opening with a public reception on Friday, May 7 from 5 to 8 pm, the MIT List Art Center is observing the Year of American Craft with an exhibition of crafts from the United States and Canada which undermine the decorative and comfortable domesticity often associated with that medium.

Fifteen ceramicists, beaders, basketmakers, jewelers, weavers and stitchers are represented by pieces whose forms, materials and technical sophistication celebrate the work of the hand, while providing a critical commentary on contemporary questions.

Crafts have sometimes been considered the stepchildren of the more serious and elevated "Fine Arts". And yet, by embedding a trenchant political content in such familiar objects of intimate usage as dishes, necklaces, blankets and handbags, these craftspeople deftly infiltrate the familiar terrain of everyday life to make serious and unsettling statements.

Richard Notkin, a well-known potter from Oregon, makes masterfully crafted stoneware teapots which refer simultaneously to the comfort of an ancient social ritual and to current, more anti-social events: nuclear threats, military adventurism and urban inequalities. New Mexican artist **John Garrett** weaves receptacles which give new meaning to the term "Trash Basket". In **Lilian Tyrrell's** and **Laura Baird's** woven blankets and rugs, **Barbara Todd's** quilts and **Lou Cabeen's** embroideries, the warmth and protection implied by the objects themselves compete with a content expressed in images of devastation and disaster. In **Kate Boyan's** sparkling beaded handbags visual delight collides un-selfconsciously with sobering messages on greed, damage and loss in the natural world. **Joyce Scott** and **Keith Lewis** acknowledge the role of jewelry in intimate personal

identity; her beaded chokers and his pins and pendants implicate the wearer in scenarios of exploitation, abuse and loss.

John Perreault, senior curator at the American Craft Museum in New York and an outspoken critic of contemporary crafts will give a slide talk titled "***The Use Taboo***" on Sunday, May 16 at 3 pm in the Bartos Theater at the List Art Center. A lively question and answer period will follow.

A catalogue of the exhibition will be published. This project has received partial support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

For further information or photographs, contact Ron Platt at (617) 253-4400.

The List Center, a five-minute walk from the Red Line Kendall Square subway station, is open weekdays from 12 to 6 and on weekends from 1 to 5. Telephone (617) 253-4400. There is no charge for admission to the galleries or events.