

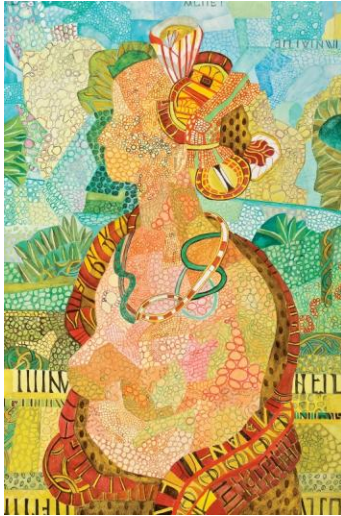
Esmé Thompson The Alchemy of Design

HOOD
MUSEUM OF ART
www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu

News Release | Contact: Nils Nadeau, Communications and Publications Manager | (603) 646-2095 | nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu

Esmé Thompson: The Alchemy of Design
April 9 through May 29, 2011

Hood Exhibits Recent Work by Artist Esmé Thompson



In Esmé Thompson's art there is a luminosity and rich patterning that engages both the eye and the mind. Colorful and bold, these objects attest to a considered and lifelong interest in the decorative designs that infuse art in a variety of media, from the Renaissance paintings of Pisanello to the designs of medieval illuminated manuscripts, the complex patterns of Moroccan textiles and ceramic tiles, and the painted harmonies of French artist Edouard Vuillard (1868–1940). This spring, the Hood Museum of Art showcases approximately thirty works by this accomplished professor of studio art at Dartmouth College in the exhibition *Esmé Thompson: The Alchemy of Design*, which runs from April 9 through May 29, 2011. The artist will give the exhibition's opening lecture on April 15 at 5:30 PM; other related programming includes several Saturday tours and a lunchtime gallery talk.

Over the last decade, Thompson has undertaken an investigation into the creative intersections of her many influences, creating veritable alchemies of design, pattern, and color. In so doing, she has fashioned a visual vocabulary that is distinctly her own, imbuing each painting and collage with the overlapping and intersecting language of symbols amid repeated articulations of line and color. She has created three-dimensional art installations as well, and several of the works in this exhibition draw upon this experience by occupying space as well as canvas. *Blue Divide*, *Beatus II*, and *Djellaba* are sectional works made up of paintings on the shaped galvanized tin covers of maple syrup buckets. Hung on the wall in a variety of arrangements, these shield-like bucket tops are painted in patterns that mirror one another. The artist writes of these works: "Over the past ten years, my interest in creating an interactive visual narrative resulted in the creation of multiple-panel pieces in which the relationship of the parts to the whole is fundamental . . . I respond to the sight of the buckets hanging, solitary, on trees, reminding me of the transitional and ephemeral nature of the seasons as well as the resurgence of new life."

Most recently Thompson has been engaged in working with ceramics, a new medium to her. The exhibition highlights a work that she created in response to the museum's early-seventeenth-century Ottoman polychrome panel of tiles that is on display in the Kim Gallery. Titled *Portal*, this large and elaborate work, like all of her visual investigations, combines echoes of the Ottoman panel with influences from the symbolic language of text, pattern, and the natural world to create something at once utterly new and bracingly familiar.

The exhibition was generously supported by Kate and Yaz Krehbiel, Class of 1991, Thayer 1992, and the Bernard R. Siskind 1955 Fund. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue

Esmé Thompson The Alchemy of Design

HOOD
MUSEUM OF ART
www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu

News Release | Contact: Nils Nadeau, Communications and Publications Manager | (603) 646-2095 | nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu

with essays by medieval literature scholar Marjorie Curry Woods and ceramicist/artist/art professor Liz Quackenbush, as well as an interview with the artist by former Hood director Brian Kennedy.

About the Hood Museum of Art

The Hood Museum of Art is dedicated to teaching and promoting visual literacy for all of its visitors. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 65,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events.

Additional images available upon request.

Image caption: Esmé Thompson, *Cleopatra*, 2008, acrylic on board, 36 x 24 inches. Collection of the artist.