

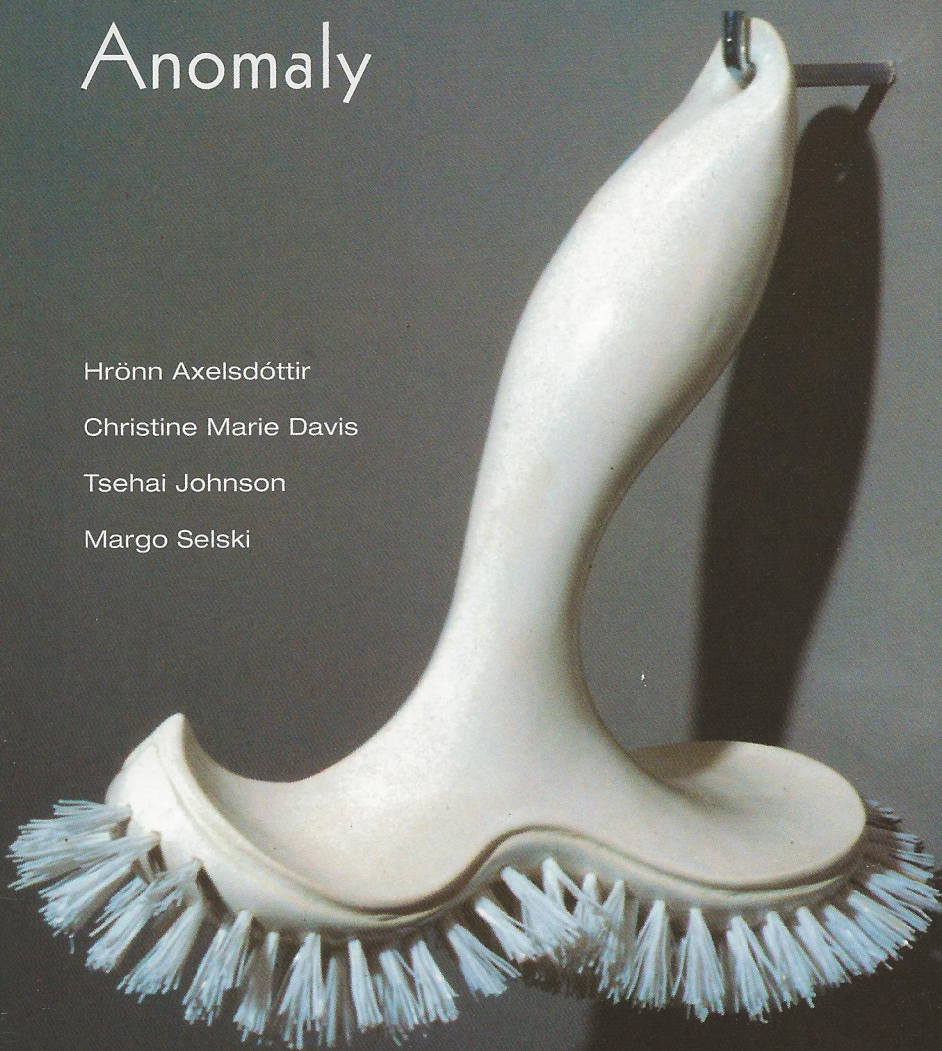
# Anomaly

Hrönn Axelsdóttir

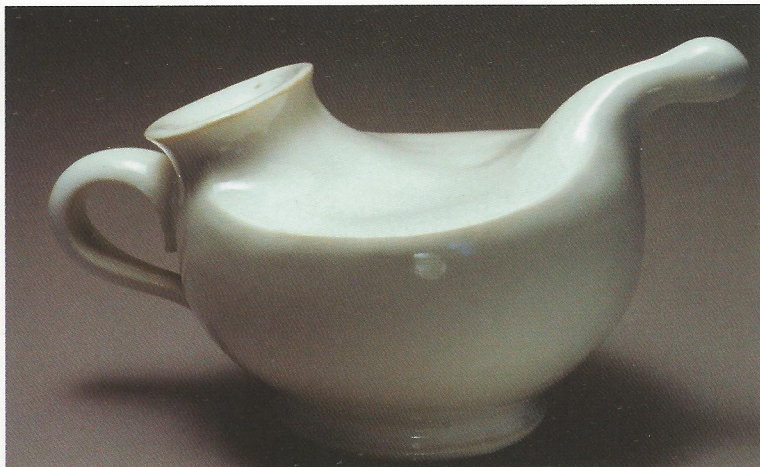
Christine Marie Davis

Tsehai Johnson

Margo Selski



The objects in this exhibition represent anomalies of form, function or concept. For the viewer they create a moment of what psychologist Leon Festinger called “cognitive dissonance” as our brains try to make sense of things that don’t fit with what we believe to be true. The anomaly stands alone, is self-consciously unique and relentlessly draws our attention. The brain begins a process of inquiry and investigation as it strives to fit the object into a familiar framework.



Tsehai Johnson, *From the Cup Series*, 2004 - porcelain, 4 x 6.5 x 4.5"

Margo Selski paints in a very traditional manner evoking the precision of the Flemish masters with rich costuming and interior accoutrements. The crackled surface is a device to convince us of the authenticity of these “period” paintings with their concern over parlour games and nursery rhymes. However, linger a moment longer and the layers begin to peel, revealing a dissonance that is disturbing and difficult to interpret. Ghostly images parade across the precise marble squares and gossamer gowns reveal chicken legs. The static poses and historic settings belie the initial permanence and balance. In the artist’s words, her goal is “to lull the viewer into a false sense of comfort and familiarity, where they are drawn to images which, upon further viewing, become curious, uncomfortable and perhaps even dangerous.” The tension of dissonance motivates us to create new narratives, weaving threads of connection between disparate images.





Margo Selski, *The Masquerade*, 2002 - oil, beeswax, varnish, 30 x 40"

Take a stroll through the ethereal photographs of Hrönn Axelsdóttir and enter a world of ancient Icelandic myth and the habitats of the invisible spirit people. Axelsdóttir is performing low-tech ghost-busting using pinhole photography, to capture the nuances of light and color that evoke an other-worldliness in these self-conscious landscapes. These are images of what is at once there, and not there. We investigate with the fullness of our expectation to see the invisible. We enter into a cognitive dissonance, telling ourselves that of course we cannot see the invisible, and yet, we look for something just below the surface, beyond the edge of the rocks, cliffs, and fields. What is the anomaly here: the artist photographing the invisible; the viewer hoping to catch a glance of the fleeting anomaly; or the spirit itself, conforming to no earthly time, or place?

Whether the objects we see entice or repulse us, we instinctively want to investigate them. In as much as anomalies are rare and unique, they confirm to us that the world has order and makes sense most of the time. And yet, the anomaly can also be just what we need to shake us up and ask the questions that begin the paradigm shift. This is the task of the artist: to bring into existence that which previously did not exist, to defy the status quo, to create anew. The successful artist presents an anomaly with each creation requiring the viewer to make a shift in perspective or paradigm, and make us see anew.



Christine Marie Davis, *Sushi Wooshi* - recycled rabbit fur, rubber, wax, bone, 18 x 18 x 2"