

# REVEAL



Phami Akha Headdress (detail), Thailand, mid-20th century. Metal, beads, coins, and cotton, 23 x 13 x 11". Photograph by Matthew Hillman, ©2012. Courtesy of Hat Horizons.

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Sue Reno. *In Dreams I Saw the Fifth*, 2020. Wool, silk, and mylar fibers; wool and cotton fabric; and glass beads, 60 x 45". Image courtesy of the artist.



## Sue Reno:

*The Enduring Beauty of the Susquehanna River*

Sue Reno has spent her life wandering the woods, wild places, and ruins of Pennsylvania. Increasingly she feels a sense of urgency to document what she observes. The natural beauty of the environment is intense, yet so transitory and fragile, and she is driven to record and preserve what she can. Reno finds that textiles are the ideal medium for this work due to the fabric's flexible and adaptable nature. It is seemingly delicate, but surprisingly strong and enduring. The practice of repurposing textiles from their familiar domestic usage and transforming them into an artistic context is a powerful form of expression for her.

## Ingrained

Rooted in the deep traditional art of Pennsylvania, the regional collection of the Phillips Museum highlights the distinctive and colorful ways that immigrant populations celebrated their native countries' stylistic heritage. This exhibition focuses on the material culture of the Southeast region of Pennsylvania and the processes used to create the ceramics, metalwork, furniture, painting, and textiles that are part of the fabric of 18th and 19th century Lancaster.

Han Child's Hat (Tiger Cap), China, early 20th century, silk, cotton, embroidery, 5 x 7", ©2012. Courtesy of Hat Horizons, Photograph by Matthew Hillman.



## The Global Language of Headwear:

*Cultural Identity, Rites of Passage, and Spirituality*

The expression "keep it under your hat" refers to withholding information or keeping a secret. However, as a piece of apparel—as opposed to a metaphor—a hat is less likely to conceal something than to reveal something important about its wearer.

A hat—from its perch atop the most prominent part of the body—proclaims to the world who we are, where we live, what we believe, and how we fit into the communities of which we are part. More than just a frivolous adornment, a hat is a tool that expresses a person's identity and personal taste as well as one's place in the world. It may also serve as a badge of social rank and as a symbol of faith and values.

Consider those people who, because of appearance, behavior or beliefs, appear to be different from you, but whose personal stories perhaps parallel your own. An awareness of what hats and headdresses represent can foster a keener understanding of others by deepening your knowledge and appreciation of disparate cultures and other walks of life.

*Exhibition Curator Stacey Miller's company, Hat Horizons, is dedicated to promoting awareness and understanding of cultures through headwear. This exhibition was jointly organized by Stacey W. Miller and International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.*

Augustin Ubeda (Spanish, 1925–2007). [Woman and Bird], 1962. Oil paint on canvas, 28 1/2 x 36". Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Silverman, #2299.



## Natural Influences:

*The Lasting Impressions of Birds in Art*

Humans have assigned different meanings to birds for thousands of years. Ideas of beauty, fortune, transformation, healing, happiness, and strength have been associated with bird iconography. People have documented birds that they see in their daily lives and while traveling abroad, many that may be extinct today. Birds have been a long-standing artistic tradition in cultures around the world, whether as symbolic representations or a decorative element within the artwork.

While the prehistoric origin of the bird species dates back over 200 million years, the first rendering of a bird was a drawing of an owl found on the wall of a cave, Grotte Chauvet-Pont d'Arc, Ardèche, around 30,000 BCE. Archaeologists have found drawings of geese and cranes in ancient Egyptian tombs providing evidence of how they were fed figs and other delicacies to fatten them for foie gras. Chinese drawings from the 17th century feature illustrations of birds on rice paper and the mid 1800s to the mid 1900s brought a mass production of decorative fabric and wallpaper prints featuring a variety of birds.

This exhibition highlights objects and artwork from the Phillips Museum's permanent collection that incorporate birds into the artistry.

Rebecca Szeto. *What Matters Most*, 2016. Oil on carved paintbrush, 6 1/2 x 4 x 1". Image courtesy of the artist.



## Totems & Transformations :

*Artwork by Rebecca Szeto*

The *Totems* series by first generation Chinese American and San Francisco based artist Rebecca Szeto embodies the idea of profound simplicity, exercising a balance between stripping away physical matter to build deeper immaterial meaning and richness. The gesture of repurposing materials from her artistic process serves as a metaphor for the ever-regenerative cycles of life.

By contrast, the *Paintbrush Portraits* series showcases Szeto's exploration of beauty and value through the lens of fabricated structures of culture, gender, and class. Informed by her experience as an old world faux finisher in new-built mansions, she initially transformed discarded paint brushes into sculptures representing portraits of historically significant women initially created by Old Master painters.

Together, these series highlight Szeto's unique approach to art-making, where her thoughtful mix of personal history, environmental awareness, and social commentary invites viewers to reconsider their own values and encourage opportunities for transformation, as both introspection and open discussion.

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