

David Lewis

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Barbara Bloom

*The Tip of the Iceberg* (1991)

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Art Basel | Unlimited

Messe Basel, Hall 1, U 20

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June 11 - 17, 2018

## Barbara Bloom Biography

Barbara Bloom (b. Los Angeles, California: 1951) lives and works in New York City. She has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions at major national and international institutions including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; The Serpentine Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum Friedricianum, Kassel; Kunsthalle Zürich; Dia Art Foundation, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Kunstverein München, Munich; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen; Museum Boymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; SITE Santa Fe; La Bienale de Venezuela, Caracas; Parrish Art Museum, Southampton; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus; Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; and the 1988 Venice Biennale, where she was honored with the Due Mille Prize for best artist. Other awards, grants, and fellowships include Guggenheim Fellowship; Getty Research Institute; the National Endowment of the Arts; Louis Comfort Tiffany Award; and Grant for Visual Arts, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, among many others.

An extensive survey of her work, *The Collections of Barbara Bloom*, was organized in 2007-8 by Brian Wallis for the International Center of Photography, New York, and traveled to Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin.

She is represented in public and private collections internationally, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Art Institute of Chicago; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; MAK Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; International Center of Photography, New York; FRAC Rhône-Alpes, Villeurbanne; Groninger Museum, Groningen; Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, among many others.

Current and upcoming Barbara Bloom exhibitions include:

*Décor: Barbara Bloom, Andrea Fraser, Louise Lawler*, curated by Rebecca Matalon, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (through July 15, 2018)

Front International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, curated by Michelle Grabner, Ellen Johnson Gallery, The Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH (from July 14 - September 30, 2018)

*Melancholia*, curated by Louma Salamé, Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium (through August 19, 2018)

*Picture Industry*, curated by Walead Beshty, LUMA Arles / Parc des Ateliers, Arles, France (October 12, 2018 - January 6, 2019)



Installation view  
*The Tip of the Iceberg*, Jay Gorney Modern Art, New York, 1991

Barbara Bloom  
*Tip of the Iceberg*  
1991

Glass, mirror, and steel table;  
teapots, cups, saucers, plates, and  
bowls bearing the device of RMS  
Titanic, the undersides printed with  
images from the Titanic wreckage of  
the ocean floor; cast plaster ceiling  
medallion depicting items listed  
in NASA's catalog of objects lost  
or discarded in orbit around the  
Earth; circular floor illumination;  
circular ceiling illumination

Dimensions variable

BB053

Exhibition History

La Bienal de Venezuela, Caracas,  
Venezuela

Jay Gorney Modern Art, New York,  
NY

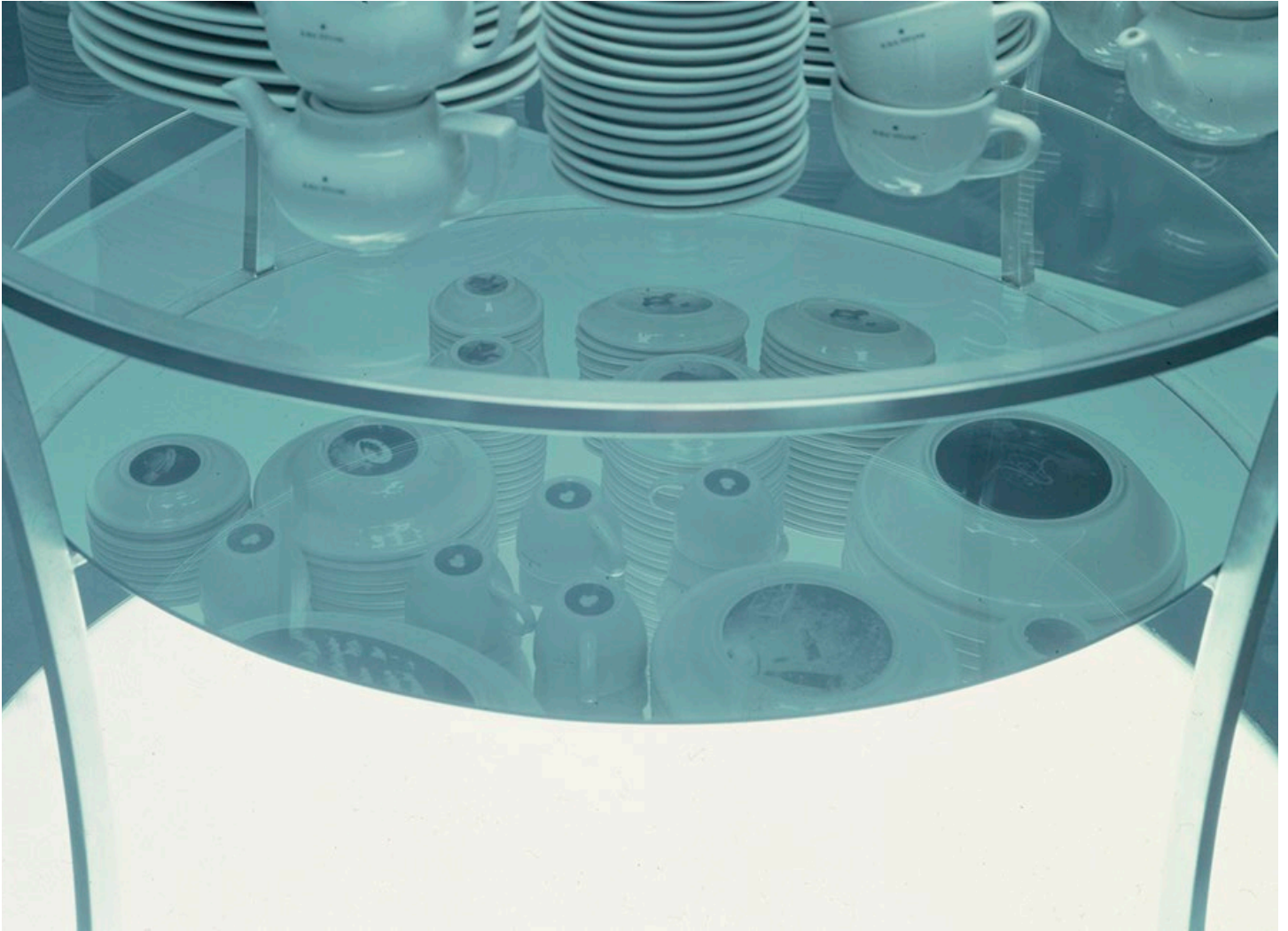
Galerie Isabella Czarnowska,  
Berlin, Germany



*The Tip of the Iceberg* (detail), 1991

In *The Tip of the Iceberg*, 1991, Bloom pairs two forms of deep space—the ocean floor and outer space—to craft a metaphor (both intentional and unintentional) of waste and loss. In the main gallery, painted a deep nautical blue gray, stacks of hotel porcelain embossed with the words “R.M.S. Titanic” are arranged on a glass-topped table beneath a recessed cupola cut into the ceiling. The bottom of the dishes, reflected from below in a mirror, reveal photographic images from the floor of the ocean, an inventory of the dolls’ heads, crockery, and spittoons from the sunken ship. A series of objects left by careless astronauts to float in space—cameras, wrenches, gloves—decorate the illuminated cupola overhead.

– Tom Kalin, “Barbara Bloom,” *Artforum*, December, 1991.



*The Tip of the Iceberg (detail), 1991*

Through the Titanic entered into legend at the moment of her sinking, the 1985 discovery of her remains – and the photographs it produced – rekindled public fascination with the tragedy. The homely familiarity of the objects in the debris field (that silent, silted teacup – combined with their astounding inaccessibility (12,500 feet under water) to create a powerful sense of physical absence. BB drew the analogy between this debris field and the even more inaccessible one that hovers above us. There are currently about 11,000 pieces of junk larger than 10 centimeters orbiting the earth. Most are the result of satellite explosions, though there are also hammers and flashlights and nuts and bolts dropped by astronauts. According to NASA, an average of one cataloged piece of orbital debris has fallen to earth every day for the past forty years, though, they tell us reassuringly, most burn up before touching the ground.

– Barbara Bloom, Susan Tallman, and Dave Hickey, *The Collections Of Barbara Bloom* (Göttingen, New York: Steidl International Center of Photography, 2008), 36-37.





“In *The Tip of the Iceberg*, Bloom takes the Hasselblad cameras, work gloves, and high tech wrenches left in orbit by astronauts and casts them into an elegiac frieze halo above an underlit glass table groaning with exact replicas of dinnerware from the Titanic... Each of these installations is the product of meticulous and prodigious research effort, and their themes overlap or echo from each exhibition to the next. The bridge between them is a series of books that Bloom has published in lieu of conventional catalogs that would simply document her work, revealing her very nineteenth century obsession with text and allowing her to elaborate the myriad references that, taken together, compose an overall conceptual frame work for her oeuvre.”



- Howard Halle, “Barbara Bloom: A Collection,” *Grand Street*, 1993.

*The Tip of the Iceberg* (details)