

Gallery Hostler Burrows on Danish design

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Kim Hostler and Juliet Burrows. Photo: Alexandra Rowley – Courtesy of Hostler Burrows.

Known as one of the premier stateside galleries for both classic and contemporary Scandinavian art and design, Hostler Burrows has spent the best part of 2021 reaffirming just what makes their galleries in New York and Los Angeles so special. A commitment to fostering creativity and a great connection with the Danish art and design scene has led Juliet Burrows and Kim Hostler to grow their fledgling gallery over the last twenty plus years, into a world leader. We digitally sat down with co-founder Juliet Burrows to dig a little deeper.



Bend, Bubble and Shine. Copenhagen Ceramics at Hostler Burrows, Los Angeles, 2021. Photo: Jesse Stone – Courtesy of Hostler Burrows.

Burrows began her journey alongside partner Kim Hostler back in 1998 in a somewhat oversized gallery space in New York's Tribeca neighborhood. With an initial focus on 20th century Scandinavian ceramics, their newly founded gallery was too big to alone house the unique works of Berndt Friberg, Axel Salto and Birger Kaipiainen – fortuitously leading them to delve into the world of classic Scandinavian cabinetmaker furniture to complete their space. A shift in the last 10 years however, has seen Hostler Burrows – Burrows in particular, bring new focus to the contemporary practices that keeps the Scandinavian traditions flowing in new and unexpected directions. This contemporary focus has always included Danish artists and designers, but 2021 has seen this connection enhanced with two group shows – Matter At Hand in New York, and Bend, Bubble and Shine on display in Los Angeles. Hostler Burrows' focus on Danish design and art has been building for some time, as Burrows details;

“I see the work of this past year and our intense focus on Denmark as a natural evolution from the galleries roots and history, considering our long relationship with vintage Nordic design. We all know the level of craftsmanship in Denmark is unparalleled, but for me the deep connection to the natural world and its inspiration that so many artists express is extremely compelling. There is also a strong graphic quality in many of the works – strikingly defined use of colour, form and texture.”



MATTER AT HAND: Ten Artists in Denmark, New York, 2021. Photo: Joe Kramm – Courtesy of Hostler Burrows.



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These unique elements Burrows speaks of can be seen viscerally within their current exhibition Matter at Hand. From the exposed cracks of Anne Brandhøj's timber sculptures, to Astrid Krogh's dive into the Danish sea; the exhibition is eclectic within the varied practices it displays, but is united by a commonality in exploration and inquisition, and through a deep connection to material and place. Approached by the Danish Arts Foundation during COVID lockdown in 2020, Hostler Burrows were asked to collaborate on the group show at a time of great distance from the artists they were working with. Communicating through countless virtual studio visits over the course of several months, Burrows focused on a group of ten artists that shared certain traits, whilst all having their own unique voice. Unexpectedly, the digital approach to curation led to new ways of viewing the work, as Burrows explains;

“For me personally, it was a wonderfully sustaining and creative project to have during the period of lockdown... The deeper we went into planning, the more inspired I was about the work. You have to remember some of the work I had never seen in person at that point, so to finally have the container arrive and to uncrate the works of the ten artists was incredible. I am thrilled with how the exhibition turned out.”



MATTER AT HAND: Ten Artists in Denmark, New York, 2021. Photo: Joe Kramm – Courtesy of Hostler Burrows.

While Matter at Hand focuses on the variety of materials and processes within Danish art and design, Bend, Bubble and Shine highlights the Danish ceramic scene, a long-time love affair of Burrows'. Whilst focusing on a single field within the Danish design scene, the resulting works are worlds apart, both in how they approach and execute their chosen medium. From the defined lines of Karen Bennicke's work, to the bold organic forms of Steen Ipsen, this exhibition showcased to Burrows another unique aspect of the Danish art and design scene at large – that of community;

“Throughout the curation of Bend, Bubble and Shine, I was so impressed with the vibrant community of ceramic artists in Denmark. They are so supportive of one another, collectively active, generous and collegial – the energy of the scene is palpable. I know this exists elsewhere, but it seems especially concentrated in Denmark.”



Bend, Bubble and Shine. Copenhagen Ceramics at Hostler Burrows, Los Angeles, 2021. Photo: Jesse Stone – Courtesy of Hostler Burrows.

After spending the past year working over zoom calls and email, Burrows is excited to again reach out to her clients and customers all over the US and the world. While Matter at Hand will move from New York to their Los Angeles location, Hostler Burrows will also step back into the international spot light at fairs and exhibitions around the world. From their local Salon Fair in New York, to Design Miami and Fog Fair in San Francisco, TEFAF Maastricht will also see the gallery returning to Europe in 2022. As one of the loudest spokespeople for Scandinavian art and design, Burrows will continue her explorations into what makes this part of the world so unique – most importantly sharing it with her audience as she goes.