

For Immediate Release

***Material World***

**September 10 - October 28, 2020**

***Material World*** is the first exhibition of the 2020-21 season at the Flinn Gallery. The show features two painters – **Leeah Joo** of Middlebury, CT and **Stephanie Serpick** of Brooklyn, NY - and one fiber artist, **Jennifer Davies** of Branford, CT. All three artists bring the nuances and richness of materials, such as drapery, sheets, and paper to life through color, composition, and texture. Behind the physical appearance of folds, layers, and creases, there are hidden narratives based on what is visible, what is concealed, and what is imagined. **Jennifer Davies** handmade paper, collage, and woven pieces have a strong physical presence and conjure images from nature such as spider webs, the moon, and hand-crafted items such as books, quilts, and veils. **Leeah Joo's** paintings celebrate the beauty and rich traditions associated with Korean fabrics and include cross-cultural references that imbue the images with added meaning. In her intimate paintings of unmade beds and crumpled sheets, **Stephanie Serpick** responds to personal loss and recent political events with artwork that speaks to grief, isolation, and healing.

Drawing was a way of life for **Jennifer Davies**, a Rhode Island School of Design illustration major, until she discovered papermaking in the 1980s at the Creative Arts Workshop in New Haven. From that point on paper moved from her support to her art as she experimented with paper pulp, pouring and splashing the thick liquid to create paintings, and building up layers of material to form low reliefs and three-dimensional pieces. Years later she learned about Japanese fibers and papermaking at the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, New York, and adopted these traditions due to their focus on materiality and natural pigments. The artwork in the exhibition includes handmade paper, collage, and woven pieces of varying sizes that are colorful, playful, and vibrant and allude to images from nature and traditional textile crafts. For Davies, "creating with paper feels like dancing with a partner, the material itself leading me through a series of new steps...in a process that is intuitive, and at the best of times, playful."

Korean-American painter **Leeah Joo** came to the United States from Seoul when she was 10 years old. Raised in Indiana by artist parents, she had a strong interest in graphic novels, especially Manga with its fantasy and mystery. With no Manga equivalent in the United States at the time, her art transitioned from pen and ink to painting. She studied art history and painting at Indiana University and received her MFA in painting at the Yale School of Art. Influenced by the technical precision of Northern Renaissance artists, her recent work has embraced trompe l'oeil art and its desire to create the illusion of real objects. She uses drapery as a form of still life and the viewer is drawn in as the drapes and folds of her richly decorated fabrics transform into mountains, oceans, and other images inspired by cinema, folklore, history, and literature. For Joo, "simultaneity" is crucial to her paintings, as "the fabric is a small still life and a vast ocean all at once, stories are historical and personal, and the myths are truths."

Art has always been part of **Stephanie Serpick's** life. Initially interested in illustration, she switched to painting while at Carnegie Mellon and received her MFA from the University of Chicago. While the subject matter of her paintings has evolved over time, her art is firmly rooted in the "canon of still life". In 2016, influenced by her father's illness and the presidential election, her focus turned to the depiction of beds as a safe place to escape and heal. Her most recent paintings, part of a series called *Its Always Darkest Before the Dawn*, are intimate depictions of

unmade beds and tossed sheets. According to the artist, “the empty bed in these paintings represents a place for grief, isolation, or healing”, and the notion that suffering is universal. Sourced from personal and online photographs, Serpick repeatedly paints and sands the backgrounds to create a rough surface that tries to convey work, struggle, and time. Given the current pandemic, her work takes on a new meaning, as home and bed have become places in which we have been forced to spend more time for safety, refuge, and hopefully healing.

Katy Finnell and Nancy Heller, both of Greenwich, are the curators of the exhibit, which will open on September 10 with an online video reception and run until October 28. All of the 44 works of art are for sale except for 3 pieces. Individual artist videos will be posted during the show to enable people to meet the artists in their studios and gain insights into their creative process. The opening and artist videos will be posted on the Flinn Gallery website. To receive email notifications about these videos and other show highlights, you can subscribe to the Flinn Gallery email list at <https://flinngallery.com/contact/>.

The Flinn Gallery is sponsored by the Friends of the Greenwich Library, and is located on the second floor of the library, 101 West Putnam Avenue. Modified gallery hours will be Tuesday through Saturday from 11am-3pm by appointment only, when the Library determines it is safe to do so. In addition to masks, only 3 visitors will be allowed in the gallery at a time to maintain social distance protocols. To learn more about the exhibit, online opening, artist videos, gallery access, and safety protocols, please visit: <http://flinngallery.com/>.