

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York Silver, Then and Now **at the Museum of the City of New York**

***Dazzling Exhibition Showcases Contemporary Works of Art
Alongside Historical Inspirations from Renowned Collection***

Explores Silver as an Artistic Medium through the Centuries



*Tiffany & Co., Goelet Prize for Sloops, 1889. Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin, M39.1.1;
Amy Roper Lyons, Women's Work #1, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and the Museum of the City of New York*

ON VIEW: Wednesday, June 28, 2017 – June 2018

(New York, NY – June 27, 2017) The Museum of the City of New York presents [*New York Silver, Then and Now*](#), a revelatory exhibition designed to create a dialogue between 25 contemporary artists, silversmiths, and designers and the outstanding New York silver in the Museum of the City of New York's permanent collection. The exhibition displays original works of art created for a modern audience by these artists alongside their historic inspirations, culled from the Museum's incomparable collection and presented in the Museum's Tiffany & Co. Foundation Gallery. The exhibition is organized by guest curator Jeannine Falino and is on view from Wednesday, June 28, 2017 through June 2018.

Engaging contemporary artists with treasures from the Museum's collection allows the exhibition to illuminate the evolution of the ancient craft of metalsmithing and explore the expressive potential of

silver as an artistic medium. As the 21st century artists open a discourse with the work of their predecessors, they weave modern interpretations of historic issues – including the role of women in society and use of slave labor to mine this precious metal – into an artistic conversation between past and present.

“*New York Silver, Then and Now* asks contemporary artists to recreate items from our expansive collection of New York Silver with a modern twist, and the results are as poignant as they are beautiful,” said Whitney Donhauser, *Ronay Menschel Director* of the Museum of the City of New York. “We invite one and all to explore New York’s artistic past and present with silver as a guide.”

Some of these modern creations – made by artists like Kiki Smith, Chitra Ganesh, Laurene Leon Boym, Preston Jones, and more – seek to retain the function of their historical counterparts, while others are transformed to serve new purposes. Some contemplate abstract issues, including the mystery of life and death. All of these works probe the changing role and enduring appeal of a medium with a longstanding history of use, enjoyment, and value in New York households, and together they offer fresh ways of thinking about this lustrous and versatile medium in our own times.

New York Silver, Then and Now also presents a historical narrative on the use of silver as a reflection of time and culture. Silver was once at the center of a well-appointed home, with its beauty adding to the family dinner table and its material value providing its owners with financial security in uncertain times. It was the treasure lovingly bestowed at births, weddings, and funerals, marking important passages in life. The role of silver in daily life has evolved over the years as fashions and social usage have changed. This is especially true with the quickening pace of life in 21st century, where family gatherings have become less formal, especially ones built around the dinner table. Even so, silver holds its fascination for consumers, collectors, and artists, suggesting something timeless about its liquid, shimmering surface – something the exhibition aims to communicate through an artistic give and take taking place across time and space.

“This exhibition is not just your grandmother’s silver,” said guest curator Jeannine Falino. “It is a one of a kind dialogue taking place between treasures of centuries past and 25 cutting-edge artists, designers and silversmiths. In addition, the show explores the timeless attraction between people and silver, asking and answering why this precious metal has played such an integral role in the history of American life.”

New York Silver, Then and Now showcases 20 treasures from the Museum’s collection alongside 25 never before seen contemporary creations. Examples of historical silver pieces and the modern works they inspired include:

- Chitra Ganesh’s beaker made to honor the more than one million people buried in the pauper’s field on Hart Island, inspired by a 1708 beaker made by Hugues Lossieux and Joseph Leddel with anti-Catholic engravings
- A honeycomb bracelet by Kiki Smith, inspired by a Tiffany & Co. bonbonnière made of platinum, gold, pearls, diamonds, and sapphires
- A hand-wrought spoon designed by Sheila Bridges and based upon designs for ships used in the transatlantic slave trade paired with late 17th century silver spoon made by Cornelius Vander Burch
- A ca. 1750 John Hastier *porringer* and a 21st century *pillinger* reinvented for present-day medicinal purposes by Constantine Boym

The contemporary artists featured in *New York Silver, Then and Now* are: Aranda/Lasch; Dror Benshetrit; Constantin Boym; Laurene Leon Boym; Sheila Bridges; David Butler; Marcelo Coelho Studio; Erin Daily; Chitra Ganesh; Michael Gayk; William T. Georgis; Preston Jones; Amy Roper Lyons; Myra Mimplitsch-Gray; Michele Oka Doner; Patrick J. Quinn; Robert Lobe; Ted Muehling; Liza Nechamkin-Glasser; Kiki Smith; Courtney Starrett; Jonathan Wahl; Brian Weissman; and Wendy Yothers.

New York Silver, Then and Now is made possible by the John P. Strang Trust, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Roy J. Zuckerberg Family Foundation; with additional support provided by Barbara and Donald Tober Foundation, Michele and Marty Cohen, Jacqueline Fowler, Mark E. Bryant Charitable Trust, the New York Silver Society, David Diamond and Karen Zukowski, Sarah Eigen, Joann Ryan, and Rita and Mark Kromelow.

About the Museum of the City of New York

Founded in 1923 as a private, nonprofit corporation, the Museum of the City of New York celebrates and interprets the city, educating the public about its distinctive character, especially its heritage of diversity, opportunity, and perpetual transformation. The Museum connects the past, present, and future of New York City, and serves the people of the city as well as visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY](https://www.facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY). For more information please visit www.mcny.org.

About the Tiffany & Co. Foundation

Since its inception in 1837, Tiffany & Co. has been guided by the belief that a successful company has a responsibility to the greater community. The Tiffany & Co. Foundation was established in 2000 to focus the company's philanthropic endeavors. Please visit www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org to learn more about The Tiffany & Co. Foundation's work.

###

Media Contacts

Jacob Tugendrajch
Lisa Sherman Cohen

(917) 492-3480 | jtugendrajch@mcny.org
(646) 603-6869 | lisa@gzandassociates.com