

HERTER ART GALLERY
TOPSY TURVY: SELECTED WORKS OF CYNTHIA CONSENTINO
September 12 – October 11, 2017

One often encounters in dreams, intimate friends in strangers' bodies and intimate relationships with complete strangers. Props and plots are often out of place, and the extraordinary turn up amidst the everyday. Operating in a similar manner, this exhibition of drawings and sculptures by Cynthia Consentino subverts the expected by blurring the lines between the familiar and the strange. Coming upon the characters in this menagerie one experiences an uncanny double-vision: they are at once deeply reminiscent of well-known family members and fantastical creatures discovered for the first time in a world of their own.

Working amidst this network of sculpted figures, Consentino repeatedly dismantles and reassembles popular iconographies rooted in established values of beauty and gender. Elements from contrasting spheres are juxtaposed to explore the dichotomies between the beautiful and ugly, the human and bestial, the tragic and humorous. In this manner, she strips down, exaggerates, and inverts the familiar to explore the incongruities embedded in social stereotypes. The resulting imagery is a whimsical, surrealist landscape where nothing is as it should be, forcing the viewer to re-investigate their notions of the expected and unexpected.

Consentino received a MFA from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a BFA from The Cooper Union College of Arts and Sciences, New York, NY. A recipient of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, American Craft Council, The Society of Arts and Crafts, Berkshire Taconic and The Blanche E. Colman Artist Awards, Consentino has exhibited widely. Currently residing in Northampton, she teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Holyoke Community College.

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