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R. MELINDA HOFFMAN: *Accoutrements, Amulets, Adornments*

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, March 28, 5-7 PM, first floor



R. MELINDA HOFFMAN | *Goddess Bellona Helmet* from the series, *Anthropological Artifacts*, 2022. Antique knives, leather belt, hardware, 10 x 8.25 x 8.25 in. (25.4 x 21 x 21 cm). Photo by Byron Flesher, courtesy of form & concept

(Santa Fe, NM) **Multi-disciplinary artist, R. Melinda Hoffman, enjoins the local art community to collaborate with her on an exhibition of artworks made with leather, mixed media, and modern anthropological artifacts.**

(March 2025) Drawing on her decades of experience as a fashion designer, art director, and visual manager, R. Melinda Hoffman crafts works that explore the intersection of identity, memory, and material culture. Using mixed media, leather, and modern anthropological artifacts sourced from Resourceful Santa Fe, Capital Scrap, and ReStore, Hoffman creates sculptural adornments, symbolic amulets, and imaginative accoutrements that highlight the stories of obsolete, discarded objects. Her off-the-grid home between Cerrillos and Madrid, NM, doubles as her studio, where she creates works that straddle the line between functional fashion and statement accessories. She invites friends, family, and gallery visitors to contribute materials, ideas, and stories to her **forthcoming exhibition opening on 28 March 2025, from 5 to 7 PM.**

Hoffman is an analog devotee who strives to live off the land, keeping things minimal and manageable. During a recent decluttering, Hoffman rediscovered a box filled with idea journals and sketches from her days as a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Inside these dusty volumes were the origins of Hoffman's studio practice: community collaboration, art as armor, and an ever-evolving question of what adornments produced with analog tools might look like in an increasingly digital world. Unlike modern manufacturing, Hoffman's design and production process is entirely analog.

"What struck me about Hoffman's DIY, analog-focused exhibition is the implicit question about whether physical objects are obsolete," says Spencer Linford, curator. "Things like CDs, paper documents, and printed photographs could be considered obsolete, but what about the objects of our material culture that are both aesthetic and functional, like clothing? What do they do in, or for, a material culture increasingly influenced by digital phenomena like algorithms?"

Hoffman sees this exhibition as a participatory art residency. It is an evolving, interactive space designed to foster engagement and creative exchange. Visitors are invited to contribute materials, share ideas, and witness the making process firsthand. A chalkboard wall will serve as a communal ideation space for reflection and inspiration, while workshops will allow guests to bring personal objects to be reimaged as practical accoutrements, meaningful amulets, or personal adornments. Visitors can engage through observation, hands-on participation, and conversation with Hoffman who will be on-site as an artist in residence during the exhibition.

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For press, image, or video inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@formandconcept.center.

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About the Artist

R. Melinda Hoffman was born in Washington, D.C., and grew up in the gritty, vibrant inner city of Chicago. Her passion for creativity led her to the School of the Art Institute, where she studied art, photography, and fashion design. Despite family financial challenges interrupting her journey to obtaining a degree, a summer internship sparked a career in fashion, where she thrived as a designer, set builder, art director, visual manager, and buyer, for more than three decades.

Despite professional success, her soul yearned for something deeper. She made the bold decision to leave her commercial career behind and forge a new path, creating her own line of leather accessories. This change supported her adventurous lifestyle as a “road warrior artisan,” traveling across the West Coast and Midwest to showcase her work at shows and markets.

Today, Hoffman is rooted in the enchanting landscape of Cerrillos/Madrid, New Mexico, where she lives off-grid in a tiny trailer that doubles as her home and studio. “Once again, I am answering the call of my soul, returning to the art practices that have always been smoldering in my heart, now ready to burn brightly.”

Artist Statement

I am embarking on a deeply personal creative journey, rediscovering the roots of my artistic identity in my sketchbooks, idea journals, and collected objects from my BFA studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Though financial challenges interrupted my education and left me without a degree, the creative spark from that time has been preserved, waiting for my future self to reignite it.

Now, in my mid-60s, I don't view myself as a late bloomer but as someone patient who knew the right moment would eventually come. That moment is now. Reconnecting with my past work has unlocked a sense of childlike curiosity and wonder, empowering me to approach my art, design, and photography with fresh eyes and boundless enthusiasm.

My practice spans analog photography, mixed media, experiential installations, body adornments as sculpture, and community storytelling. These diverse forms allow me to explore and push creative boundaries, crafting work that invites interaction, introspection, and connection. Through exhibitions, workshops, and storytelling, I aim to create spaces where my community can experience the joy of exploration and the power of artistic expression.

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