

## Erica Rosenfeld

**“Like Remembering a Dream the Day After ...”**  
**Heller Gallery**  
**New York City**  
**April 10–May 21, 2015**

As glass artists, or artists who happen to work with glass, delve further into the world of mixed media, and as designers and artists who don't traditionally work with glass try their hand at the material through programs like GlassLab at The Corning Museum of Glass, the sometimes insular quality of the glass art world is beginning to break down. It is within this changing landscape that Erica Rosenfeld created the serene yet unsettling world of “Like Remembering a Dream the Day After,” a predominately glass mixed-media installation at the Heller Gallery in Chelsea. The rich tableau incorporates organic objects to provide texture and multiple layers of meaning, and tackles themes such as the interplay of reality with dreams and the effects of memory and the passage of time.

A project Rosenfeld has been working on since 2012, this is the first solo exhibition of her work at Heller Gallery. Fifteen individual works of art (2013-15)—although *Lemon Pile Bowl* was inexplicitly missing during my visit—form a collective installation. One enters the exhibition gradually, drawn in by a few works spilling out of the show's main space into the greater gallery. Although the first impression may be one of confusion, one slowly realizes there is a story lurking within these objects, waiting to be discovered. As the story unfolds, the initial sense of having walked into something lighthearted, pink, and bunny-filled is replaced by a nagging sense of unease. “Like Remembering a Dream the Day After ...” is a surrealist landscape of shattered bits of glass pinned together, of delicate eggshells (pale, dark, and golden) deliberately smashed and then painstakingly reconstructed, like a beloved but broken china doll. Rabbits dominate the entire installation, including found-glass heads emerging from snow pile-like floor sculptures, full-bodied bunnies hunkered down to hatch impossibly large and odd-shaped eggs, and tiny paper heads pinned to the walls by the hundreds, like butterfly specimens that will, sadly, never take flight. Individual details aside (and there are many), the overall feeling is that one has stepped into the ruins of a once-glorious civilization, in which the piles of pristine rubble and charred fruit that once made up an elegant party have been overtaken by kitschy, plastic jungle greenery.



Installation view, 2015.  
 Blown and carved glass,  
 mixed media. Dimensions  
 variable.

PHOTO: MATTHEW CYLINDER  
 COURTESY: HELLER GALLERY, NEW YORK

In addition to glass, Rosenfeld—who is a co-founder of The Burnt Asphalt Family, an artist collective that centers on the “performative, sculptural and social aspects of glass and food-making,” and whose productions end with an edible feast—has a passion for food. She incorporates oranges—hoarded, already rotting, from grocery stores—into “Like Remembering.” Rosenfeld piled them into a kiln at 900 degrees, which turned the rotting pieces of fruit into carbon-blackened storytelling elements.

Rosenfeld, who lives in Brooklyn, began working with glass about 20 years ago after receiving a B.A. in Fine Art from Kenyon College. Her earliest work in glass was jewelry, and while she still continues that part of her practice, her work has developed sculpturally over the years. The evolution of her work is evident when observing *Clouds* and *Reclaimed Eggs*, whose overlapping, reassembled bodies clearly developed out of her earlier series “Tapestries.” The “Tapestries” were constructed out of multitudes of small tiles, shingled together like pieces of armor, and were made from 2007 to 2012 at WheatonArts.

The overall effect of “Like Remembering

a Dream the Day After ...” is cohesive, if slightly disjointed. The individual bowls of *Reclaimed Eggs* feel misplaced within the architecturally driven nature of the rest of the installation, which uses the gallery walls for its underlying structure. The strength of the installation comes from the areas where Rosenfeld creates an environment: the repetitious *Clouds*, the rabbit motif, and—although I didn't think it a strong element at first—the greenery plays a part in the otherworldliness of the scene. This otherworldliness may have been more strongly supported outside of a white-cube gallery setting; something as simple as a dark wall color may have been appropriate. Rosenfeld's intention of creating a “shrine to a dream,” however, was successful, and mine led me to a mythical version of Amazonia.

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