

Corning Museum of Glass curator to speak at Alfred University

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Susie Silbert

ALFRED, NY Susie J. Silbert, curator of modern and contemporary glass at The Corning Museum of Glass, will present a lecture at Alfred University on Tuesday, April 24, at 5:30 p.m.

The lecture, titled “Blue Chip Artists, Glassy Thinkers, and Boro Boys: Navigating Contemporary Glass,” will be held in Room C of Binns-Merrill Hall. The talk is a case study in Howard Becker’s concept of “art worlds,” how contemporary glass incorporates several distinct constituencies operating in parallel:

Blue chip artists with access to skilled craftspeople create elaborate objects that mine the material’s history and the decorative arts to speak to broad audiences. Working in a mode that recalls early modern makers such as Bernard Palissy and Wenzel Jamnitzer, “glassy thinkers,” use their artisanal knowledge of the properties of the material and its composition as fertile territory for works that may, in the end, not even be composed of glass. Under the radar, but perhaps the most influential in culture at large, are marijuana pipe makers. Harnessing phenomenal technical skills to pop culture aesthetics, these “boro boys” (and women) circumvent traditional patronage systems by using Instagram and other social media platforms to reach an ever-growing collector base.

The lecture surveys this varied landscape in light of the history of studio glass and the collections of The Corning Museum of Glass.

The lecture, sponsored by the Alfred University School of Art and Design Division of Sculpture and Dimensional Studies, is free and open to the public.