

(Olson) Gregory 68 Taking Tea at Buffalo's Burchfield Penney Art Center
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Judith (Olson) Gregory, AU Class of '68, will be "Taking Tea" at the Burchfield Penney Art Center - the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo - Friday, Sept. 12 - Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, where her art will be "offering insight on how the most widely consumed beverage in the world after water, has become deeply woven throughout cultures on all continents." Her new installation art "will point to the tumultuous journey of tea from the mountains of China to the lace tablecloths of British aristocracy."

The focus of the exhibition consists of a minimalist "tea house" constructed from 2,500 used tea bags and tea leaves. Tea is about 5,000 years old and has played an important part in the history of commerce, ship-building, the formation of corporations, and has been an intense economic force at the heart of several international wars. It is a part of the world's culture from the Chinese tea house, Japanese Tea Ceremony, British High Tea to people's homes and kitchens around the globe.

Judith, a Jamestown, NY native, creates works with used tea bags which she opens into squares, dries, brushes on an acrylic transparent medium and fashions into designs.

"I started working with tea bags a number of years ago on a project called Chance/Choice, where participants could make a chance decision by reading tea leaves or a choice decision by reading a map," said Judith. "I love working with this medium, and what makes the Taking Tea exhibition even more interesting is that it is also a recycling project. It connects me with a lot of friends, family and neighbors who leave bags of used teabags on my doorstep and their donations become part of the installation.

"The tea house in the installation is literal as well as something a little more spiritual. The title, "Taking Tea," is also ambiguous. It could mean going to a tea party or alluding to when tea was first bought out of China by the East India Company and the British traded opium for tea which sparked the First Opium War," said Judith. "One wall in the exhibition will feature old, stained lacy table cloths to question the way tea was originally traded from China but also reflects all of the different places each tea bag has been used in, each one with a distinct history of its own."

"Taking Tea" will also provide a contemplative, contemporary space for tea ceremonies as well as for the

interpretation of messages found in tea leaves. A tea box, similar to a sandbox filled with tea leaves will allow visitors to search for a hidden message or fortune,” promised Anthony Bannon, Burchfield Penney executive director. “For those who prefer a more hands-on or social experience, a certified Tea Master-in-residence will perform scheduled tea ceremonies beginning late September.”

Imagery of tea leaves inspired by the artist&s visit to the Charleston Tea Plantation are among the patterns visitors will discover on some of the 11-ft long transparent panels that define this graceful space and introduce participants to a new way of experiencing one of their favorite beverages.

Judith has exhibited widely in the region and across the nation, taught numerous workshops, received many awards, and served on several art boards in the Rochester, NY area and at the Chautauqua Institution. Balancing concept and form in artwork that is equal parts message and memorable visuals has been Judith's objective throughout her career. Whether creating individual pieces, a themed series or site-specific installations, her work has been inspired by everything from words and text to found objects.

Positions as a commercial artist, teaching artist and arts advocate have complemented and contributed to her professional studio output. For more information, go to www.judygregory.com,

The Burchfield Penney Art Center is at 1300 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, on the SUNY Buffalo campus. The Center is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m.-9 p.m., and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Admission is \$10 (adult), \$8 (senior), \$5 (student). For more information go to, www.burchfieldpenney.org or call 716.878.6011.