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SWEPT: THIS WORK I WILL DO

An exhibition at Hancock Shaker Village

June 17–November 27, 2022

(HANCOCK, MA – May 16, 2022) In *Swept: This Work I Will Do*, artist and broom squire Cate Richards presents a series of broom-inspired sculptures alongside Shaker brooms, connecting Shakers to contemporary craft practices and exploring the Shakers' influence on American craft and art today

To understand brooms is to understand an object where use, beauty, design, labor, art, agriculture, and craft come together. Utilitarian brooms became objects of enchantment in witchcraft lore. They were linked to love and marriage in verse and custom, from being “swept off our feet” to jumping the broom in African-American tradition. To Shakers, they were religious objects. In *Swept: This Work I Will Do* (the subtitle is from a Shaker hymn), Richards makes sculptural objects using established broom making techniques in a discursive manner to explore issues of craft, social inequity, environment, and other topics. Richards' works are made of materials both expected (broomcorn, twine, and wood) and unconventional (plastic and metal). These anachronistic sculptures, juxtaposed against original Shaker brooms, offer revealing insight on the history of American broom making, highlight contemporary broom making practices, and explore the broom as a spiritual object.

Cate Richards is a queer artist, jeweler, broomsquire, and educator currently living on occupied Ho-Chunk, Sac & Fox, and Kickapoo lands, now also called Madison, Wisconsin. In the summer of 2021, they were a resident at MASS MoCA, where they researched the history of New England broom production. Richards has been awarded several travel grants for craft research, including funding for fieldwork in Michigan's Upper Peninsula to study the copper mining culture of the area, and to travel to the Foxfire Museum and Appalachian Heritage Center in Georgia to learn broom making. Richards has exhibited at Abel Contemporary in Stoughton, WI, EatMetal Inc. in Hoboken, NJ, the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, WA, Lillstreet Arts Center in Chicago, and the Gallery im Körnerpark, Berlin.

Swept: This Work I Will Do opens in the Chace Gallery on June 17th with a reception and talk for Hancock Shaker Village members; the exhibition opens to the public with regular admission on June 18th.

IMAGES:

Terminated

Libman broom, broomcorn, twine

11 x 2.5 x 68"

2021



Yoked Red oak, broomcorn, twine / Ink on Bristol
14 x 2.5 x 29" / 13 x 16"
2021



ABOUT HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE: Home to the Shakers for almost 200 years, Hancock Shaker Village is the preeminent Shaker living history museum in the United States. With 20 historic buildings on 750 acres, Hancock Shaker Village brings the Shaker story to life and preserves it for future generations. Through Shaker architecture, design, a 22,000-piece collection, and engaging programming, we promote appreciation of the aesthetics, beliefs, achievement, and controversies that have defined the Shaker experience in America. For more information about Hancock Shaker Village, please contact Carolyn McDaniel at cmcdaniel@hancockshakervillage.org or visit HancockShakerVillage.org.

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