

AMELIA TOELKE

Amelia Toelke is a visual artist whose work is rooted in the history of adornment, decoration, and material culture. Toelke holds a BFA in Metal and Jewelry from SUNY New Paltz and MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An interest in public art, collaboration, contemporary craft, and cultural exchange guides her multidisciplinary practice, taking hold early on when she and a group of friends turned an old firehouse in Kingston, NY into a shared studio and gallery. Toelke exhibits nationally and internationally and continues to explore collaborative avenues in curation and public art, highlighted in last year's public installation *Underpin & Overcoat*, the recent exhibition *Worn*. She is the recipient of merits such as the Windgate Fellowship Award, the Blair H. and Leah D. Temkin Award, and the Best in Show prize for Sculpt EVV, and was recently awarded the Ora B. Schneider fellowship at the Women's Studio Workshop. She has been an artist in residence at Lanzhou City University, China, Brush Creek Center for the Arts, and a participant in Artisterium in Tblisi, Georgia. Her work has been presented in publications such as *Metalsmith* magazine, *Art Jewelry Forum*, and *The Washington Post* and has been published in the books *500 Enameled Objects, Unique by Design*. Toelke has taught at the The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Peters Valley, and SUNY New Paltz. Toelke is currently based in Chatham, NY.

Ornament is far from supplemental. We adorn ourselves, our spaces, our lives to communicate who we are. As our personal, portable signage, jewelry informs, simultaneously expressing who we are and who we want to be. It reveals not only our aesthetic tastes but also performs complex social functions like indicating our marriage status, our religious views, our values, or our wealth. This innate human impulse to adorn frames how I understand the world, our past and our present. In my work, I borrow visual vocabulary from the languages of adornment and signage to explore the profound relationship between identity, culture, and ornament.

Golden Hour brings together current and recent works on paper with earlier sculptural installations. In the two-dimensional vignettes, I pair the luminescence of 24k gold leaf and colorful metal leaf with the velvety texture of gouache and matte latex paint. In these works, I present improbable jewelry-like objects that blur the line between object and image. The sculptures, though objects, dance similarly with the space between reality and representation. Viewed together, recognizable shapes, symbols, and motifs appear and repeat across medium and format. This visual effect breaks down boundaries between categories and shows the intimate connection between the material world and our everyday experiences, rituals, emotions, and memories.