

AMERICAN
art
COLLECTOR





"Ghosts of the Muse" 46 x 24 x 40 in. Stoneware. Opposite: "Remnants" (detail).

Jason Jacques + Galerie Fledermaus

The
Illusion
of
Permanence

The trompe l'oeil ceramics
of Eric Serritella

August 28th - September 26th

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ERIC SERRITELLA

The Illusion of Permanence

The Canadian novelist Robertson Davies wrote, “The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.”

When Eric Serritella wanted to improve his skills working with clay he took a workshop with Ah Leon, one of Taiwan’s most distinguished ceramic artists. Ah Leon invited him to Taiwan to study with four masters. He learned the ancient process of making Trompe l’Oeil Yixing teapots by copying the masters. He returned home resolved to find his own path, however. He continued in Trompe l’Oeil but chose a unique subject, the resilient birch. He remembers birches from his boyhood family

homes. “My dad died when I was 10,” he explains, “and those birch trees remind me of him. For me, my dad is at the heart of all things birch. I think of them as the angels of the forest—these beings, almost mystical, ghostlike, with the purity of an angel.”

Serritella’s stoneware sculptures now reside in numerous private and public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. His latest work will be featured in an exhibition *The Illusion of Permanence*, presented by Jason Jacques Gallery and Galerie Fledermaus, and will be on view at the latter in Chicago from

August 28 through September 26.

“The illusion of permanence echoes the inevitability of environmental change under duress of climate change, wildfires, pollution, deforestation and a myriad of other human disregards,” he explains. “Through aging and decay, I explore how nature maintains its splendors with tenacity and triumphs of existence, despite human disrespect.”

He knows birch trees so well, he often sculpts from his subconscious, his hands automatically forming the twisting trunks and branches of the tree. Recently he felt he had lost some his original inspiration.





3



4

"I couldn't find the groove," he says. A friend showed him a photo of a weathered cedar tree that inspired him to go out and see the tree for himself. "The tree has lots of holes that seemed to sing like a chorus of ghosts," explains Serritella. "I felt the resonance and the vibration and enjoyed being in front of an actual object again. I remembered what I love so much about weathered wood." His experience allowed him to see afresh and to reconnect with nature.

Ghosts of the Muse is the result of that reconnection. Its expressive branches evoke human arms raised in a rhythmic dance or an exultant gesture of praise. The recognition of the anthropomorphic element in the viewer reminds us that "We're not disconnected from the environment," he explains. "I want people to look at a piece and see something. That sense of connection and recognition can happen

on a subconscious level."

Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, "The universe is represented in every one of its particles. Every thing in nature contains all the powers of nature. Every thing is made of one hidden stuff..."

Serritella continues, "Anthropomorphic elements link humanity as timelessly inseparable from its interactions and relationships to natural surroundings. Each sculpture fosters awareness and influences viewer behavior toward the environment. Through this consciousness viewers can alter their illusions, acquire new appreciations and diverse ways of seeing, and may thus choose to walk with softer steps." ●

Galerie Fledermaus

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1
Ghost of the Muse,
stoneware, 46 x 24 x 40"

2
Defiance, stoneware,
22 x 18 x 9"

3
Remnants, stoneware,
22 x 18 x 9"

4
Oishii, stoneware,
14 x 10 x 5"