

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Jeffrey Mitchell

Vases & Flowers

Flowers & Vases

July 16 – August 22, 2009

Opening Reception

Thursday, July 16, 6 – 8 pm

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our fourth solo exhibition by Jeffrey Mitchell. Titled “Vases & Flowers, Flowers & Vases,” the show will consist of drawings and vessels that have been a consistent theme of the artist’s vocabulary for over twenty years.

Unlike the baroque ceramics of the past 10 years, Mitchell has stripped the ornamentation to focus on the hand thrown vessel and its sensuous surface. Each unique vase explores the crossroads among notions of high art, decoration, and craft. The surface is often hand decorated by incising drawing into the body of the clay wall while others are painted with glaze. The vases not only emphasize the physicality of the medium, but also act as stand-ins for openings, orifices, and receivers. To this end Mitchell’s work takes conventional attitudes toward ceramic art as a point of departure, infusing expressionist and conceptual sensibilities into a medium which has been traditionally evaluated in terms of technical and formal virtuosity. Over twenty vases will be on view to demonstrate the richness of banality and the banality of exuberance. Mitchell is attracted by the flexibility of clay and as a result, the unusual combination of ideas it could accommodate, in particular the concept of painting, drawing and pottery rolled into one creation.

Also on view are a series of new flower drawings. Composed of Mitchell’s signature washes of watercolor and ballpoint pen, the flowers are imbued with a feeling of latent sexuality. Through their simple beauty they reflect on emotional and psychological needs or desires. The drawings are delicate and sweet yet never cloying.

Mitchell’s ceramic work is also currently on view in the critically acclaimed exhibition “Dirt on Delight: Impulses That Form Clay” at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. His work is in the collections of the Fog Art Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Gallery hours are Wednesday - Saturday 11:00am - 5:00pm

Images are available upon request.