

# JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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## PRESS RELEASE



### Tanya Batura *Sculpture*

May 20-June 19, 2010

Opening Reception  
Thursday May 20, 6-8 p.m.

Gallery Hours:  
Tuesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
and Mondays by appointment  
Additional images available upon request

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of sculptures by Tanya Batura. Based in Los Angeles, the ceramic artist creates disembodied heads that are both sensual and disturbing. This is her first exhibit with the gallery.

Crafted from earthenware and airbrushed with acrylic paint, Batura's figures are anonymous, with features both idealized and abstracted. "My figures are a compilation of conflicting ideas and emotions that are derivative of the ideal beauty inherent in traditional figurative sculpture and the abstract beauty that is found in the contemporary non artistic photographic representation of the body," explains the artist. "Close-ups of fashion models, dental and surgical procedures, as well as fetish and memorial photography can be comparable with the beauty of an exquisite marble figure." Sometimes the sculptures are dead white, with blank eyes, and only a smear of pink or red at the mouth. With finely wrought features interrupted by an undeniable strangeness, these works display a sensuality that is simultaneously entrancing and unsettling.

While the surfaces of the sculptures are polished, there is often an underlying sense of something amiss. Some figures possess subtly glowing eyes, or what appears to be a rip in the sculptural skin. Many of these forms might technically be called busts, but for the fact that they often rest on their cheeks, with an exaggerated wood grain pattern exposed where the head would connect to the body. The blank eyes possess an eerie quality that seems to challenge the sensual detailing of plump lips, delicate chins, and finely formed noses. The newer works, which are a bronze-like hue, reference classical sculpture as well. These striking sculptures offer an unusual look at the figure, showing the human form as malleable, vulnerable, and imperfect.

Tanya Batura received her MFA from UCLA in 2003, after completing a BFA from the University of Washington in 1998. Her work has been seen in exhibitions at Dubhe Carreño Gallery, (Chicago IL), New Wight Gallery, (Los Angeles, CA), and the Wayne Art Center, Philadelphia, PA. Her work is currently on view as part of the *Disquieted* exhibition at the Portland Art Museum, (Portland, OR). Batura's works are collected at Arizona State University Art Museum Ceramics Research Center, (Tempe, Arizona), Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, (Overland Park, Kansas), and Portland Art Museum, (Portland, Oregon).