

**JAMES
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PRESS RELEASE

Matthias Merkel Hess:

Oeuvreday

September 5 to October 12, 2013

Opening Reception: Sept 5th 6-8PM



Gallery Hours are:

Wed. - Sat. 11:00am - 5:00pm

Tuesday by appointment

Additional images are available upon request

Left: Anvil, 2013

stoneware, 11 1/2 x 32 x 13 inches

James Harris is pleased to present our first solo exhibition by Matthias Merkel Hess. The exhibition, titled “Oeuvreday” riffes on the artist’s practice of creating sculpture based on everyday objects. The artist casts these ordinary objects into ceramic sculptures while negating their implied function. Merkel Hess re-sculpts surface details to emphasize the formal constructs of the objects shape. This practice heightens the notion of the manufactured in comparison to the man-made. The installation is arranged across the gallery floor, acting as a tableau. These works strive to invoke humor yet simultaneously convey melancholy.

The exhibition will include a selection of Merkel Hess’ signature works, a “Brute” trashcan, two gasoline cans and a 5 gallon bucket. In addition there will be newer iconography, an anvil, an Igloo Mini Cooler and a Ridge Rest Camping Mat. The combination of objects normally found around the home or work place create an unsettling dialogue. One may imagine these pieces were washed ashore by the tsunami, cleansed by the ocean and now ready for re-use. Merkel Hess adeptly explores the inherent nature of each object. His work is an investigation of ordinary objects as a fusion of tropes. Merkel Hess collapses the meaning of these pieces through the use of his materials, clay and glaze. He is keenly aware of the history of the ceramic vessel, its relationship to consumption, and its historical context in art. “Oeuvreday” is a culmination of these concepts and a presentation of the artist’s discovery. Individually, each sculpture maintains its own presence, yet when viewed in collaboration it becomes apparent that Merkel Hess has created a world where the everyday has been transformed into the extraordinary.

Matthias Merkel Hess received his MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2010 and continues to work and reside in the area. He has had exhibitions ACME in Los Angeles. and Salon 94 in New York. His work has been featured at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas and the Laguna Art Museum in California. Merkel Hess was the recipient of the 2009 Elaine Krown Klein Award.