

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Jeffry Mitchell

“Ceramic Sculpture”

November 17 – December 23, 2005

Reception: Thursday, Nov. 17 6:00-8:00PM

"Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower,
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Robert Frost 1923



James Harris Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new ceramic sculpture by Jeffry Mitchell. The artist makes intensely seductive objects that exploit the traditional decorative qualities associated with ceramics. This selection of work was made while working as a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana this summer. Fabricated out of terra cotta earthenware with a low-fire commercial glaze, Mitchell's low-class low-craft objects aspire to the luxurious baroque. This is not the baroque of 17th century Europe, but the baroque of the America West: Remington bronzes, rodeo belt buckles, and the cheap prizes found at a shooting gallery.

Mitchell's fantastically ornate ceramic vessels, exaggerated by the sheen of the glaze, put into play the disparate lore and analysis of the craft. According to Mitchell, "the objects convey a strong sense of façade, like the gold rush ghost towns, a fancy front on something very simple and ordinary." Barreled shaped vessels reminiscent of Pennsylvania Dutch pickle jars are covered with three-dimensional flowers, elephants, turtles, four leaf clovers and horseshoes creating a playful fantasy. The objects luster glaze adds to the exuberance of ornamentation. Decorated with emblems of luck and fortune they convey a sense of hopefulness; an earnest and honest reflection on the dreams and heritage of the west.

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday 11:00 to 5:00 and by appointment. Photography is available upon request.