PRESS RELEASE

PHILIP EGLIN

Nice Pair of Jugs

20 June to 31 July 2013

Philip Eglin finds inspiration in the history of visual culture. His works are collisions of elements collected from a wide range of sources and in this exhibition he combines different aspects of ceramic form, figurative image and pure gesture to create a collection of highly resonant vessels.

A series of drug jars carry depictions of hunting scenes, images that had undergone a process of interpretation and revision for the consumption of a different cultural audience even before Eglin’s treatment of them. His imagery is reworked from Spode’s Indian Sporting series of designs (produced in the early 19th century), which was itself based on engravings already taken from paintings by the artist Samuel Howitt. The pictorial narratives involve colonial game hunters and their Indian entourage, firing from elephant and horse-back as they hunt tiger and boar within exotic landscapes. But Eglin’s new configurations of the scenes are distorted by the bulbous form of the jar. As the image-laden clay slab is pressed into the plaster mould, the painting is stretched and requires cutting and patching, introducing unpredictable mis-registrations and nuances. Once reconstituted, the blue and white design interplays with additional areas of fragmented pattern.

His large jugs are loosely based on 13th century Umbrian maiolica examples, seen in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence. Their surfaces contain figurative excerpts, enlarged from his sketchbook renderings of details from religious paintings, as well as brisk loops and swerving brushstrokes of luscious, strongly-coloured glaze. It is an approach that requires a work to undergo numerous firings, following the application of each layer of colour and detail. The belly of a jug might be dented, giving it the suggestion of wear and tear through irreverent usage and adding to its general demeanour as the survivor of a rich and eventful life.

This exhibition of new ceramics by Philip Eglin is a lively orchestration of drama and incident.

Philip Eglin (born Gibraltar, 1959) studied at Staffordshire Polytechnic (1979-82) and the Royal College of Art, London (1983-86). He has exhibited internationally and his work can be found in major private and public collections that include Auckland Museum, New Zealand; Mint Museum, North Carolina, USA; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the British Council and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. He was winner of the prestigious Jerwood Prize for Applied Arts: Ceramics in 1996.

Gallery opening hours: Tues to Fri 11:00 - 18:00 and Sat 11:00 - 16:00. Nearest tube stations: Barbican, Farringdon or Old Street.

For more information, images or to arrange an interview with the artist please contact Siobhan Feeney or Tatjana Marsden
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