

PASADENA NOW

Seven LA Object Makers Translate Ordinary into Art in "Interstitial" at Pasadena Museum of California Art

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With new and recent free-standing sculptures by seven Los Angeles-based artists presented in the contemporary exhibition "Interstitial," Pasadena Museum of California Art curator John David O'Brien addresses the question: What happens to ordinary entities of domestic life when they are moved from their quotidian contexts, transformed through the art-making process, and reconfigured in the formal space of the museum?

The community of object makers answers this question with works that exist in the interstitial, in the space between the memories of objects' conventional functions and their abrupt and unexpected presences as artworks in the museum.

The seven artists: Jeff Colson, Renée Lotenero, Kristen Morgin, Joel Otterson, Rebecca Ripple, Aili Schmeltz, and Shirley Tse forge relationships with everyday objects through an eclectic merging of sculpture and craft, a colliding of found and formed pieces. The resulting object-sculptures are hybrids, assembled from or reinvented to resemble the habitually overlooked items of the everyday. By reconstructing and reimagining objects, the artists renew viewers' attention to the significance, placement, and visual characteristics of objects, within both the exhibition and their daily lives. The artists further challenge the conventional functions of the objects by imbuing them with values not inherent to their normative usages, causing viewers to consider the way meaning is ascribed.

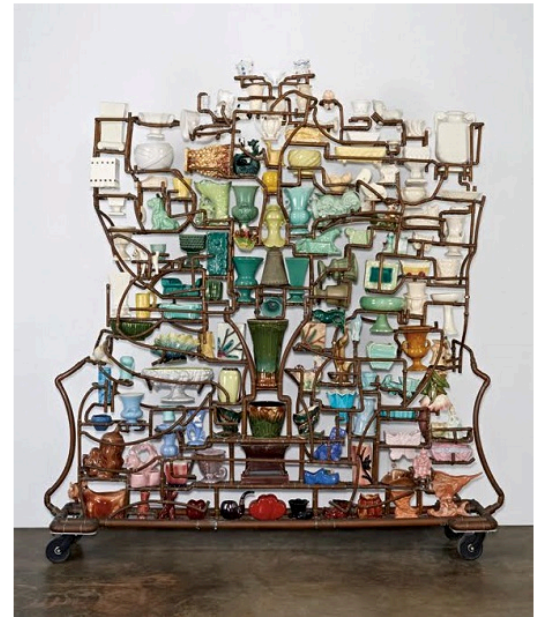
To encourage careful observation and underscore the uncanny sense of displacement, the gallery walls are void of text as well as artwork—a divergence from the majority of art in museums, which is hung on or positioned close to the walls. The sculptures are arranged at a distance from one another and either set away from gallery walls or suspended from the ceiling, making them available for viewing in the round from any vantage point. The suspended artworks may lead viewers to notice the unique, exposed ceiling of the PMCA, an often overlooked feature, and to conjure the architectural usage of the term interstitial, which indicates the space above the ceiling of one level but below the floor of the next.

The works also evoke their art historical roots, from still life painting's symbolic meanings to the readymade's use of found objects and assemblage's combination of disparate elements, and from abstraction's conveyance of emotion to conceptual art's theoretical notions. Whether through Joel Otterson's combinations of fine and decorative art materials, Kristen Morgin's unfired clay disguised as found objects, or Jeff Colson's masses of stacked paper that merge memory and craft, the artworks in *Interstitial* challenge connotation and perceived iconography through the restructuring or sculpting of and with domestic objects and their placement in new contexts.

Interstitial unravels labels and melts away standard uses and prescribed functions through a sculptural translation of the everyday into art. On view in the PMCA Main Gallery, the works encourage slow looking and contemplation of the form, structure, and aesthetic value of art as well as the objects that make up our surroundings.

Interstitial is organized by the Pasadena Museum of California Art, curated by John David O'Brien, and accompanied by a brochure. The exhibition is supported by the PMCA Board of Directors and PMCA Ambassadors Circle and is made possible in part by the Pasadena Arts & Culture Commission and the City of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division.

Pasadena Museum of California Art, 490 E. Union St., Pasadena, (626) 568-3665 or visit pmcaonline.org.



Joel Otterson, *American Portable Pottery Museum*, 1994. Ceramic, copper, plumbing pipe, steel, and casters, 93 X 104 X 20 inches. Photo © 2016 Maloney Fine Art. Courtesy of the artist and Maloney Fine Art, Los Angeles