James Evans makes mysterious objects, ones that inspire successive half-recognitions and partial recollections. His incorporation of precious metals is suggestive of great value, but other ideas the works give rise to soon become wayward and unstable. Rust percolates through gold and silver leaf - an unnatural, though handsome combination. Forms are ambiguously organic and inorganic, seemingly soft but also hard, a curious amalgamation of human flesh, geological specimen matched with other transient, contradictory qualities; they appear beautiful and awkward, humorous and dignified.

When asked about formal references he points to the modelled drapes of a porcelain figurine and a weathered object found washed up on the beach, then speaks of a long-standing fascination with the marble curls of the coat of the Newfoundland dog carved by Matthew Cotes Wyatt in the work Bashaw; The Faithful Friend of Man ... (1834) – seen in the collections of the V&A. The titles Evans gives to these works, such as Pibble, Ambigaiety and Ironique echo their inherently fugitive nature by offering part pretext, part alibi. Ultimately he demands that the artefacts he brings into being should be alien even to him. He appreciates their vacillating cultural signifiers and indeterminate physical characteristics, their equivocal, possibly undeterminable nature. His Madonna seems to function less as an analogy to the religious icon, more as a sort of visual onomatopoeia.

Are these things that are just coming into being? Is this matter still shifting, bulging, erupting and settling, containing the potential to do all this again in a different matrix of time and space? Even the pedestals on which they sit belong to the logic of a divergent system. They are essentially potent, uncanny artefacts, ones that return us to a child-like state of wonder and puzzlement at the ostensibly magical meanings and workings of the world. With reference to Freud’s insights into uncanny experience the cultural critic Esther Leslie notes: ‘Uncertainty seeds the uncanny... Susceptibility to uncanny feelings does not diminish in adulthood – at moments it bursts back in all the more powerfully because it does not accord with the learnt rationality we hope to apply successfully and at all times.’

Tessa Peters, Curator

Born 1964, James Evans studied for a BA in Ceramics at the Central School of Art, London and for an MA in Fine Art at the University of Colorado, USA. He has since exhibited internationally, most recently selected for Award, a major survey exhibition of current British ceramic practice held at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent and part of the 2011 British Ceramic Biennial. His work is represented in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The Marsden Woo Project Space runs alongside our established programme of solo and small group exhibitions by gallery artists. MW Project Space allows us to respond quickly to significant bodies of innovative work and showcases the work of talented emerging artists and designers and fresh directions in the work of more established artists. The exhibitions are organized at short notice, so please check our website regularly for news on forthcoming shows and events.