Each of James Rigler’s emphatic ceramic artefacts is a synthesis of historical forms and cultural ideas with a multiplicity of associations. He is particularly interested in the signification of objects, such as the way in which grand architecture and funerary art transmit messages about the importance of affiliated individuals down through time. Architectural details and domestic interiors are references, both in his elevation of commonplace forms to a position of importance and in his opposing impetus to reduce full-blown architectural exuberance to a more modest scale.

Between undergraduate and post-graduate studies he was employed as a model and mould-maker for Lamb’s Terracotta and Faience. Working on restoration projects he had the opportunity to scrutinise examples of historic architectural detail at close quarters and believes that this experience has led to his proclivity to gather together families of related forms, his building up of large and eloquent works from smaller parts.

The exhibition’s title The Lost World refers to what happens when objects are cut adrift from their original contexts, losing their intended significance to take on new meanings.

Clockwise from left to right:

**Gothic Lantern** (2011)
Glazed ceramic, MDF, wood, vinyl and blanket.
The heptagonal lantern refers to Gothic Revival architecture of the Victorian era. It is a quintessentially English architectural folly, of the kind that marks a landowner’s family’s long-standing attachment to the part of the country on which it stands. However, Rigler’s small-scale yet grand architectural gesture sits, newly unwrapped from its protective blankets, upon an ordinary trestle table. He delights in the pure artifice of such structures, the original model as much as his domestic-scaled replica, noting that ‘Although we read these kinds of things as false, we can also appreciate them at the same time’.

**Niche** (2011)
Glazed ceramic and wood.
The stonework wall niche mounted on a pole, mixes an architectural feature with thoughts about the paraphernalia of folklore, the representations of ancient symbols still paraded during fête days in English towns and villages. It is inspired by his recollections of the Chulmleigh Old Fair, an annual event in the North Devon town of his childhood that marks the town’s Royal Charter granted to the town by Henry III in 1253, and where a large white glove symbolising the King’s gauntlet is paraded through the town. It is also a manifestation of Rigler’s predilection to take permanent things and make them portable.

**Green Bundle** (2011)
Glazed ceramic and rope.
This casual bundle of sticks arose from his reflections on everyday things as portrayed in folktales and what might happen if they were filtered through the visual language of architectural monumentality. Rigler describes it’s character as ‘Hovering between something non-precious and yet something clearly very carefully designed and made.’ It was inspired, in part, by a drawing made by the 18th-century architect William Chambers, in which he depicts the development of architectural structures from hut to classical temple, starting from simple constructions that speak of nature and ending with highly sophisticated cultural productions.
**Branches** [2010]
Glazed ceramic and wood.
Part constructed landscape and part imaginary landscape, Branches exists in a space between that which is ordinary and mundane and that which is fantastical, at the cusp of humdrum reality and an astonishing magical world.

**Cascade** [2011]
Glazed ceramic, metal and rope.
The ceramic flowers represent the detached carved flora of architectural stonework. Their washed-out orange and peach hues were inspired by illustrations of interiors found in books from the 1950s and 60s, books that he inherited from his architect grandfather. It is a palette of colours curiously analogous to faded utopian dreams.

**Jug** [2011]
Glazed ceramic, painted glass and cloth.
Jug transcends the idea of a domestic object, not merely in scale but in its dignified presence. It is an ordinary vessel elevated to the level of Sacred Pool within a natural landscape.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

James Rigler studied Architecture at The Bartlett, Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL (1998 – 99), 3D Craft at the University of Brighton (1999 – 02) and for an MA in Ceramics and Glass at the Royal College of Art (2005 – 07). Since 2007 his work has been included in exhibitions in the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and China. He has recently undertaken residencies at the International Ceramics Research Centre, Guldergaard, Denmark, the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, and this summer he will be an Artist in Residence at Cove Park, Scotland. His most recent commissions include a table for the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire for Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, and an installation for the restaurant Zizzi Central, St Giles in London.

Marsden Woo Project Space is curated by Tessa Peters. The Marsden Woo Project Space runs alongside our programme of solo and small group exhibitions by gallery artists. The 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.