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## KERRY JAMESON

19 November 2009 to 16 January 2010

It is art that inspires Kerry Jameson, complex narrative painting in particular, and from the 17th and 18th centuries most of all; the Baroque, great scenes of human drama, battles and shipwrecks and crucifixions. Through her serious visual observation with her 'hungry artist's eyes', and her emotional connection with these depictions and stories, traversed through drawing, she builds with red clay in an apparently free-wheeling way, making tall totemic structures where figures in a human dilemma are poised on top of an elaborate scaffold of clay struts. It is as if she sees and understands the paintings more vividly by making her sculptures.

In Kerry's work there is always a narrative content, though it may have altered the story from her historical source painting. She works in groups, sets scenes. One of her devices is to have large and small works occupying the same space, like the great trees in a forest lapped by undergrowth and grass, or the mice in a cartoon film carrying a subtext to the main action.

Her pieces are unlikely sculptural forms for ceramics, with their see-through underpinnings like the rusting metal legs of a seaside pier. Modern sculpture in clay has tended to emphasize the mass of an earth-bound idiom converting soft to hard, mud to rock, seen in the way that Juan Miro or Lucio Fontana used the plasticity of the material and the evident marks of the hand to make dense solid forms. There is a deceptive depth of skill in her manner of working, achieving the lightness of structure and a vertical pile-up in a material that is at the outset a sticky mass. She chooses a quality of 'unfinished' in her modelling, or simplicity in her small figures - building round a found pebble or twig, gilding special emphases of subject matter, echoing aspects of folk art and the everyday as well as the grand traditions of world art, but these are not to be confused with naivety.

In this group of new work the subject is Conflict. She has drawn in particular from three paintings: Uccello's **Battle of San Romano** from the 1450's, Bruegel's **Massacre of the Innocents** of 1565, and **The Battle of Hanan** painted by Vernet in 1824. The larger sculptures are thronged by small groups of different types with different titles; the Cavalry, the Front Line, the Worriers (like a Greek chorus wringing their hands), Fear, Becoming, Places I've Been.

Foreground and Background in this **theatre of war** are as intrinsically important as the shifts in scale. Kerry talks of her preoccupation in giving form to the formless, and making objects out of emotions. She is also resolving some kind of whole from all the bits, re-making and re-presenting her own world with an uneasy love of this world. Looking, thinking, drawing and building with clay is a natural and unstoppable sequence of actions for an artist like this one.

Kerry Jameson graduated from the Royal College of Art MA in Ceramics and Glass in 2009.

She initially did a BA at Central St Martins from 1989 - 92, and spent the fifteen intervening years running her studio making figurative sculpture, often of dogs. She came back into education to have the time to change her mode of working and to overcome the detachment she felt from the successful practice she had established with the cheerful dogs, and to 'speak of experience' instead.

Quotation from Kerry on the RCA website

"Works are inspired by the flow of things seen everyday, as well as by the art I look at, from past and present.

With a passion for the European arts of the 17th and 18th centuries and its spiritual persuasions, I find ways to translate this source material into my own experience in the form of drawings, paintings and sculptures, which are crafted from red earthenware, slip, glaze, gold leaf and found objects."

Alison Britton November 2009

For more information, images, or to arrange an interview with the artist contact Tatjana Marsden or Alida Sayer  
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