

Extreme Craft

November 08, 2008

Pottery's Gay!



I've known about the song "[Pottery's Gay](#)" (by a band whose name I won't print here) since grad school. I actually know quite a few gay potters, and I've always given me a subversive thrill that the band don't even know how close they are to being right. Ceramic artists like Howard Kottler, Mark Burns, Matt Nolen, Richard Milette, Paul Mathieu, Leopold Foulem and countless others delight in smashing heteronormative stereotypes like veritable bulls in a china shop.



If you google "Queer Ceramics", though, one name quickly bubbles to the surface: [Eric Scollon](#). Scollon, who recently got his MFA in ceramics (plus an MA in visual culture) from the California College for the Arts, is a relative newcomer whose "take no prisoners" approach to ceramics is translating to success in the broader art world. Scollon isn't just interested in making pretty things-- he's fundamentally interested in how objects function in the world. He creates sexually charged porcelain objects that he releases into the world like weather balloons to measure human foibles and proclivities.

Function is an interesting concept...anyone who has attended a craft fair (or manned a booth) knows that function is different for different people. One of the advantages of using handmade objects in your daily life is the opportunity to mesh with idiosyncratic functional elements on a daily basis. Scollon's approach to function borders on genius....he creates cockrings, buttplugs and other erotically charged objects (plus the occasional drinking vessel or enigmatic bit of tableware) then sometimes gives them away in exchange for documentation of their use. For the recent "[Bay Area Now](#)" show at the Yerba Buena Center, Scollon gave away dozens of objects, then created a social networking site for the recipients of the objects to share their use with the maker. He got back some racy pictures of some of his objects, plus



others, like the fetching cockring bacelet above, in addition several earplug organizers, a toothpick holder, an urban treasure hunt and a tortoise companion were submitted.



Face it....galleries are boring. There's no better way to suck the fun out of an object than to slap it in a frame or on a pedestal and showcase it in an antiseptic white room. For a 2007 show at the Eagle Tavern in San Francisco entitled "Walls of Glory", Scollon actually installed porcelain sculptures into the urinals in the men's room. There is a great photo of the above figurine, entitled "Piss Tub" in use (or rather after use. Delight, revulsion, pleasure and function are all wrapped up in one tangled ball.

Scollon speaks the languages of form, history and function fluently. This allows him to fold in additional layers as he sees fit. If you'd like to own your own Scollon, you're in luck! The [Look boutique](#) has several beautiful blue and white porcelain objects for you to use for their intended purpose, or even your own repurposed purpose.

[LINK](#) thanks [Lyndsy](#)!

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Don't miss the work of one of my favorites--Jeffrey Mitchell. (I think he might have been in that Obamaware show too...)

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Eric Scollon – Albion’s artist-in-residence

[[Features](#)] [Sandra Turay](#) - 12:57pm Feb 22, 2010

Eric Scollon, 1994 Albion alum, has returned to Albion as an artist-in-residence for the 2010 spring semester. His art has been displayed in numerous galleries in California, and his written work has appeared in *American Craft Magazine*. <http://www.albionpleiad.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ESair2.flv>

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