

Among Others
November 3 – December 22, 2019
(Exhibition Opening November 3 12-5pm)



Joel Otterson, *Mixed Marriage (Ménage à Trois)*, 2018,
walnut, oak, aromatic cedar, leather and brass, 18 x 18 x 18 in (45.7 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm)

Seminal Los Angeles artist Joel Otterson opens his first solo exhibition at Royale Projects, *Among Others*, opening November 3 and running through December 22, 2019.

Indulgent details from Otterson's diverse aesthetic memoir collide with stark minimalism in his complex sculptures. A myriad of techniques and materials are fused together to communicate and question American values.

Drawing from the endless beauty accumulated through human time various aspects of art, decorative art, and objects are reinvented into harmonious amalgamations that celebrate the original sources of inspiration while prompting fresh ways of seeing and thinking about something rare and unusual. As a connoisseur of all objects, his experiences and moments of awe are captured with a snapshot on his phone. The pics are sketches, notes in a diary of his eyes.

The artist states, "my curiosity is about the history of all objects in relationship to human beings and my job as an artist is to communicate their joy, beauty, humor and horror."

His multidisciplinary practice includes glassblowing, embroidery, woodworking, ceramics, casting and welding of metals. Otterson shatters commonplace stereotypes associated with these disparate techniques, juxtaposing methods typically deemed as feminine or masculine, craft or fine art, allowing artworks to become metaphors of a blended world full of delight and wonderment.

A work such as *Voluptuous Desire* developed out of his enamored with a pair of ancient Greek amphora at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Captivated by the form and their diverging DNA throughout history, Otterson decided to make his own version this time made from cast iron. The vessel is gone and the only thing left is his marvelously circuitous decoration. The resulting form is reminiscent of 1930s Hollywood bombshell May West.

The *Mixed Marriage* series uses the vocabulary of fine furniture and joinery forming sensational utilitarian sculptures that binds exotic components like leather, purple heart wood, and Persian carpets. The works are both minimalist and maximalist all at once. This series is a continuation of his career long pursuit to investigate the domestic landscape dissect the home and remake everything within it.

A recent body of soft works such as *Sea of a Thousand Greens* is a patchwork of dozens of fabrics and laces elevating and democratizing all materials used. Where domesticity meets theatrical, the work hangs like a curtain over an implied window or a stage waiting to unveil what is behind.

Otterson states "my work questions what it means to be alive and to consider our relationships with everyday things, especially the objects that mediate people and bring them together."

Born in Los Angeles in 1959, Otterson attended Parsons School of Design in New York City, where he stood in the city's epicenter of the postmodern revolution. At age twenty-seven, he was selected for a one-person exhibition in the Projects Room of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In the wake of the AIDS crisis, by the early 90s, New York has become a dark place. Otterson retreated to the middle of America to have a fresh focus.

In 2002 he returned to Los Angeles where a group of young curators connected with his work including him is the Hammer Museum's first Los Angeles Biennial, *Made in L.A.* in 2012 and leading to his participation in the Whitney Biennial, New York in 2014.

Otterson's work has also been exhibited at The Jewish Museum, New York NY; Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, San Diego, CA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; and The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

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