

Kjelshus Collins***legerdemain***

December 8, 2023 - January 21, 2024

Sibyl is pleased to present ***legerdemain***, an exhibition of sculpture across media by **Kjelshus Collins** (b.1982, Oklahoma City, OK).

Collins draws from both high and low visual culture in his exploration of simulacra and consumerism. He cites Jim Nutt, Paul McCarthy, American face jugs, Japanese tea ware, and Jean Dubuffet as well as MTV *Liquid Television*, Star Wars, Gumby, Tarot, and Walt Disney. His ceramic sculptures make direct references to Japanese soft vinyl toys (known as "sofubi") and monster culture, remaking them as votive objects such as to conflate their cultural status and functionality.

Often Collins' ceramics emerge as a result of free association with already loaded objects anthropomorphized in the style of Japanese *tsukumogami* (wherein inanimate objects over a long enough timeline are imbued with a sentient soul). Disparate references come together into singular objects that feel at once ancient and contemporary. He describes the process of emptying his mind into the objects as he makes them, connecting to the clay and the millions of years of erosion embedded into its inherent materiality and malleability. With the series the artist calls "Requinware," (*requin* being the French word for shark, directly translating to "menacing grin") he appropriates the aeronautic nose art from World War II fighter planes, abstracting the eyes and mouth into a "social graffiti" embedded into simple vessels of everyday life. Collins embraces the indeterminate nature of clay by embracing the "mistakes" that result from the firing process or the fragility of the final product. Broken vessels and objects are given new life rather than discarded.

In writing about his works, Collins describes his time spent on archaeological dig sites in Jordan and its influence on his practice. In such spaces, he notes that often votive objects and ancient children's toys are indistinguishable from one another and require further research. Both are used in forms of ritual for acting on imagined or wished-for scenarios, the "ritual" of play. He embeds this indeterminacy into his work, often conflating the sacred or "majikal" with the playful, mass-produced commodity. The dialogue between the past and present, sacred and the mundane, is central to the power in Collin's sculptures, serving as vessels that intertwine memory and play.

ABOUT KJELSHUS COLLINS

Kjelshus Collins was born in Oklahoma City, OK. He obtained a BFA and BA in Art History from Oklahoma State University in 2006. He obtained his MFA from the University of New Orleans in 2022. This is his first solo exhibition at Sibyl Gallery.

ABOUT SIBYL GALLERY

Founded by Katherine Lauricella Ainsley in 2022, Sibyl Gallery is a contemporary art space in New Orleans dedicated to promoting emerging artists and art practices. Collaborating with artists, patrons, and institutions alike, the gallery aims to continue to diversify and strengthen the New Orleans art community and connect it with the broader international art world.