

Kahlil Robert Irving
Street:Chains:Cocktails

September 8 - October 29, 2017

Opening reception: Friday, September 8th, 6 to 8pm

Callicoon Fine Arts is proud to present a solo exhibition of new work by Kahlil Robert Irving, on view from September 8 to October 29. Titled "Street:Chains:Cocktails", the exhibition will be comprised of new sculpture, works on paper, and wallpaper. Irving has produced ceramic assemblages out of fired elements that include porcelain, stoneware, gravel, and glass. The highly visceral compositions include a range of imagery, some of which are typical to porcelain vessels like the florals of Messien pottery while other images are taken from news reports surrounding the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, a suburb of the city of St. Louis. The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication with an essay by Hannah Klemm, Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Saint Louis Art Museum.



Irving's work derives from decorative arts traditions, post-war industrial design, and contemporary urban culture. Through an amalgamation of popular and autobiographical symbols, Irving's mastery of material and image produces a reflection on the experience of living in America's cities today. In the gallery, groups of ceramics include signifiers of quotidian objects. Within Irving's sculptures are embedded shards of porcelain as if a teacup had been thrown against the floor, then incorporated into cement gravel. Paint cans, soda bottles, and crumpled styrofoam fast-food containers, are rendered in slip cast porcelain, densely collaged with image decals of fried chicken, cigarette butts, lotto cards, and dripped with black, blue, silver and gold luster.

Three monoprints serve as an important extension of Irving's sculpture production. In the series titled "Street View," Irving embosses and collages detritus and gravel with ink into sheets of paper to make unique constellations of collected litter. Pressed objects and printed textures evoke the ordinary city street either suburban or of the inner-city, transitions between environments, and the similarities found from one space to the next. A digital chain-link fence printed on vinyl further emphasizes a partition wall. Like the decal images that blanket the surface of Kahlil's ceramics, the all-over pattern, repeats in a series of interlocking black on white loops. This decorative architecture reads as barrier under the guise of making calm for safety, while simultaneously suggesting harmful situations.

Phrases like “I am Mike” and “No Charges for Wilson,” pulled from press coverage following the killing of Michael Brown, cover areas of the porcelain surface and encapsulate the critical social and political response both nationally and locally near the artist’s home town. In her essay Klemm describes the effect of Irving’s layered use of material and text as “repeated poetics paired with a systematic accumulation of recognizable forms” asserting that the works “astutely question the relationship of abstraction to language, politics and identity.” The merging of words and form repeats in the artist’s choice of titles. Careful pairings like “Street Section - After Death (**Layered Mass** never forgotten)” and “**Mass: Meissen TO – GO (KILLING DAILY; DAILY KILLING)**” again, pull from the headlines, to combine with words that both describe the material as well as social ritual in the face of collective mourning. The titles read in blue, red, and black, and styled in bold, italicized, underlined, suggest memorialization. In the last lines of her essay Klemm states, “The works in this exhibition are tied up with historical and contemporary practices of how we live together in the world, how we understand what is left behind—the detritus of global capitalism and its impact on local communities and on everyday life. The end product proffers a lyrical and elegiac sense of both belonging and loss.”

Kahlil Robert Irving (born 1992, San Diego, CA) is currently living and working in Saint Louis. He attended the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art, Washington University in St. Louis (MFA 2017) and the Kansas City Art Institute (BFA Art History and Ceramics 2015). Upcoming exhibitions include, *Ephemora* at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas, and the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles (both 2017). Additional exhibitions include, *FRAME BY FRAME* at Callicoon Fine Arts, New York, *Desirable Objects| Cabinet* at David B. Smith Gallery, Saint Louis, *Almost Now, Just Then...* at Projects+ Gallery, Saint Louis (all 2017), and *Undocumented* at Bruno David Gallery, Saint Louis in 2016. In 2016 Irving was a resident artist at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy. In the fall of 2017 he will be in residence at the University of Pecs, in Pecs, Hungary. Kahlil Robert Irving has work in the collections of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas; the Riga Porcelain Museum, in Riga, Latvia; The Ken Ferguson Teaching Collection at the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, Missouri; the Foundation for Contemporary Ceramic Art in Kecskemet, Hungary; and the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, in Jerusalem, Israel.

For additional information contact Photi Giovanis at info@callicoonfinearts.com, or call 212-219-0326.

Callicoon Fine Arts is located at 49 Delancey Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets. Gallery hours are Wednesday to Sunday, 10:30am to 6:30pm. The nearest subway stops are the B and D trains at Grand Street and the F, J, M and Z trains at Delancey-Essex Street.

image caption: Kahlil Robert Irving, “*Seven Pack – Memorial edition, August 2014 (RIP)*,” 2017, glazed and unglazed porcelain and stoneware, blue slip, gravel, glass, personally constructed decals, and black, blue, gold, silver luster, 15 x 14 x 12 inches (38.1 x 35.6 x 30.5 cm)