
PAGODA RED



"POMPEII" BY MICHAEL THOMPSON

\$5,880

2023 • United States • Porcelain, Stoneware • Collection #CMT261

W: 10.5" D: 9.5" H: 8.0"

Based in Chicago, IL, contemporary artist Michael Thompson creates unique kites, collages and mixed media works assembled from material fragments of past and present collected in his travels. In his ongoing series of memory jugs, Thompson adorns stoneware vessels with a kaleidoscope of ceramic shards, found objects, and pocket-sized trinkets he collected over the course of his life.

Also known as forget-me-not jugs or spirit jars, memory jugs are African American folk art objects that honor a loved one who has recently passed. Continued...



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Small tokens and mementos of the deceased are gathered and affixed to the exterior of a jug or vase, an abundance of memories that celebrates a life lived to the fullest.

Michael Thompson applies this tradition to his own practice, creating tactile assemblages of this and that. Formed in the manner of collage, each jug honors the lost memories of generations past and his own memories of personally discovering each item. With varied sources for materials including Kyoto, Turkey, and Mexico, a great number of the found shards are 18th and 19th century ceramics Thompson gathered from the Thames River at low tide in a practice known as "mudlarking."

Colorful porcelain miniatures of people, animals, flowers, and architectural elements burst from the surface of this earthenware jar entitled "Pompeii" to form a vivid, reticulated tableau. Cheekily titled after the preserved city of Pompeii, the discarded toys and figurines that encrust the sides of the vessel have been given new life as they ripple and merge, swirl and compress around the ceramic form. To form the collage, well-placed shards are plastered to the side of a found, brown glazed fermenting crock. The amalgam of forms that comprise the jug's relief achieves a continuous, amorphous surface texture, contrasted - upon closer inspection - by the delicate, ornate details of the individual fragments.

"Pompeii," 2023

Michael Thompson

Porcelain shards and found objects on stoneware vessel.

