
PAGODA RED



"CHINA CABINET" BY MICHAEL THOMPSON

\$5,880

2023 • United States • Stone, Ceramic, Porcelain, Stoneware • Collection #CMT258

W: 9.25" D: 8.5" H: 8.5"

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."

Porcelain figures, stones, and objets d'art encrust the surface of this small earthenware jug entitled "China Cabinet," playing with scale through its use of figurative ceramic miniatures. Staying within a palette of crème, stark white, and pale celadon, the collage of objects forms a delightful monochrome facade that ripples and merges, swirls and compresses around the sides of the jug. To form the collage, well-placed shards are plastered to the side of a crème glazed found vessel. 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.

"China Cabinet," 2023

Michael Thompson

Porcelain shards and found objects on stoneware vessel.

