
PAGODA RED



"IRIDESCENCE" BY MICHAEL THOMPSON

\$5,980

2023 • United States • Porcelain, Stoneware • Collection #CMT262

W: 12.5" D: 12.0" H: 9.5"

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."

Pottery shards, seaglass and stones tumbled smooth by the waters of Lake Michigan encrust the surface of this large earthenware jar entitled "Iridescence" to form a reticulated tableau of abstract forms. Figurative miniatures of hands and vivid bursts of color break through the swell of organic shapes, creating moments of intrigue within the irregular current that ripples and swirls across the ceramic form. The collage of fragments spans a mix of colors, evoking the broad tonal range contained within an iridescent sheen. To form the collage, well placed shards are plastered to the side of a found, beige 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.

"Iridescence," 2023

Michael Thompson

Porcelain shards and found objects on stoneware vessel.

