
PAGODA RED



"BEACH-COMBED MOCHAWARE" BY MICHAEL THOMPSON

\$6,280

2024 • United States • Porcelain, Stoneware • Collection #CMT263

W: 11.0" D: 9.5" H: 9.75"

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...



1740 W. Webster Ave., Chicago, IL 60614 • 773-235-1188 • info@pagodared.com

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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 miniatures, export china, and objets d'art amass and emerge over the surface of this earthenware jug entitled "Beach-Combed Mochaware," evoking imagery of lost items poking through an eroded riverbed. The pale coloring of the swell of objects is peppered with shocks of cinnabar red and cobalt blue and accented by tender shades of mint green and pink. To form the collage, well-placed shards are plastered to the sides of a found jug finished with dark brown glaze. 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.

"Beach-Combed Mochaware," 2024

Michael Thompson

Porcelain shards and found objects on stoneware vessel.

