

CHRISTIAN HOLSTAD
TOOTHPICK

Massimo De Carlo gallery is proud to present TOOTHPICK, the new exhibition by American artist Christian Holstad.

TOOTHPICK is structured as a spiralling voyage into the cyclical nature of creation, growth, waste and dissipation. In his practice Christian Holstad has often explored, both aesthetically and conceptually, the vessel and content of consumption and its consequent effect on the world. In TOOTHPICK this investigation is paired with the artists' newfound muse – Food; in the past couple of years cooking has been, in the words of the artist himself, like 'learning a new language'.

Clay was Christian Holstad's first medium. This new exhibition at Massimo De Carlo includes, among others, a new enchanting series of ceramic works. In his formative years the artist discovered the medium's tactile, emotive and alchemical nature, which can also be related to food and cooking. The nature of clay, combined with its historical relationship with food, makes it the perfect instrument to translate this research around nutrition and squander into the vocabulary of art.

Many of the works in the exhibition are the result of the artist's long stay in Faenza where, working closely with Italian ceramists, he developed new ways of working with clay that expand the American, English and Japanese techniques he was already accustomed to.

Upon entering the first room the viewer is met by eerie masks covered in eggshells, dog bowls, pots, pans, funeral cornucopias and the drawing of a steamy open dishwasher. Here the gallery is transformed in an uncanny domestic ambiance that raises questions and mordantly mocks our relationship with consumerism, posing the accent on how we are consumed ourselves by our contemporary way of living.

On the second floor, after following the custom egg themed rope up the stairs, the reflection on consumerism goes from particular to universal: here the artist, sharing and translating through art his own juvenile experience in catering, sheds light on the abundance that is related to consumption. The delicately hand made ceramic trashcan, a symbol that Holstad has often dealt with, becomes the epitome of the raw remains of our own ego, steering away from the projections of ourselves that we insert in our shopping carts. Oversized toothpicks, snakes with swan faces smothered in caviar, tomatoes thrown against walls and an assembly line of sandwiches create a narrative that tells us about gluttony and greed, work and individuality, interior and exterior.

The last room is entirely dedicated to the egg and the snake, and the Simbology connected to the two as individual entities but also to the relationship between them, a celebration of growth and decay. Carefully layered mosaics made of eggshells and gentle ceramics where orange peels become bats that hang from the ceiling are paired with three sculptures of snakeheads balancing eggs on their mouth. Should they eat the egg or not? The subtle monstrosity of this gesture highlighting the state of our own relationship with the earth.



The understanding of new languages and the subsequent visual and emotional decoding of them are at the heart of TOOTHPICK. Here food scraps, dishes, sandwiches, dog bowls and so on become traces of an imaginary soothing household ambiance which raises questions on the relationship between the warmth of domesticity and the external environment, the yolk and the shell.

Christian Holstad was born in Anaheim in 1972, and now lives and works New York. His solo exhibitions include: *The Terms of Endearment*, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2006); *Gaity: Discovering the Lost Art (in Absentia)*, Kunsthalle Zurich (2004); *Innocent Killers*, Project Room, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2004). Has also taken part in group shows among which: *Compass in Hand*, at MoMA in New York (2009); *Collage: The Unmonumental Picture*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2008). Christian Holstad has participated in the 2007 edition of the *Biennale de Lyon*, in Lyon and, in 2004, at the *Whitney Biennial* at Whitney Museum in New York.

Hard Facts :

Massimo De Carlo

Via Giovanni Ventura, 5 — 20134 Milano

Opening: 20th of January 2016 at 19.00

From January 21st, 2016 until March 26th, from Tuesday to Saturday, 11.30am - 7.00pm.

For further informations and materials :

Press Office, Massimo De Carlo

T. +39 0270003987 – F. +39 02 7492135

press@massimodecarlo.com

www.massimodecarlo.com

Instagram: massimodecarlogallery

Twitter: mdcgallery

MASSIMO DE CARLO