

You, Me and Everyone We Know

BY GLITHERO

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One by one visitors were invited to sidle their way through thick black-out curtains into an improvised dark room. There, holding a thrown pot carefully above their head, like a trophy, each was invited to take a slow turn through 360°, beneath an intense beam of light. The surface of the pots had been treated with chemicals sensitive to light, and as the visitor turned, an image of their hands became part of the skin of the vessel. In this way, through the help of one hundred friends, neighbours, family members and collaborators, identified here in a wall of photographs, one hundred pots have become an emblem of a community.

For Tim Simpson and Sarah van Gameren, the work that matters to them has never simply been the object itself. While, as design studio Glithero, they produce objects - their Les French furniture; their Silverware and Blueware vases, tiles and lampshades; their Woven Song Table Cloths, the patterns dictated by organ music; their Bench Mould Consoles - their central goal, as they express it, is "to foster a deeper understanding of the value that is created in the moment of making."

This value is something hard to put your finger on. But an apt emblem of it is the idea of a vessel, thrown with skill by one pair of hands, being held aloft with care by another pair of hands, photographed in the turning, and then handed to a third, which places the vessel on a plinth. To underline this genealogy of value, "You, Me and Everyone We Know" offers multiple examples of meaning created through the passing of objects between hands.

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There are amphorae, like newborns, incapable of holding themselves upright, dependent upon being held. There are totemic three-section vessels, feats of technical ingenuity, the hands on the side of each section a record of the movement of placing the vessels gingerly one on top of another and also a mark of the absence of those people. There are Hold Me vessels, where multiple pairs of hands have been photographed holding the same pot.

This new solo exhibition, Tim and Sarah explain, is an attempt to express what they stand for, as contemporary designers. Alone in their studio, in 2020, they were especially conscious of all the people who normally contribute to their productivity, from instrumental colleagues to inspiring friends. That they have drawn on photography and the image of the human hand to mediate this thinking is unsurprising. They have been working with photographic processes for over ten years, exploring the impact of translating ephemeral plant life into three-dimensional objects, which then exist in perpetuity. The centrality of photography to their practice is emphasised by the elegant plinths and shelves they have created - out of compressed paper and stainless steel - deliberately evoking the materials normally used to mount and frame photographs. The hand, in turn, is an archetypal symbol of human creativity. As a print on the walls of the caves of our prehistoric ancestors, or a pattern on the side of one of Glithero's vessels, it is a permanent record of a single moment in a single life. But as Tim and Sarah are keen to communicate, their works are not just single hand prints; the value in each object is a joint-creation.

Text by Emma Crichton-Miller

Photography by Thomas Joseph Wright PenguinsEgg Ltd

