INTERVIEW: NAM TRAN

JULY 16, 2019



This summer Stern Pissarro Gallery presents *No Ball Games*, an exhibition of sculptures by British-Vietnamese artist Nam Tran. This is Tran's inaugural exhibition at the gallery, showcasing recent works created at his London studio. The artist's presence has grown immensely in recent years and he is now solely represented by Stern Pissarro Gallery.

This new body of distinctive works conjures childhood memories and popular culture, both playful and exquisitely crafted. In the collection, there are various sculpted objects including ceramic cars, bunny rabbits, eggs, trainers and spray cans. Described by the artist as "bookmarks", the objects reflect certain stages of his life reimagined through the medium of ceramics.

Throughout his years of experience, Tran has experimented with alternative ceramic techniques which have led him to create a unique style. Tran attended the prestigious Central Saint Martins School of Art and Royal College of Art in London before holding teaching positions at University College London.

Since then, Nam has featured on the BBC's 'Great Pottery Throwdown' in 2017 and runs several ceramic studios in London. His mission is to inspire creativity through urban culture and promote a new era of ceramics.



Introduction about yourself and how you started in the arts, what led you to ceramics? What was your first experience in art-making?

I am an artist who derives inspiration through childhood and evolving the ideas through the ceramic making process. Through the process of play and creativity I have actively always been drawn to the arts, both visually and tactilely.

From a young age my mother used to encourage arts within the household, if we had no clay, my mother would give us balls of dough to make animals and create forms with.

Whilst studying an art foundation, I found the ceramic department to be the most exciting as it allowed me to translate ideas very quickly and roughly into a three-dimensional form. During my final show, I had found out that all of my pieces had sold out. With this excitement, it gave me belief that I had some skill and talent that people appreciated.



How would you describe yourself and your artwork?

I'm a very playful person and so is my work, but the depth within each piece has a strong concept and a high-level of technicality to make them. By incorporating these fundamentals into my work, it has created interest through to the learning of the piece and how it is made to the audience.



Where do you get your inspiration from, particularly for this body of works at Stern Pissarro Gallery?

My inspirations come from basic memories from my late childhood, trying to grasp a strong object to remind myself of a certain time or moment in my life, when life was different and fun. Carrying these bookmarks as I call them - objects that reflects a certain stage in my life – I then replicate and mould them, playing with the material of ceramics.

For this body of works for the gallery, I have looked at ball forms. The title of the show is called *No Ball Games*, as within London city there were signs stating this everywhere such as outside my apartment which was where we used to play ball games right under one of these signs. This wall became a place where children would come to play not just ball games but all sorts of games… hide and seek, tea parties and basketball. It has been my strongest series of works so far and the work employs humour and playfulness to target the inner child within adults.



***No Ball Games* will be on display at Stern Pissarro Gallery through August 30th 2019. To view our online catalogue, click here. For sales enquiries, please contact stern@pissarro.com or call us on +44 (0) 20 7629 6662.**