



BENTE SKJØTTGAARD
Timberline
ceramic sculpture

2.02 > 16.03.2024

OPENING

Thursday, February 1st – 5 pm > 8:30 pm

SUNDAY OPENING

Sunday, March 3rd – 2 pm > 6 pm – www.marais.guide

NEWS

Bente Skjøttgaard's work is presented at the exhibition:

Alkymistisk træf (Alchemic encounter) – **Vejen Kunstmuseum**, Danmark - **until 5.05.2024**

and will be presented at **Ceramic Brussels** (fair) – **25.01 > 28.01.2024**

An oak can grow to be one thousand years old. A tree thus becomes a witness of time and evolutions: unfavourable weather, natural disasters, and human intervention make themselves part of it and alter its aspect.

With *Timberline*, Bente Skjøttgaard allows the millennial tree to speak: she imagined a fossilised, eternal, mysterious, and aethereal forest, where enormous trees materialise history – and stories. Her new sculptures, be they straight or curved, shoot up to the sky or run alongside the ground. They convey these quiet forces with great dynamism. Her surfaces, dense or openwork, evoke the thin structures of the microscopic fabric of a tree. Some of them, with their irregular mosaics, seem to outline the bark structure. Gradations of white prevail, in contrast with delicate shades of green, deep shades of blue, or even a delicious pink. A silvery sparkle is brought here and there by some knot, some appendix, some parasite growth in pewter casting.

***Timberline* represents a border beyond which some forms of life cannot survive, thus extending a symbolic invitation to treasure life and value its importance. Here Bente Skjøttgaard pays tribute to trees, to their slow growth, to their resilient nature and their ability to absorb waste, to the precious shelter they become for many animals and tiny life forms.**

By naming her works *Family Tree*, she suggests a parallel with the human family, with its succession of generations and its young shoots growing both under the protection of the older trees and in their shadow.

In the winter of 2005 and 2006, European forests were devastated by a storm. Seeing the ground strewn with uprooted, mutilated trees, Bente Skjøttgaard had then modelled naked roots, trunks, and heaps of branches through a range of green, yellow, and brown glazes reminiscent of utilitarian pottery. Two years later, the artist would revisit the origins of ceramic materials with *Elements in White*. There, rocks, organic materials, and human littering came together to make colossal sculptures unified through white glazes of extraordinary textures – coarse coral-like surfaces, cracks, sugar coating. Civilisation, culture, and nature had met in this tour de force of materials.



***Family Tree* #2320 (fragment) | 2023**
glazed ceramic and tin
61 x 43 x 34 cm
© photo Ole Akhøj

Although *Timberline* relates to these past two series, it is also the result of a journey through the **history of Franco-Danish ceramics of the late 19th century and early 20th century**. This journey started when the **Vejen Kunstmuseum** in Denmark devoted a research project to **Niels Hansen Jacobsen (1861-1941)**, following the 2020 monographic exhibition dedicated to him by the Musée Bourdelle. The Danish artist lived in Paris for ten years, having the sculptor Jean Carriès (1855-1894) for a neighbour. **Jean Carriès** was known for his pioneer work in ceramics, born from his fascination for pieces from the Chinese Song period and from the exclusive use of local materials characteristic of that technique. The Vejen Kunstmuseum's research project aimed at digging deeper into the secrets of Niels Hansen Jacobsen's overflowing creativity, with the help of ten artists-ceramicists, including Bente Skjøttgaard. The Danish artist might have gotten hold of Jean Carriès' glaze recipes, published posthumously by his assistant L. Auclair in the article *Céramique de grand feu* in *Art et Décoration* in October 1910. Working from this hypothesis, Bente Skjøttgaard tried to interpret Carriès' recipes using his flagship principle: working on local and contemporaneous materials. LECA balls, bricks, crushed volcanic stones, and scoria from Niels Hansen Jacobsen's kiln are all put together to form new glazes. Particularly inspired by one specific work of his –VKV3050, a small jug with a pewter handle shaped like a branch from his Parisian period–, Bente Skjøttgaard learned the casting techniques of lost



Family Tree #2324 | 2023
glazed ceramic and tin
49 x 31 x 27 cm
© photo Ole Akhøj



Family Tree #2319 | 2023
glazed ceramic and tin
50 x 28 x 26 cm
© photo Ole Akhøj

wax and sand cast. This is how pewter elements —partially visible, partially hidden— got themselves into Bente Skjøttgaard's lexicon, linking her work to the fundamental research and the mysterious experiments of alchemists of yore, themselves closely related to the history of ceramics.

Feeding the human imagination from times immemorial, trees and what they might be hiding inspired countless stories and tales. Similarly, the sculptures in *Timberline* tell tales of temporality, of resilience, of family, and of environmental issues. These works also tell us a story of inspiration between generations of artists and of the links between the French and Danish art avant-gardes of the late 19th century, which are once again renewed by the experiments and the embodied poetry so characteristic of Bente Skjøttgaard.



Family Tree #2326 (fragment) | 2023
glazed ceramic and tin
59 x 35 x 40 cm
© photo Ole Akhøj

parcours

An internationally renowned artist, Bente Skjøttgaard (born in 1961 in Denmark) is also a particularly dynamic figure in the world of ceramics: co-founder of the **SuperFormLab** at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, member of the troika that initiated the exhibition platform **Copenhagen Ceramics** (2011-....), she is also part of the team behind the new window for ceramic art Peach Corner in Copenhagen (2021-).

In France, her works are presented at the collections of the MAD (Musée des arts décoratifs) the Fond national d'art contemporain, SEVRES - the Musée national de la céramique, and the Musées de Châteauroux. In the rest of Europe, they can be found in number of collections, notably the V&A, the Designmuseum Denmark, the Holstebro Kunstmuseum, CLAY (Museum of International Ceramic Art), the Vejen Art Museum, the Trapholt Art Museum, the Danish Art Foundation, and the Copenhagen Cultural Foundation. Bente Skjøttgaard has additionally received many awards for her work.

From her collaboration with the stylist Anne Damgaard rose the exhibition **Everything Flows**, presented at the **Museet Holmen** and at **Peach Corner** (Denmark, 2022). She debuted her New York career in 2020-2021 respectively at the Jason Jacques Gallery and at the Hostler Burrows Gallery, and participated around the same time in the **Biennale for Crafts & Design 2021** (Denmark). The dialogue exhibition **Regarder les nuages (Looking at the clouds) Georges Maroniez/Bente Skjøttgaard** took place at the **Musée des beaux-arts de Cambrai** in 2019-2020, and during the summer 2019, **Madoura**, Vallauris, hosted her exhibition **Look at me!** Additionally, the artist's work was presented in 2021-2022 at **Les Flammes (The Flames)** at the **MAM, Paris**, and at **Par le feu, la couleur (Through fire, colour)** at the **MBA, Lyon**.

From the kilns of Denmark was a panorama of the Danish ceramics' scene shown at The Museum of Art and Design, New York, in Fitchburg, in San Diego, in Sacramento, in Racine, as well as at La Maison du Danemark, Paris, and the Nordic Embassies, Berlin (2002-2005). In South Korea, Bente Skjøttgaard participated in the *Gyeonggi International Ceramics Biennale*, 2009 and 2011 (Adventures of the Fire – World Contemporary Ceramics). Besides, her sculptures have been exhibited at the *Biennale de Châteauroux* (2009 and 2011), at the *Biennale de Vallauris* (2010), for the *Parcours Carougeois* (2015, exhibition themed *La ligne*), in *Climats artificiels* at the Espace Fondation EDF, Paris, in the exhibition *Nuages* at the **Centre Céramique de Giroussens**, at **WCC-BF, Mons, Belgium** (2016) as well as in the 2016 and 2017 editions of *Une partie de campagne*, Chassagne-Montrachet.

Timberline will be Bente Skjøttgaard's ninth exhibition at the Galerie Maria Lund, marking two decades of collaboration between the artist and the gallery. Preceding it, were presented exhibitions in 2004, 2006, 2008 (*Elements in White*), 2010 (*Dans les nuages [In the Clouds]*), 2013 (*Aire de repos [Rest Area]*), 2016 (*Espèces nouvelles [New Species]*), 2018 (*Look at me!*), and 2021 (*Tableaux*).



studio view | November 2023

Since 1999, the **GALERIE MARIA LUND** (Paris, le Marais) has been supporting forms of contemporary art that combine conceptual depth and visual relevance. This positioning involves the promotion of powerful works that suggest a meaning rather than imposing one, raising existential questions in a contemporary way. The work of the 23 represented artists encompasses a great diversity of media: installations, sculptures, paintings, drawings, photography, performance, videos, textiles and poetry. In addition to organising exhibitions in its gallery space and taking part in various French and international fairs (KIAF Seoul, Drawing Now, Asia Now, Art Paris, Enter Art Fair (Copenhagen), Luxembourg Art Week), the gallery also works to promote its artists' visibility outside its walls, by means of relationships with institutions and private establishments, playing an advisory role for commissioned works, publishing books and hosting events from other artistic fields (theatre, music, literature). The **GALERIE MARIA LUND** is a member of the French galleries' association, CPGA (Comité Professionnel des Galeries d'Art) – and of the pgmap – paris gallery map.