

Twin

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21st Century Ceramics

Four artists make contemporary
work in an ancient medium.



Guðmundur Thoroddsen, *American Pint Trophy*, 2014.
Guðmundur Thoroddsen, *Sandae Trophy*, 2014.
Guðmundur Thoroddsen, *Trophy for Longest Pee*, 2013.
Guðmundur Thoroddsen, *The Sifter Trophy for Best Imperial IPA*, 2013.
All courtesy of the artist and Asya Geisberg Gallery.

Guðmundur Thoroddsen

Icelandic history and legend seep into artist Guðmundur Thoroddsen's ceramics. Although he doesn't study the Icelandic past directly, the folklore and culture of his home country definitely colour his work. Another important influence for him is Icelandic landscapes. "Though I don't work with it as subject matter, it definitely impacts my work. Rock formations, the rugged texture of lava and the muted, earthy colours all find their way into my sculptures."

In his recent series, Thoroddsen satirises manly aspiration, referring to the macho trait of constant and meaningless one-upmanship, in a series of roughly made trophies adorned with grimacing faces. Masculine themes tend to dominate his work and Thoroddsen approaches them with what he considers a male hand. "I can imagine

those pieces being done by a heavy-handed burly man, who somehow snuck into the ceramic workshop when no one was looking," he notes, as though he's trying to accumulate manliness through his sculptural output, while aware of his own shortcomings.

Thoroddsen plays imaginatively with the traditions of ceramics. With deliberately crude handling he only follows the rules as far as necessary to ensure that the work doesn't explode in the kiln. He feels that "contemporary art ceramics might be moving away from the skilful craft into the direction of a more open and experimental medium, where ideas can be represented freely as in any other medium."

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