



Jeffrey Mitchell, *Elefant & Flowers #1*, 2023. Letterpress collage on gampi, 28"x22", Edition of 10. \$1200

Mullowney Printing is pleased to announce the release of a new edition of letterpress collage prints by Portland-based artist, Jeffrey Mitchell.

Print materials and processes: papers, collage, image transfers, reversals and mirror images are essential to the invention of this art work. The artist generates myriad prints from a catalogue of beloved decorative motifs he's been using for decades: flowers, animals and scallops.

In this case, remnant scraps from a previous art work are reused, glued into symmetrical arrangements elaborating the space around a central circle. This circle is the subject of the print. It is a void, an unknowable mystery. The collaged elements radiate from this absence.

A single petal is printed a dozen times, cut out and glued around the hole. Stylized flowers and hands in mudra like poses spring from this "rose window". The whole array floats in an atmospheric field of scallops exquisitely colored by the printer in a blue and red "bokashi". This ground suggests twilight, or dawn, a time that is neither day nor night. While these emblems hold an air of religious iconography they are more playful and decorative than dogmatic.

Jeffrey Mitchell's primary medium is ceramic and he is well versed in its traditions around the globe (references to Early American glazes, Pennsylvania Dutch pickle jars, asymmetrical Japanese aesthetic decisions and Chinese Foo Dogs abound). Mitchell takes a very direct approach to working, often eschewing refinements that commonly accompany many ceramic processes. The resulting pieces radiate an exuberant, unbridled immediacy. He feels that this unfettered approach is essentially relatable to our shared human experience.

To explain this idea Mitchell talks about a fundamental familiarity with clay that we all carry with us from our formative years. Perhaps we came to it through playing as children making mud pies or maybe it was making pinch pots in elementary school, regardless he feels that clay is a material that is universally relatable at a very basic level. The imagery that he uses is also very accessible. Bears, elephants (he prefers 'f' to 'ph'), bunnies and flowers appear over and over in his work and though they can be definitely be related to his own personal story he feels that these too spring from an early and universally familiar place. Throughout the work Mitchell seeks to tap into and broadcast a sense of vitality whether it be joyful or colored with more a complex mix of emotions. This throughline can be seen in the thick, dripping glazes, the unabashed appropriation of decorative motifs and an unmistakable suffusion of playfulness.



(detail) Jeffrey Mitchell, *Elefant & Flowers #1*, 2023. Letterpress collage on gampi, 28"x22", Edition of 10. \$1200