

MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY

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MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY ANNOUNCES *VESSELS*
AN EXHIBITION OF CERAMICS AND DRAWINGS BY FIONA WATERSTREET

Exhibition Dates: 15 FEBRUARY – 30 MARCH 2025

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING – MAYA FRODEMAN GALLERY is pleased to present *Vessels*, a solo exhibition with English ceramicist Fiona Waterstreet, on view at the gallery's downtown location from February 14th through March 30th, 2025. An opening reception will be held Friday, February 14th from 5 to 7pm. All are welcome to attend.

Fiona Waterstreet is a maestro of tactile expression. Having spent her career developing an organic aesthetic, her ceramics convey a distinct humanism in the enduring trace of her hand found in each object. *Vessels*, her second solo exhibition with Maya Frodeman Gallery, presents fifteen recent ceramic works and five drawings that exemplify Waterstreet's winsome coalescence of hand-building and drawing.

When Waterstreet first started working with clay at the Greenwich House Pottery Studio in New York nearly fourteen years ago, she was largely throwing on a wheel. Despite having no previous arts education, and ceramics being a largely ignored branch of the fine arts, she says that she fell in love with the tactility and uncertainty of working with clay. "The art thing started to seep into me," Waterstreet remembers. She began creating more sculptural objects, bringing a form to life within her hands. Waterstreet enjoyed the meditative process that begins in water and minerals and ends in anticipation as it transforms within a fiery kiln as she began making abstracted birds and forms from porcelain. "Ceramics are a nut you have to crack," says Waterstreet. "There's an intrigue to it. Every time you open the kiln, you're surprised." Since then, Waterstreet has also held solo exhibitions with McClain Gallery of Houston, Texas, and the Drawing Room, East Hampton, New York.

Her newest body of work includes pieces that nod to her earlier practice. One such piece is the stoneware bowl, which was the only work in the exhibition created on a potter's wheel. Despite this, the bowl finds affinity in her recent work through the expressive, sweeping brushstrokes that dance across its surface. *Vessels* also includes a set of two small bird forms, bulbous, elegant, and curious. The gentle tilt of the neck, the arch of the back, and the details of the beak: these works, more traditional to Waterstreet's oeuvre, show her propensity for capturing the *je ne sais quoi* of the avian spirit in an organic, abstracted form.

Vessels marks a watershed in Waterstreet's practice in her ability to go bigger through hand-building, as one monumental vessel stands nearly three feet tall. It was also an exercise of taking the universal form of a vessel and pushing it out of simple functionality, and out of tradition. Many of Waterstreet's vessels recall those from antiquity, with a subtle cracking to their glaze, caused by Waterstreet's use of terra sigillata, an ancient Italian method of putting an ultra-refined slip on the clay that tends to crackle in the firing process. Meaning "earth seal," terra sigillata was used by ancient Greeks and Romans to make vessels watertight, but Waterstreet experimented with terra sigillata to create surface texture and add color to her works. Other works are subtly carved with leaf motifs. This "drawing" on the surface of her vessels was a novel way for Waterstreet to imprint her organic aesthetic onto each piece, another way the viewer can see the perennial presence of Waterstreet's hand. The exhibition brings these works together with her realist pencil drawings. Many of these works were done in 2020, when Waterstreet, isolated and

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without her kiln, began drawing portraits of all the people she could not see in person at the time. Her more pastoral location, away from the hustle and bustle of the Soho loft home and studio she shares with her husband, artist John Alexander, inspired her to create studies of bird nests and leaves that later inspired her most recent ceramics.

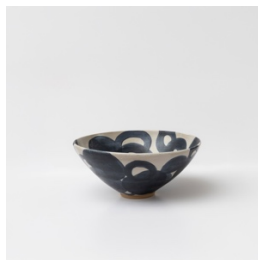
Waterstreet's high relief vessels, whose forms are abstracted and concealed by tangles of leaves, mimic the carvings and motifs of her other works. These works exude a similar air of antiquity as if they were pulled out of a long-forgotten country home enveloped in vines. Working through the abstraction of organic forms, she manages to retain the traditional essence of each object. "It's the crux of what I do. I have a formality to myself, and I have a formality to my work, but it's not interesting to me unless I can take it a bit further, unless I can bring abstraction in." Building each vessel by hand, Waterstreet relishes in the process of distortion that follows. In working with organic forms and a feminine hand, she creates forms that embody elegance as much as they exude whimsy. As she has honed her distinct style over the past fourteen years, Waterstreet's practice is one of experimentation, and by proxy, of transmutation. "I often wonder what my work will be like in five years... Really, I feel like I'm in the early stages of my journey."



Fiona Waterstreet, *Untitled*, 2024, stoneware, 12 x 12 x 19 ½ inches



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Specializing in modern and contemporary art, Maya Frodeman Gallery unites artists from all over the world in a tightly curated vision. Maya Frodeman Gallery began in 2024, continuing the 23-year legacy of Tayloe Piggott's eponymous gallery, the first of its kind in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In an expansive exhibition space in downtown Jackson Hole, the gallery pursues a rigorous schedule of exhibitions representing both emerging and established artists, encompassing unique practices of painting, sculpture, paper, photography, and printmaking.

Exhibiting contemporary giants such as Caio Fonseca, Jane Rosen, Richard Fleischner, Rakuko Naito, Nicola Hicks, and Stephen Talasnik alongside emerging stars like Jane Yang D'Haene and Kathryn Lynch, Maya Frodeman Gallery supports its extensive contemporary roster with close relationships with the estates of Wolf Kahn, Emily Mason, Hans Hofmann, and Esteban Vicente.

From first-time buyers to seasoned collectors, the woman-owned and women-led gallery assists a wide range of clients with the intricacies of collecting contemporary art. Our staff has the knowledge and expertise to facilitate art acquisitions, advise collection management, and curate the interiors of private spaces.

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