

Robin Cameron

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"*Une Seconde Vie*" (A Second Life), Robin Cameron's debut European solo exhibition, is an irreverent romp in a ceramics-focused Parisian gallery founded in 1880. Nineteen sculptures have been made with discarded pottery that Cameron had refired. Held together with porcelain, these works form anatomical suggestions of hands, feet, limbs, jawbones, craniums, and a ribcage. Supported by steel rods on pine bases, they are shape-shifters of interiorities, and their structural balance buoys their precariousness. As in *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with lacquer and gold, failure serves as a generator of these rough-hewn marvels. Displayed on glass-topped tables, as well as inside a ceramic-tiled cabinet, the shards of motley glazes are punctuated with occasional flashes of gold. Plastic lemons and oranges are arrayed around the sculptures to diffuse the preciousness of handiwork.

On one wall, a large chine-collé abstraction (*Movement I*, 2012) pays deft homage to the *gouaches découpés* of Henri Matisse, whose second burst of creativity after his diagnosis of cancer inspired the exhibition title. Completing the *mise-en-scène* is a towering floral arrangement (*Vayse*, 2013), perhaps evoking the Baudelairean elegy in *Les Fleurs du mal* in which "the flowers evaporate like an incense urn." Modernism is further reassessed in the form of a buttoned-down shirt printed with an oil-stick drawing, as part of Cameron's capsule collection for French men's clothing line-book publisher Études. Insouciantly hung on a bathroom door, it attests to the suppleness of Cameron's practice.

In the dim cellar, one encounters a lone ceramic sculpture (*The Gold Debacle*, 2013). It is frontally gilded, and Cameron has likened it to the golden idol in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, even as it conjures up the spirits of James Lee Byars. Nearby, *Still Life I*, 2011, made with William Santen, is one of three 16-mm films on view; in one sequence it shows the artist's hands arranging mundane objects on a metal stool: envelope, semicircular piece of wood, pineapple top, dollar bill, plastic comb, deck of cards, key, lightbulb, and chess piece. Stuart Sherman-esque but with the body out of sight, the films are void of any spectacular denouement. The matter-of-factness is evidence that Cameron is interested not in magic but—as in her sculptures—in the trust of objects, and in physicalizing the seductive power of material fact.