

Adam Fuss

“Untitled” from the series entitled My Ghost, 2001

Iris print, 4'10" X 6'

On loan from the Cindy Daniel and Doug Lipton Collection, Healdsburg

Adam Fuss is best known for his contemporary photograms of moving light, live creatures, and organic things. He took his first photo at age four of a young woman feeding ducks and a small bird, angel-like, flying toward her hand at the exact moment of the “click”. The image seems prescient. But what really marks Fuss’ images? There’s no camera. This modern day artist uses an antiquarian, 19th century technique, carefully thought out photograms. Fuss says he is “always going after something that is perfect and compellingly beautiful.”

British born (1961) and based in New York, Fuss’s work is usually compared to early 19th century “sun print” photograms rather than cameraless darkroom techniques that evolved under the influence of Bauhaus innovators in the early 20th century. It’s easy to see how his affinity for the natural world puts him close in spirit to 19th century practitioners who exposed sensitized paper holding plants and laces to the sun. He has held solo exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the FotoMuseum in Switzerland. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Los Angeles County Museum.



Uniform of Frederick Humphreys

First military Aviator, circa 1909

On loan from the Jack Blades Collection, Santa Rosa

First military aviator, Frederick Erastus Humphreys (1883-1941) graduated 8th in his class at West Point in 1906. The US Army Signal Corps created an Aeronautical Division in August 1907 to “take charge” of all things that took to the air. Orville and Wilbur Wright with their historic flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 1903, were at the forefront of aviation and indeed were the only bidders to produce an airplane for the Army Signal Corps in 1908, the “Aeroplane No. 1, Heavier-than-Air Division, US Aerial Fleet”. Their contract included training and certifying two military officers as pilots. Humphreys was the first military pilot trained by the Wright brothers, flying solo for the first time on October 26, 1909 over College Park, Maryland. Flight was a major advancement for military engagements and presented distinct advantages for use during wartime as a spy vehicle and for covering great distances at a fraction of the time it takes by ship or automobile.



Taxidermy pet store birds

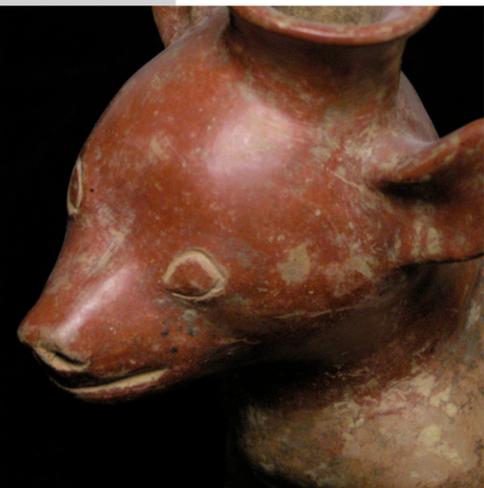
Mid 1900s

Purchased from Deyrolle, Paris

On loan from the Cindy Daniel and Doug Lipton Collection, Healdsburg

Paris has many unusual shops, but one of the most unusual is Deyrolle a 170-year old establishment on rue du Bac, not far from the Musée d’Orsay on the Left Bank. These taxidermy pet store birds were purchased at Deyrolle, which was founded in 1831 by Jean Baptiste Deyrolle, a passionate insect lover and taxidermist. Over the decades, Jean Baptiste, with his son Achille, and grandson Emile, turned Societe Deyrolle into a sort of educational resource for the schools of France. They assembled vast collections of perfectly preserved and mounted insects, butterflies, sea shells, minerals and animals as teaching aids for natural history classes. Butterfly hunters and botanists came here for the gear they needed, while game hunters brought their trophies, big and small, to be stuffed.

NOTE: These birds are all pet store birds, which died of natural causes.



Pre Columbian animals

Terra cotta effigy jar in the form of a dog, his body decorated with red and flesh colored slip glaze.

Pre-conquest Mexican (Colima) terra cotta

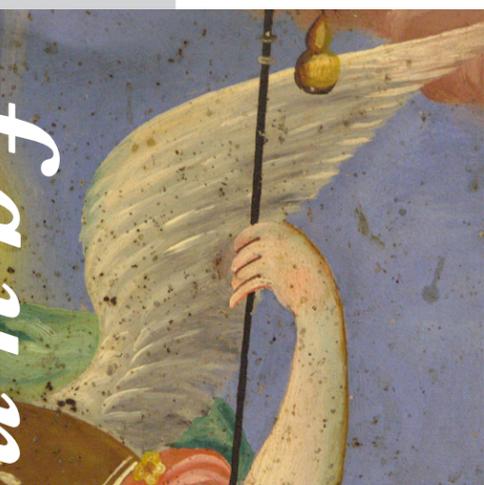
Terra cotta effigy jar in the form of a seated dog with a mottled black slip glaze.

Protoclassic period circa 100 B.C. – 250 A.D.

On loan from the Jim Kidder Collection

Possibly first developed in Colombia or Ecuador, pottery succeeded baskets and gourds as containers. Throughout the entire pre-Columbian world, pottery became the most common surviving artifact. Both hand-modeled and molded pots and clay objects were made. Decoration involved incising designs, carving or molding relief and employing various techniques of painting and polishing. Although polychromed ceramics were produced, most pottery was painted with one or two colors or left unpainted.

These seated animal figures come from the Mexican state of Colima. They are made of highly burnished, red-orange terra-cotta and are notable for simple, rounded forms. The blending of animal and human forms with functional pottery was characteristic of pre-Columbian art. Terra Cotta is a hard semifired ceramic clay used in pottery and building construction.



Mexican Tin Retablos

San Rafael, Arc Angel (dated April 22, 1900) oil on tin

On loan from the Jim Kidder Collection

Retablos, better known as “laminas” in Mexico, are small oil paintings on tin, zinc, wood or copper which were used in home altars to venerate the almost infinite number of Catholic saints. The literal translation for “retablo” is “behind the altar.” This genre of folk art, deeply rooted in Spanish history, represents the heart and soul of traditional religious beliefs in 17th, 18th, and 19th century Mexican culture. Colorful, spiritual, symbolic, allegorical, historical, folkloric and charming are just a few of the words that best describe this unique art form.

A process which was originally introduced to converted Indians by the Spanish, the retablo was an art form that flourished in post conquest Mexico and then ultimately, with the introduction of inexpensive mediums such as tin, reached its pinnacle of popularity in the last quarter of the 19th century. These oil paintings were sold to devout believers who displayed them in home altars to honor their patron Saints. The Mexican retablo is a hybrid of indigenous artistry, centuries old catholic iconography and Spanish culture.

This unique combination of subject and style reflects the historical, cultural and religious links between “old” and “new” worlds.

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