

Skarstedt Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition Memory Ware Flats by Mike Kelley. The exhibition is comprised of eight works from the series begun in 2000. The title “Memory ware” is a reference to the Canadian folk art practice in which common household objects such as bottles, picture frames, ashtrays and any variety of recycled trinkets are combined with sentimental keepsakes--buttons, beads, charms and pendants. Kelley refers to the artworks in this exhibition as “paintings,” frames filled with shimmering trinkets floating in a sea of grey tile grout. While the works were not pre-meditated, there are recognizable systems in place. There are works made entirely of similar sized buttons; others of garish gumball machine toys dispersed in the so-called “wild style,” and others of colorfully flowing beads.

Kelley’s Memory Ware Flats grew from other projects such as Educational Complex (1995), Frame and Frame (1999), and most specifically Categorical Imperative (1999), in which a large installation was created from twenty years worth of unused art material. In the Memory Ware series he was particularly interested in the re-examination and re-use of materials. Here, art practice trumps the sentimentality of the actual tchotchkes employed to make the work. Kelley once stated, “I playfully give new ‘life’ to unused studio material and discarded formal and thematic considerations in a manner similar to memory ware’s revitalization of cast-off objects.”

Mike Kelley was born in 1954 in Detroit. He attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1976, B.F.A.; California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, 1978, M.F.A. He has received numerous art awards and grants, most notably: Wolfgang Hahn Prize, 2006; The California Institute of the Arts Distinguished Alumnus Award, 2000; National Endowment for the Arts Museum Program Exhibition Grant, 1990. He was also honored with a traveling retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (1994); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (1995); and more recent exhibitions at the Louvre, Paris, France (2006); Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, England (2004); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2000). A major retrospective exhibition will open in 2012 at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and will travel to MOCA, Los Angeles in 2014. Mike Kelley died in Los Angeles in 2012.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*