

The Mitchell Albus Gallery presents *Steve Keister: Post-Columbian*, an exhibition of new ceramic reliefs and fiberglass sculpture from the 1980s.

Steve Keister first gained attention in the late-1970s and early 1980s for suspended planar sculptures with glowing florescent interiors that incorporated a wide array found materials to “esthetic and expressive ends.” In the mid-1980s Keister began using fiberglass reinforced stretched Spandex to produce complex topological volumes. Bringing these forms down to earth, the artist began to utilize the steel structures found in chairs designed by Bertoia, Eames and BKF (Bonet-Kurchan-Ferrari). Three of these fiberglass sculptures – one suspended, one wall-mounted and one free standing – are in the current show.

In the mid-1990s Keister’s art underwent a seemingly radical transformation. Forms recalling Pre-Columbian art began to appear. Yet these appeared subliminally, not from direct appropriation, but rather from the realization that “the ubiquitous Styrofoam carton inserts which littered the sidewalks of Tribeca contained a kind of relief that echoed the forms which distinguish Pre-Colombian art.” To utilize these forms, the artist learned “casting & mold-making techniques, with ceramic slip as the preferred casting material, “to build a vocabulary of readily available forms “filtered for their correspondence to pre-Columbian art.” This interest in Mesoamerican art has preoccupied the artist for two decades. Lest this seem an abrupt break from earlier work, Keister points out the significant influence of pre-Columbian art as a common modernist source, and the earlier, if unwitting, appearance of Mesoamerican references – such as Chac-mool (1987) – that tacitly recognized the correspondence between his sculpture and pre-Columbian art.

Steve Keister was born in 1949 in Lancaster, PA and attended the Tyler School of Art. After moving to New York in 1973, Keister had shows at the New Museum, Nancy Lurie Gallery in Chicago, Pam Adler and BlumHelman Galleries in New York, as well as the Texas Gallery in Houston, Larry Gagosian in Los Angeles and Rudolph Zwirner in Cologne, among others. Keister later showed at Bill Maynes and Feature galleries. Since 1993 Steve Keister’s work has been included in six shows at this gallery. The current show is his second solo exhibition.

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