

BLOUIN modern painters

ART / ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN / PERFORMANCE / FILM

FEBRUARY 2016

**PIER PAOLO
CALZOLARI'S
MATERIAL
WORLD**

KAWS
toys around

INSIDE THE
**MU XIN
MUSEUM**

+

**JOHN MILLER
KRISTEN MORGIN
SARA CWYNAR
THEODORE BOYER**

**LAURA
POITRAS**
**THE SECRETS
BEHIND HER WORK**

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STUDIO CHECK



Kristen Morgin

TEXT BY JULIET HELMKE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF McLANE

AN UNUSUAL LINE of questioning inspires the sculptures and assemblages of the Los Angeles-based Morgin. “What happens when Joey Tribbiani and Chandler Bing [from the TV show *Friends*] switch places with the Hardy boys; what would Eliza Doolittle do if she found herself in a galaxy far, far away; and what new context happens when SpongeBob SquarePants boards the *Titanic*?” asks the artist. A bowl featuring that porous animated TV-show character is at the center of one of Morgin’s sculptural amalgams she calls still lifes in her upcoming show at Anthony Meier Fine Arts in San Francisco—on view February 19 through March 25—encircled by objects including a Mickey Mouse Pez dispenser, a baby Jesus from a nativity set, a flattened Carl’s Jr. paper cup, Hedy Lamarr’s biography, *Ecstasy and Me*, and a cutout picture of Buster Keaton taped to a piece of cardboard. Or, rather, the objects appear to be these things—all are, in fact, trompe l’oeil re-creations made out of unfired clay that is expertly painted. Not

strengthened by firing, the resulting works are extremely delicate.

Morgin’s studio abounds with the results of many visits to estate sales, Goodwill stores, and flea markets, and the objects (as well as their clay counterparts) bear the physical markings of their past. Garage-sale stickers, scribbles typical of a toddler let loose with a permanent pen, and names or initials of former owners grace the many assorted items. Morgin is investigating systems of value: How does worth change over time and with wear? Is something fragile made more valuable by its meticulous crafting, or less by its breakability? What is the relationship between the handmade and the mass-produced? It’s this thread that runs throughout Morgin’s myriad, disparate cultural references. The pieces in the show, she says, “are tied together more by randomness than by commonality. It’s more a mismatched cacophony of pieces that are layered with ideas, making a kind of recontextualized collaged soup.” MP

▶ **PERFECTING ARRANGEMENTS**

"I make configurations of objects that I move around until I am happy with one. Then, not unlike with a still-life painting, I slowly create a ceramic version of every object in the configuration."



▶ **ON THE WALLS**

"In addition to older works such as the mixed-media collaged cups, I keep a lot of random junk around, like the Santa, the sunglasses, and Silly Putty, as well as some sentimental objects. My father made the wooden Kristen sign."

▶ **NEW WORK**

"Most of these pieces will be in the upcoming show, though objects like the Charlie Chaplin and the Goodyear tire may eventually become parts of other works."



▶ **HOLY DUET**

"The first part of the title of my large still-life piece *Heart & Soul* or *The Garden of Delights*, comes from these Mary and Joseph figurines seated shoulder to shoulder at a toy piano looking as though they are playing the popular piano duet 'Heart and Soul.'"



▶ **STILL LIFE**

"This piece, *Heart & Soul* or *The Garden of Delights*, is made up of about 200 objects. With the exception of the chair and some pieces of wood, everything is unfired clay and paint. The piece takes the second part of its title from the well-known Hieronymus Bosch painting. Like that work, the devil is in its details."

