

TOM JOYCE: AFTERSHOCK

JAMES KELLY CONTEMPORARY
1611 PASEO DE PERALTA, SANTA FE

GEOMETRY GONE RIGHT. TOM JOYCE'S CIRCLES, CYLINDERS, TUBES,

and cubes invite viewers to contemplate interiors, surface textures, process, and force. And then there are the marshmallows, Swiss cheese, and ice cream cones. The thirty-one works in *Aftershock* range from cast iron wall art to forged stainless steel sculpture to designs charred into wood fiber. Also included are works of photography and videography. Joyce blends his training as a blacksmith with his powerful creativity and his artistic imagination.

Four sculptures—including the marshmallows—are displayed outside the gallery. *Bifid I* is a nearly four-foot-tall object forged from high-carbon steel that evokes the slightly open shell of an upended razor clam. The ruddy exterior is hammered into scale-like depressions; the paler, curved interior has the texture of a waterfall. Its companion, *Berg XVII*, is made from the same material but in this case Joyce used a solid ingot cut with an oxyacetylene torch and squashed between hydraulic rams. It is oddly mind-bending to think about the extremes of heat and force that are required to shape such a graceful mass. The marshmallows are called *Two to One III* and *Two to One V*. Literally. For each sculpture, Joyce forged two iron blocks into one droopy, gooey structure. He blind-riveted each duo with a stainless steel pin and heated them until the top block began to slide, ooze, and drip along the bottom block, with only the pins and carefully monitored heating time stopping them short of disaster. Their placement—just outside the gallery's front door on a cozy little plaza—invites passersby to use them as seats.

Inside, we are greeted by *Fissure*, eighteen hundred pounds of forged stainless steel mounted on a concrete base. The work's charcoal-grey sides are smooth and straight but its pale grey upper surface must be lava flowing backwards, draining into the fissure and down into the earth, as though returning to where it came from.

The ice cream cone clusters are

from the *Reservoir* series. All three project from the wall and are bolted to it, even the one that weighs one hundred and forty-two pounds. They are made of cast iron and Joyce has covered a few selected cones with gold or palladium leaf. *Reservoir I* and *Reservoir II* share a wall and share the gold leaf treatment. Together they weigh nearly two hundred pounds. The well-licked ice cream surface is black and the textures are spiky and drippy in one case and cratered and dented in the other.

Perhaps the most breathtaking works in the show are *Aureole I* and *Aureole II*. They are displayed indoors and it's hard to imagine how they got there. Weighing in at around six thousand pounds each, these tire-like stainless steel circles are over six feet tall and six feet wide, and are forged from industrial remnants and heated

to near destruction. The resulting surfaces resemble charred campfire logs; the kind that you know will disintegrate if you pick them up. No danger of that here, but there is an irresistible temptation to count their growth rings.

The ring theme continues in a half-dozen framed pieces from Joyce's *Penumbra* series, where he has charred the wooden fiber surface of particleboard with hot metal rings of various sizes. The overlapping circles, in every possible shade of burnt brown, create an impression of clockworks or industrial gears or perhaps champagne bubbles. The *Pith* series is an adventure in negative space. Joyce packs cube-shaped molds with sand-casting medium, then cuts spaces into them with an angle grinder. After casting and liberation from the molds, the

resulting finished cubes have both an exterior and an interior texture and a compelling interior geometry based on the prior cuts. It would be amazing to climb inside, but all we can really do is peer in and marvel at the complexity.

Equally complex and internal is the *Corona* series. Here Joyce uses CT scan slices of his mold-making process and layers sequential views to create framed wall art—mounted on light boxes—to reveal X-ray-like representations of the inner intricacy of his cast sculptures. Joyce curated the show himself, and his decisions lead us through his use of extreme force to create surprising delicacy.

—SUSAN WIDER

Tom Joyce, *Penumbra XIV*, charred wood fiber, 48 1/2" x 48 1/2" x 3", 2015. *Fissure*, forged stainless steel and concrete, 2015. *Aureole I*, forged stainless steel, 75" x 75" x 8", 6492 lbs., 2015. *Aureole II*, forged stainless steel, 74" x 74" x 7", 5660 lbs., 2015

