

James McKenna
Artist's Bio

As an undergraduate James McKenna studied metalsmithing under Bruce Metcalf. He developed a raw style and made objects reminiscent of artifacts from an earlier age. When later he returned to art, he gravitated toward this unpolished aesthetic. Honing his craft, he turned to aggressive industrial processes to accentuate feelings of strength and endurance. Contrast became important, and he began to polish and gild elements of his work to evoke the sacred shining out from the raggedness of life.

Entering the MFA program at University of Cincinnati's School of Design, Art, Architecture & Planning, he was challenged look deeper into values and purposes. There he discovered that his castoffs and crude drawing processes represented not endurance but the opposite: inevitable decay, impermanence, and mortality.

Sensuousness and, to some extent, sensuality also inform his practice. The naked body invites awareness in the viewer of the presence and actions of one's own body; the body in its entirety cannot but express its sex, of which viewers make what they will. This immediacy of his practices give his work an intense, intimate presence.

James continues to experiment, searching for new materials and techniques to accentuate these feelings of presence, ineffability, mortality.

His work is in private collections in New York, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Cincinnati.

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