

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Artforum
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ARTFORUM

William J. O'Brien

By Sabine B. Vogel

05.15.11-06.26.11 The Renaissance Society, Chicago

Curated by Hamza Walker

Chicago-based artist William J. O'Brien's sculptures, drawings, and paintings are shrewdly insouciant. Whether rendering enchantingly naive patterns in colored pencil or sculpting ceramic heads that combine the tacky craftsmanship of a '70s vase with the exaggerated features of a mask, O'Brien often flirts with kitsch. But the artist's engagement with the ornamental, and his intuitive combination of found and handmade forms, are in fact fascinating reflections on the contemporary art object's complex identity. This exhibition will focus on O'Brien's ceramic sculptures, gathering almost one hundred pieces made in the past five years. Ranging from abstract geometric compositions to brightly dyed faces with gigantic grins, these works will offer a picture of a practice defined less by its consistency than by its eccentric variation.

Translated from German by Elizabeth Tucker.

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