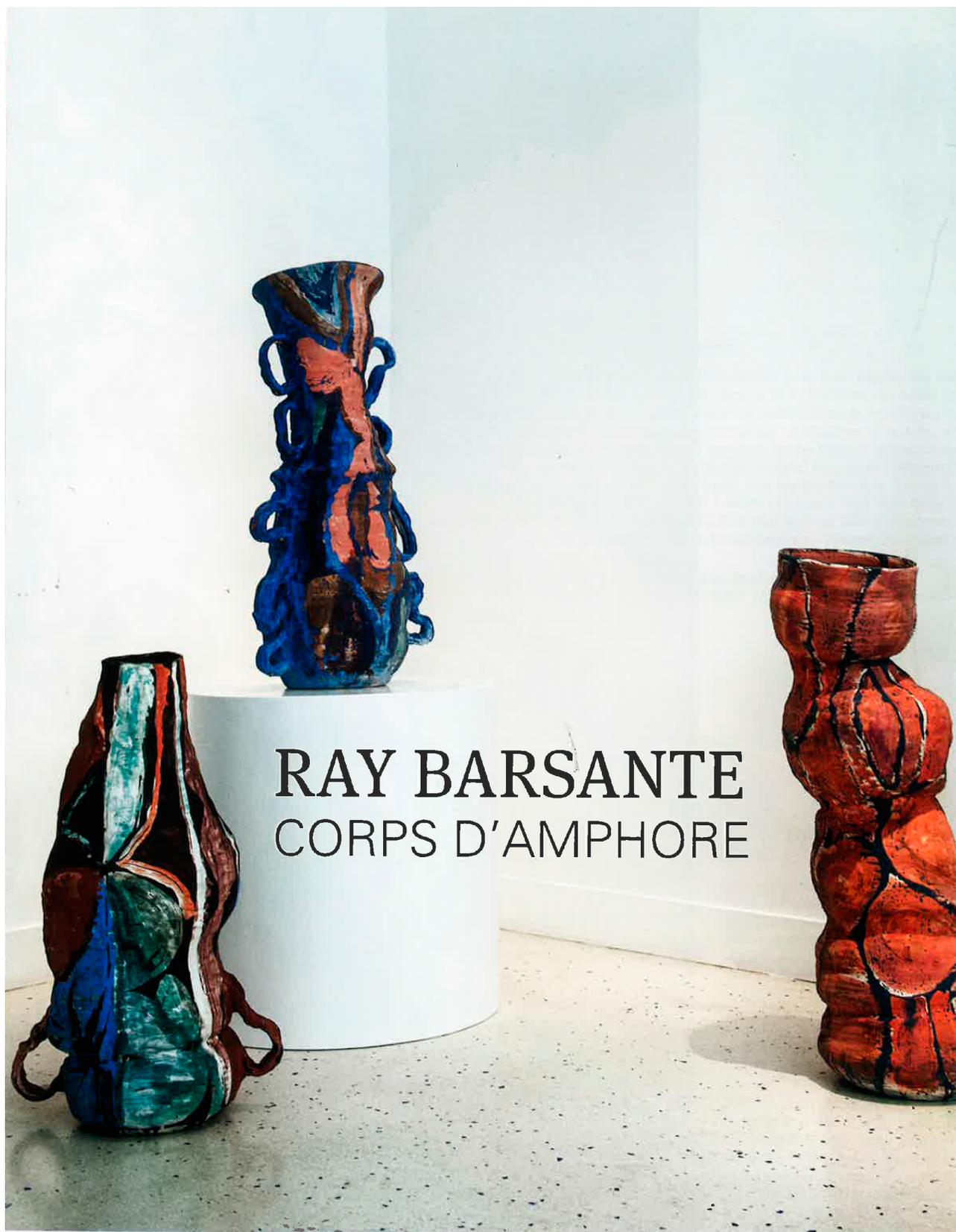


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RAY BARSANTE CORPS D'AMPHORE

De gauche à droite *Untitled, French Vessel #16*, grès émaillé, 2017, 69 x 38 cm, *Untitled, French Vessel #07*, grès émaillé, 2017, 88 x 39 cm, *Untitled, French Vessel #13*, grès émaillé, 2017, 82 x 35 cm



Weaving threads between painting, sculpture and ceramics. Ray Barsante's artistic point of departure, is loosely derived from an ancestral structure taken from the Greco-Roman era that he re-interprets and rediscovers. For the very first time, Ray Barsante presents in Paris his series of ceramics with the title "Second Voyage".

For his second visit to France, Ray Barsante stayed from June to September 2017 in the former music pavilion of Madame Elisabeth at Versailles. There, in a part of the pavilion of the young sister of Louis XVI transformed by the gallerist Louis Lefebvre into a residency program, is where the young Californian (born in Ventura in 1990) played with fire, water and Earth.

The amphora for conducting wire

Why did this graduate of Santa Barbara College and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in History of Art and Applied Arts decide to use ceramics as a medium? "When I was little, I loved modelling clay, I loved working with my hands," he says. With his hands, he first studied drawing, then painting, engraving and finally sculpture. But not the earth. Only after obtaining his BFA (bachelor of fine arts) in 2015 and on the advice of his teachers,

Roger Herman and Julia Haft-Candell, did clay come to him as a source of inspiration. From then on, applying his painting onto his sculptures, in order to appreciate his work in 3D, were other horizons opened. "You can have an awful result or, on the contrary, get better than you hoped for", that's what he likes about ceramics. He is a good technician and, as of 2015, earns his living as assistant to UCLA's ceramics department. Today, he works only for two Californian ceramists. The rest of the time, he paints and draws in his studio in Santa Barbara or realizes his many projects in the studio of the University of Los Angeles — he is allowed use the kilns, as a former student.

antiques that were used, to transport and preserve the basic products, especially olive oil. and the wine.



"I do not think much, it's my hands that speak, not my brain, it's like Jazz, an improvisation with the guiding thread, the vessel,"

↑ *Untitled, French Vessel #02*, grès émaillé, 2017, 74 x 35 cm
→ *Untitled, French Vessel #01*, grès émaillé, 2017, 67 x 37 cm

He always considers his work as a whole, a series. "I do not think much, it's my hands that speak, not my brain, it's like Jazz, an improvisation with the guiding thread, the vessel," he says. The terracotta jar with two handles reminds him of Italy, where his father (a chef) comes from, but also antiques that were used, to transport and preserve the basic products, especially olive oil, and the wine.

An inner journey

Using this ancient form, Ray Barsante marries abstract expressionism, an artistic movement born in the 1940s in New York, led by Jackson Pollock or Cy Twombly, both have been influential to the artist. In Twombly, he borrows the name of one of the series, «Second Voyage in Italy», naming his exhibition «Second Voyage», a title that he also qualifies as a play on words, since indeed Ray Barsante comes to France for the second time. It is in the inner journey that he also finds his inspiration. «When I work in ceramics, I work with my emotions, it's an inner journey that I pass into my sculptures, I freeze them in the earth,» he says. In the United States, he uses the wheel, pinch and the slab. Each time, in several of his works, he deforms, twists and reconnects the forms before painting in watercolor directly, he then patterns fauve-style imagery, both inside and outside the vessel. His colors are also inspired by the palette of Vincent Van Gogh, his first artistic inspiration.

The young Californian also plays with the symmetry and the irregularity of his sculptural forms; in his series and unique works, becoming totemic. If the shapes and lines tend towards Antiquity, the tones, as diaphanous as they are deep, reveal different motifs. In Versailles, jostled by his gallerist, Ray Barsante, is forced to put away his watercolors. In exchange, Louis Lefebvre offers him glaze. "The result is superb and unexpected," admits the American. Half-abstract, half-figurative, his sculptures have something tangible; and their feminine or masculine side makes one want to embrace them. As to whether one day he will change his process, Ray Barsante responds: "Every day, I evolve. I test, I transform my way of creating. I have only one goal, keep my freedom of expression. "

RAY BARSANTE

