



Paul Metivier, "The Procession" (Courtesy of Gallery I|M|A)

Paul Metivier and Kathleen Skeels

These two Seattle ceramic sculptors tackle dark, gnarly territory while doing extraordinary things with clay. Paul Metivier's wall-mounted pieces recall battered archaeological finds and sculpted medieval joints found in cathedral archways. Using terracotta paper clay, stain and gold leaf, he produces carved-wood effects with remarkably persuasive wood-grain illusions. In his *Processionist* series, lone male heads seem to be in varying states of erosion and decay. In his large piece, "The Procession," twenty clustered heads at an inconsistent scale seem to converge their stares on a point somewhere near the viewer's solar plexus. In his artist's statement, he says he's exploring "the visceral realities that families experience of growth and demise with each generation." The work of Kathleen Skeels includes two extraordinarily complex freestanding porcelain sculptures, "Queen Bee" and "Portrait of the Artist (Angry Old Man)." The longer you look at them, the more you see in them, starting with the little nest of dormant figures crowning the head of "Portrait" and the bees-within-bees of "Queen Bee." Skeels' show also includes dozens of "porcelain drawings" and a variety of vessels, all with busy surfaces packed with ghostly or grotesque figures, some bifurcated, some intersecting. In her artist's statement, she says her aim is to "make intangible worlds tangible." Both artists take figurative ceramics in unlikely directions. — M.U.

If you go: Gallery I|M|A (<http://www.galleryima.com/>) through October 27.