

'Echo Chamber' opens Oct. 20 at museum

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Anders Ruhwald Lamp 1
Glazed earthenware and lamp
components 2010

"Echo Chamber," an exhibition of work by Anders Ruhwald and Marie Torbensdatter Hermann, opens Thursday, Oct. 20, at the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University. The opening reception is 4:30-6:30 p.m. Oct. 20 at the museum, located on the second floor of Binns-Merrill Hall on the AU campus. "Echo Chamber" will remain up until Dec. 2. "Echo Chamber is a tandem solo exhibition by two young Danish-born ceramic artists of note," explains Ezra Shales, associate professor of art history in the School of Art & Design and author of the catalog that will document the exhibition. "A commonality of their work is that both artists allude to the broad expanse of everyday furnishings and yet are committed to ceramics as a medium in which to explore the interval between refinement and anti-form. We half-recognize the bowl that Marie Torbensdatter Hermann throws on the wheel and the hand-modeled pylon Anders Ruhwald builds, but these objects disrupt the traditional categories of ceramic 'vessels' and 'sculpture.' The artists craft specific objects that allude to a functional form or social habit but one deformed or gone astray." Shales notes the exhibition title "can be read a few ways." One is in the commonality of their backgrounds; both have MFA degrees from London's Royal College of Art. Ruhwald earned his in 2005 and Hermann in 2009. Ruhwald, however, is a hand-builder who rarely uses the wheel, and Hermann primarily creates by throwing porcelain. They currently live and work in the Detroit area. Ruhwald is an artist-in-residence and head of the ceramics department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. "For Ruhwald, this exhibition is a reverberation of sorts," Shales says. Ruhwald was an artist-in-residence during the summer session at Alfred University in 2009, and made the work that will be exhibited in "Echo Chamber" during that time. Another way in which "Echo Chamber" is an appropriate title prompts Shales to reflect on the way in which "hard material deflects sound, and so ceramic is acutely relevant to the simile of acoustic amplification and distortion." Hermann and Ruhwald "work in terms of variation and reiteration, call and response," says Shales. "Their work can be considered both avant-garde and also historically inclined." For more about the Schein-Joseph Museum of Ceramic Art: <http://ceramicmuseum.alfred.edu>, more about the School of Art & Design at Alfred University: <http://art.alfred.edu> For more about Ezra Shales: <http://art.alfred.edu/faculty>