

Thomas Frontini



Thomas Frontini

Sculptural Work, 2014

Essay by Peter Frank

For more information about Thomas Frontini, updated work, events and commissions, visit: ThomasFrontini.com or ThomasFrontiniSculpture.com
e-mail: Thomas@ThomasFrontini.com



Kiwi of the Oasis, 2014, Oil on Panel, 16" x 20"

Front Cover: Offering #3, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 7"x 11"x 11", Detail
Back Cover: Primordial Factory, 2014, Limestone & Lead, 14.5"x 11"x 10"

SMALL RITUALS

By Peter Frank

Best known as a painter, Thomas Frontini has produced sculptures at various times in his career. Only once before, however, has he produced a corpus of three-dimensional work distinct from his painting. The small, somewhat votive-like figural stone pieces carved in 2007-2008 extended his exploration of figural narrative into extra-pictorial space; while not repeating specific motifs in concurrent paintings, these figurines did reflect Frontini's interest in childhood memory and loss of innocence. (Their evocation of Gauguin's sculptures, conjuring the "primitive" innocence of Micronesian culture, was not accidental.) The charm, the mystery, and even something of the ominousness of these objects recur in Frontini's latest body of sculpture; only now, the forms the stone takes are not figural. They clearly reference already extant things, but utilitarian things such as dinnerware, furniture, (seemingly) religious altars, even buildings – things that exist in the world but have been put there by us rather than by nature.

The new objects Frontini has fashioned have arrogated for themselves an identity separate from his paintings – but not entirely. The blocky, hieratic, yet oddly graceful arrangements of geometric solids that comprise these sculptures find echo in imagery found in the artist's current paintings. In these Frontini has increasingly concentrated on a visual formula that posits a single, totemic image (often festooned with secondary, if usually organic, things like birds or fruit) before or within a nominally recessive space, usually a



Forgotten Idol, 2007, Coral Limestone, 22"x 6"x 4"



Monster and Child, 2007, Sandstone, 8" x 6" x 18", 2007



Gatekeeper, 2008, Cottonwood Limestone



Brothers, 2007, Red Sandstone, 14"x 8"x 24"

simply described seascape. Whether vegetation, architecture, or even topographical anomaly, these presences infer, insistently, on the presence of life of some kind. In the sculptures these presences – or segments of them – gain a physical heft. And the anthropological trace they suggest is conspicuous by its physical absence but its cultural presence.

Frontini's older work, in two dimensions and three, provoked personalized, perhaps poignant recall. Even the most peculiar sculptural groupings seemed familiar. His whole enterprise back then had the uncomplicated appeal of a children's book – although such appeal was a mask that hid darker, psychologically fraught resonance. This new sculpture, even more than its contemporaneous painting, relies instead on acculturated association, outside narrative or personal memory. It is not about story, but about artifact. As such, it seems at first glance relatively aloof and obscure. But under further examination these new objects, with their eccentric formal arrangements and their sensuous, lovingly worked surfaces, so evince human artfulness that they almost beg you to discover what function they play, or once played, what civilization devised them, what human endeavor necessitated their being brought into existence. They bespeak a system of ritual, or at least monumentation, that has been lost to modern knowledge even as they seem "modern" themselves.

Perhaps it is their small scale that throws us off track. (They are still large enough to perform some sort of home-altar duty.) Perhaps it is their mix of modern and ancient structure – Graeco-Roman vessels resting atop Bauhaus cabinets – that upsets our epistemological equilibrium. Perhaps it is their poised, self-contained dignity that gives us pause. Whatever it is in these intimately scaled blocks and containers, planes and columns, that troubles us, they trouble us intriguingly, magnetically, even warmly. They pose a challenge to what we know. Thomas Frontini's work always thrums with a quiet mystery, and his latest foray into material and volume gently hits a nerve.

Los Angeles, September 2014



Painter's Sacrifice, 2014, Limestone & Oil Paint, 16"x 8"x 6"



Painter's Sacrifice, 2014, Limestone & Oil Paint, 16"x 8"x 6", Detail



Dwelling #2, 2014, Limestone, 21" x 8" x 8", Alternate Views & Detail



Dwelling #2, 2014, Limestone, 21"x 8"x 8"



Dwelling #5, 2014, Limestone, 29"x 8"x 10"



Dwelling #4, 2014, Limestone, 15.5"x 6"x 11"



Subterranean City, 2014, Limestone, 10"x 10"x 7", Alternate View & Details



Subterranean City, 2014, Limestone, 10"x 10"x 7"



Primordial Factory, 2014, Limestone & Lead, 14.5"x 11"x 10", Alternate View & Details



Primordial Factory, 2014, Limestone & Lead, 14.5"x 11"x 10"



Alter to the Painter, 2014, Limestone & Oil Paint, 16"x 8"x 6"



Alter to the Painter, 2014, Limestone & Oil Paint, 16"x 8"x 6", Detail



Offering #3, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 7"x 11"x 11", Alternate View & Details



Offering #3, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 7"x 11"x 11"



Dwelling #3, 2014, Limestone, 19"x 6"x 11", Alternate View



Dwelling #3, 2014, Limestone, 19"x 6"x 11"



Offering #2, Pomegranate, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 9"x 11"x 11", Detail



Offering #2, Pomegranate, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 9"x 11"x 11"



Storage Tower, 2014, Lime & Lead, 14"x 10"x 9", Alternate View & Details



Storage Tower, 2014, Lime & Lead, 14"x 10"x 9"



Factory #2, 2014, Limestone & Lead, 11"x 7"x 10"



Pink Factory, 2014, Travertine, 26"x 7"x 15"



Offering #4, 2014, Limestone & Fruit, 8"x 12"x 12"



Hill Dwelling, 2014, Limestone, 7"x 11"x 11"



Factory Tower #1, 2014, Limestone, 18"x 7.5"x 7.5"

Thomas Frontini

Thomas@ThomasFrontini.com

ThomasFrontiniSculpture.com

ThomasFrontini.com



Thomas Frontini, Istanbul, 2014



Sculpting "Primordial Factory," Studio Shot

Education:

The Ohio State University- M.F.A. Painting Degree-
Columbus, Ohio 1992

Cleveland Institute of Art- B.F.A. Painting Degree-
Cleveland, Ohio 1990

The Institute for Art and Restoration- Florence, Italy 1989

Current Gallery Representation

Gama Gallery, Istanbul

William and Joseph Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Marji Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Jack Meier Gallery- Houston, Texas

Gibson Contemporary- Artist Representative

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong

Latest Select Solo Exhibitions:

World Wide Art L.A.- Los Angeles, California 2014

Gama Art Gallery- Istanbul, Turkey 2014

The Gallery 4- Pittsburgh, PA 2014

LAUNCH LA Gallery- Los Angeles, CA 2013

William Busta Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio 2013

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China 2007

Lawrence Asher Gallery- Los Angeles, California 2006

Josaphat Arts Hall Convivium33 Gallery- Cle, Ohio 2005

Select Group Exhibitions:

2013

Earthward- Skylight Gallery- New York, NY

Small Works 2- Jeffrey Leder Gallery,- New York, NY

The Quantum Effect- Brooklyn, NY

Los Angeles Artist Association- Los Angeles, CA

Lagrange National- LaGrange, GA

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong

2011

Cat Street Gallery- Hong Kong, China

Cross Gate Gallery- Lexington, Kentucky

2010

Cross Gate Gallery- Lexington, Kentucky

Wall Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio

MOCA- Cleveland, Ohio

2008

The Ohio State University- Ohio

Tatar Gallery- Toronto, Ontario Canada

2007

Spaces Gallery- Cleveland, Ohio

Tatar Gallery- Toronto, Ontario Canada

Ballard and Fetherston Gallery- Seattle, Washington

Lawrence Asher Gallery- Los Angeles, California

