

# JAMES STERLING PITT: *DECODER*

(*Lost Sculpture and a Few Ideas*)

April 13–May 18, 2024

# SEVEN SISTERS

## INDEX OF WORKS

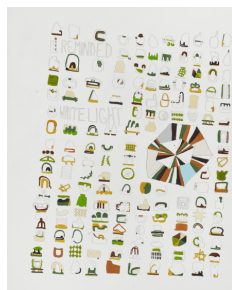
### DRAWINGS



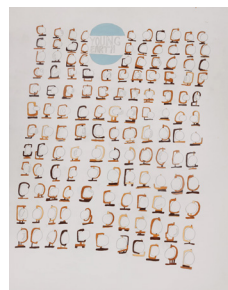
*Chart #3 (Chimayo Wand), 2008\**



*Untitled (Semi-Sun), 2008*



*Untitled (White Light), 2008*



*Chart #7 (Young Earth), 2008*



*Untitled, 2011*

pencil, watercolor, and gouache on paper, measuring 30 x 22 ¼ inches, framed: 32 ¾ x 25 inches

### SCULPTURES 2009–2010



*Untitled (Young Earth), 2009*



*Untitled (Ocean Dial #1), 2009*



*Untitled (Bouquet), 2009*



*Untitled (Sea Arc), 2009*



*Untitled (Half Head/Wave), 2009*



*Untitled (Warrior/Star), 2009*



*Untitled (Dream Dial), 2009*



*Untitled (Union-Earth), 2009*



*Untitled (Young Earth #2), 2010*



*Untitled (Sea/Light), 2010*



*Untitled (Ocean Dial #3), 2010*



*Untitled (Desert Art), 2010*



*Untitled (Time), 2010*

acrylic on wood (several with plaster, shellac, and elastic ties)

### RECENT SCULPTURES



*Untitled, 2018*  
acrylic and Alkyd on wood  
5 ½ x 7 ¼ x 2 in.



*Union #1, 2022*  
acrylic and glaze on ceramic  
7 ¾ x 14 x 4 in.



*Untitled (Orange Energy), 2023*  
acrylic and Flashe on ceramic  
6 ½ x 7 ⅞ x 4 ⅜ in.



*Untitled, 2022*  
acrylic and glaze on ceramic  
7 x 8 x 4 ¼ in.



*Untitled, 2022*  
acrylic and glaze on ceramic  
5 ¾ x 6 ½ x 3 in.



*Untitled, 2022*  
acrylic on wood and ceramic  
3 ¼ x 4 ⅝ x 2 ½ in.

Seven Sisters celebrates the opening of *James Sterling Pitt: Decoder (Lost Sculpture and a Few Ideas)* with a reception on Saturday, April 13, 2024, from 2 to 4 PM and an artist walkthrough at 4 PM.

The title *Decoder* alludes to the works in the exhibition as a form of communication: drawings and sculptures that can transmit meaning. They unscramble signals and words into abstract shapes that cue a specific memory, time, or place and back again. The subtitle *Lost Sculpture...* interjects a sense of humor as these works have been stowed away for 15 years ...and *a Few Ideas*, understating the plenitudes they contained for the maker, then and now.

*Now Is a Re-Opening - Re-Telling  
- Re-Looking - Re-Grouping.*

To calibrate this *Decoder*, we must first go to the beginning. On an early morning commute in 2007, at a hairpin bend, James was hit by a driver who had fallen asleep at the wheel.

*To start over.*

*Time/place - now.*

*The beginning.*

*young Earth and blank globes*

*The globe*

*- as a mirror.*

*- as possibility.*

*- as the place for all things to form after.*

In early 2008, while at the Djerassi Residency, James walked the Santa Cruz Mountains blankly; thinking about a new world without boundaries, while absorbing the history of artists in Northern California. He ruminated on music, especially the concrete and field recordings from Blithe Sons/Jeweled Antler Collective's "We Walk the Young Earth." While still recovering from initial orthopedic surgery, and adapting to neuropsychiatric effects and vision changes, James completed his first two larger-scale drawings with pencil, watercolor, and gouache on paper. These are the first drawings: diaristic, askew grids of symbols and open shapes. The potent atmosphere of waiting, of ambient noise—a reverberating echo held between the plucking sound of two strings.

*"Time Is All Ways."*

*- Larry Eigner*

*"I See Nothing but  
Infinites on All Sides."*

*- Blaise Pascal*

There is a permeable membrane between memory and feelings. These early drawings feature forms that resemble spirals or sundials to trace time. Fractional clocks are color-coded with earth tones. Written-out words appear as reminders and directional cues:

*Reminder.*

*White Light.*

*Electricity.*

*Semi-Sun.*

*Chimayo.*

*Wand.*

*Young Earth.*

As this visual shorthand blurs functional and artistic lines, they will morph into James' spells and recipes for the first sculptures, where temperature, place, landscape memory, and chains of thoughts become material. In these formational constructions, you feel both the rawness of the materials (mostly found wood and objects) and the roughness of the process (dust, upcycling, and relearning). There is a collision of the organic and the transformative, playfully butting up against architecture and formalism.

*Materials - Collected, Residue As Part Of Process Of Making/Loop - Cutting Wood (Dust) Ceramics (Fired Dust/Fragments Of Discarded Works) - Gathered During Walks Streets Of San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Fe Or Shorelines Of Northern California Or Deserts Of New Mexico. Sometimes Objects Collected Become Tools And/Or Materials - Stones, Wood, Discarded Plywood, River Water*

Over the years, as the initial visual language is absorbed, familiar shapes disappear. Other forms take time to reveal themselves and have emerged in recent years with gradual refinement and more saturated color. With personal meaning so deeply embedded— James generously hands us a skeleton key:

*Time/place - now.*

James Sterling Pitt (b. 1977, Warwick, New York) earned his BFA from the University of New Mexico and his MFA from Mills College. Pitt divides his time between Houston, TX, and Santa Fe, NM, where he is the co-director of Best Western. In 2022, he contributed text to *Agnes Martin: Independence of Mind* published by Radius Books. In the past he has held teaching positions at both Berkeley and Stanford.

Pitt's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in San Francisco, Boston, Berlin, and Houston, and group exhibitions throughout the Bay Area and New York. His work is in the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; BioMarin Pharmaceutical, CA; the Blanton Museum of Art, TX; The Cleveland Clinic Collection, OH; the Progressive Collection; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Most recently his work has been included in *100 Hooks*, Blunk Space, Point Reyes Station, CA, 2024; *JSP JBB: James Sterling Pitt & JB Blunk*, Blunk Space, ibid. 2023; *Salutary Sculpture*, Laumeier Sculpture Park, Saint Louis, MO, 2022; and *Sensate Objects*, Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland, OR, and in solo shows at Ratio 3, San Francisco, CA; Eli Ridgeway Gallery, MT and S.F., CA; Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, College of Marin, Fine Arts Gallery, Kentfield, CA and 5., Santa Fe, NM.