

# JAMES KELLY | CONTEMPORARY

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**TOM JOYCE | AFTERSHOCK** - James Kelly Contemporary: August 7 through October 3, 2015

"This body of sculpture, charred drawings, digital video and illuminated photographs was made to expose material characteristics that encourage one to feel surfaces and perceive forces that before the materials were manipulated, were hidden from view beneath their skin and difficult to observe. Forged, cast or constructed from common materials, these substances behave differently than expected under a recipe of controlled conditions - upsetting what one has come to know about their homogeneity and strength - especially those ferrous components now indispensable to modern life, yet largely taken for granted.

*Aftershock* presents an ongoing investigation toward an understanding of the inherent nature of steel - a manmade concoction that upon its birth, as it cools, develops a molecular grain structure as unique as the dendritic pattern found in wood or as individually identifiable as a human's fingerprint. These inherited subtleties are found in iron on both micro and macro scales and are palpably evident to trained eyes and hands and are delivered here through the violent vehicle of heat and hammer. They are sited in stark contrast to the forge and factory settings that brought them to bear and instead are being shared within the clean, quiet and safe haven of white gallery walls.

In essence, the pieces in the show have arrived not only after years of observation and tangible experience, but also through imagining what hurling bodies of meteoritic iron in space, super frozen in extreme celestial environments experience when they impact our atmosphere. In an instant they are super-heated from friction and begin to shed billions of years of skin as they shatter into oblivion or are reformed by the penetrating and irreversible displacement of its once solid mass. Some of the works expose an erosive power that humans have not enough years in a lifetime to watch occur naturally. Other forms interpret the rejected iron "offspring" of manufactured objects forged in industry that exert both positive and negative effects on the planet. A few of the pieces have appeared while trying to predict the trajectory of molten iron moving like water through the concealed corridors of a sand mold made to arrest its form in an improbable configuration.

This exhibition illustrates a studio practice that holds simultaneously, tools in the hand and an interpretation in the mind of iron's dynamic, performative role at the core of Earth and acknowledging at the same time, iron's silent meander through the blood streams of other oxygen-breathing life forms."

Tom Joyce - August, 2015