

## Andrew James Ward

### Between the Forest and the Trees

Opening Thursday 6th November 2014, 6-8 p.m.  
Exhibition 7th November - 20th December 2014

*Between the Forest and the Trees – the title of this solo exhibition at Galerie Andres Thalmann of works by Andrew James Ward is taken from the final line of a poem by the Scottish artist himself (see page 8). The phrase evokes the saying, “He or she can’t see the wood for the trees”. How often do we fail to see the obvious, or get stuck in a thicket of information, or lose the scent of what is essential? In his most recent cycle of works, Ward again returns to and guides our attention to vases. While his 2011 works featured stable, hand-thrown ceramic bowls or pots that were at rest in themselves, his new works pulsate with emotion and energy. Taking his cue from life’s various stages, the artist never stands still, interpreting the much quoted object anew and often providing a landscape-like setting for his vessels. As the artist explains, the vases symbolise life: “These new works are about the everchanging form of life. They are about birth and death and at the same time about that that never changes. The paradox of the infinite.”*

*Ward’s Vase Series continues to be inspired by a poem by Kabir, the great Indian mystic. The leitmotif also provides a link to other recurring motifs – the sea, the mountains and, more recently, woods and forests – landscapes Ward associates with various periods of his life.*

*Inside this clay jug are canyons and pine mountains  
and the maker of canyons and pine mountains!  
All seven oceans are inside and hundreds of millions of stars.  
The acid that tests gold is there,  
and the one who judges jewels.  
And the music from the strings that no one touches,  
and the source of all water.*

*If you want the truth, I will tell you the truth;  
Friend, listen: the God whom I love is inside.*

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*Enormous semi-transparent vases bearing ancient chinese patterns claim centre stage on equally enormous canvases, against mysterious backdrops inspired by the woodlands in the Nature Park near the Scottish artist's present home in Wehrheim, Germany. Having captured his newly commonplace environment in studies and drawings, Ward now alludes to trees and woodlands in some of his oil paintings. The reference is quite specific in Oasis Vase, for example. Here, the white vase hovers like a fragmentary mosaic above a tropical landscape with palm trees and steaming hills; we can almost feel the heat radiating from the translucent rivulets of paint and a sky tinged yellowish-ochre by the desert. A fairly realistic scene is presented in Limas Vase, which extends across over three metres. Here Ward has used colour a great deal more expressively. A gaily painted stone wall runs behind trees whose many limbs and branches throw long, slender shadows across the lower section of the painting. They can be seen through the fragments of a white vase that is as tall as the painting. From its rim bright dots like fireflies swarm away through the twigs and branches.*

*Elsewhere the landscape grows increasingly abstract and – in Methuselah Vase – has been reduced to horizontal lines. The foreground is dominated by the vase itself and by the many writhing, energy-charged tentacles that emerge from it. The more reduced the ground, the more powerful the energy inside the vases. In Yellow River Vase the energy is still contained in the vase, seething and glowing; a luminous turquoise makes for a vivid contrast to the bright orange exterior. In Egyptian Forest Vase, Red Forest Vase and Night Vase, the energy begins to flow and erupt – while the background remains a mystery.*

*Alongside various works on paper that again address the subject of the vase, the exhibition also features a series of five graphite seascapes. These night-views of the Atlantic ocean and the Summer Isles on Scotland's North-West coast are drawings that vividly express Ward's fascination with change and permanence, which he has described in these words: "The moving sea, the clouds, the moon, the sound of the waves lapping on the shore, have always been changing, not one moment ever the same. And at the same time it has never changed for millions of years. One stands on the edge of eternity, always."*

Marie-Louise Teichmann