

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Will Yackulic: Enigma Variations**

**June 12–July 26, 2014**

**Reception: Saturday, June 14, 4-6 PM**

**Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00-5:30 PM**

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In *Variations on an Original Theme for Orchestra* (1898-99), aka *Enigma Variations*, Edward Elgar composed a dozen variations on a theme. Each variation was for a friend and revealed some quirk of character, i.e. melancholic, jaunty, etc.

Will Yackulic's *Enigma Variations* are portraits too, in their own manner. Clay flasks measuring little more than a few inches tall, the original twenty-one Variations transpose the personalities of the artist's friends into constructions made of tiny cubes. A slender bottleneck rises at their tops like a smokestack on a model factory. Some of the Variations are assembled methodically, their stepped sides building into dramatic cantilevers. Others lose themselves in cubic warrens, giddy with complexity, or they develop asymmetrically, spontaneously sprouting up geometry.

The *Variations* are not only formally unique. Yackulic asked all the subjects of the *Variations* to deposit something inside their portrait. It was a double-blind process: the artist concealed the vessel inside a cardboard box with an aperture, and the subjects made their deposit in private. After the exchange was completed, he then sealed the bottleneck with cork and black wax, and returned the vessel to its company of fellows. It remains an enigma on both sides of the encounter; Yackulic can no more guess at the interior of each vessel as the rest of us can guess at the identity of the exteriors.

No two portraits are the same, but there are likenesses among them: patterns that Yackulic has exaggerated in a second group of somewhat larger vessels called "Trait Families." Using these archetypes, the artist has generated a third set of objects, titled "Strangers." These vessels indicate fictional characters: novelistic inventions that, lacking a novel to bind them to a destiny, may wander out to discover real referents in the world.

The artist has fantasized a far off future when the *Variations* might be found, like so many ceramic urns before them, as archeological evidence. Those on the dig, he surmises, could only conclude that these vessels were an ancient society's memorials – thus making them a perfect union of the amulets they are in scale, and the monumental tomb architecture they suggest in form. Their anonymity would then be perfected. Absolved of any care as to whom the portrait depicted, all that would remain is the fact that it was made, that something was exchanged, that a bond was honored.

– Joanna Fiduccia, excerpted from the catalogue essay published on the occasion of the exhibition.

**Will Yackulic's** recent exhibitions include *Surviving Sandy*, The Brooklyn Rail, (curated by Phong Bui), Brooklyn, NY; *Approaching Infinity*, *The Richard N. Green Collection of Contemporary Abstraction*, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Brooklyn Academy of Music, NY; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina; Jeff Bailey Gallery, New York. His work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *Modern Painters*, *Flash Art*, *Art on Paper*, *Le Monde*, *Time Out London*, *Village Voice*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and *Los Angeles Times*. Yackulic lives and works in New York. This is the artist's fourth solo show with the gallery.