

PAN

AMSTERDAM

FRANZIS ENGELS GALLERY



Goudse groeikracht

What is real?

Reality and fantasy become strangely intertwined in the sculptures of Patrick Bergsma (1965), who graduated from the Royal Academy in The Hague in 1996. Bergsma draws inspiration from the centuries-old influence of traditional Eastern art forms on those of the West. His work is characterized by whimsically shaped bonsai trees that break free from exploding porcelain vases.

Patrick Bergsma's vibrant bonsai sculptures illustrate the power and resilience of nature. Flowering branches, gnarled roots, and lush mosses twist and turn from shards of old vases, capturing moments of transformation and growth.

Bergsma grew up in a family of antique dealers and was surrounded by art and historical objects. In his 'Expanding China series', the artist refers to the rich, global history of porcelain (usually referred to by the collective name 'China').

Delft blue, which is seen worldwide as typically Dutch, was originally an attempt to imitate the highly popular porcelain imported from China and Japan. In the series, he often uses these types of 17th-century 'imitations' in combination with natural elements such as bonsai and ikebana (Japanese floral art). The compositions also nod to the Japanese tradition of kintsugi, an art form in which broken pottery, porcelain, or ceramics are repaired with lacquer mixed with gold powder. The idea behind this was to emphasize the breaks and cracks rather than hide them. In Bergsma's art objects, the 'broken' is not accentuated with gold lacquer, but with natural mosses and wild roots.

Initially, Patrick Bergsma used real bonsai trees that were sick or dead in his Expanding China sculptures. In this way, he breathed new life into discarded miniature trees. The bonsai tradition originated in China in the 7th century, where Buddhist monks brought specially shaped, small trees from the mountains to their temple complexes to meditate on the power of nature. Later, this art form was further cultivated in Japan, under the influence of Zen Buddhism. The numerous living bonsai trees in his studio garden provide Bergsma with inspiration for choosing the right colors and materials to make his art versions as realistic as possible.