

# Make:

## BRENDAN TANG MELDS SCI-FI AND CERAMICS IN CYBERNETIC SCULPTURE

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*Manga Ormolu Ver. 4.0-w*, 2016, 35.5cm

In the nearly 80 pieces of Brendan Tang's sculpture series *Manga Ormolu*, hunks of futuristic robots live among the curved lines and intricate patterns of Chinese ceramics. Tang's juxtaposition is inspired by ormolu, the 18th-century European practice of adding gold gilt to existing art pieces. But the charm of his series lies in the difficulty of the two trying to mesh, as robotic elements routinely squish the elegance of the pottery, and the pottery overflows the robotic constraints.

"When I originally saw an example of ormolu, I was drawn to the act of cultural appropriation and hybridization. In their efforts to create a curiosity object I saw my own story of an immigrant adapting to Western culture," Tang said. "I also wanted to mash up my two loves: ceramics and giant robots."

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Each piece is made from low-fire white ceramic, metal, wire, glass, and plastic. He uses traditional ceramics tools like potters wheels, slab rollers, and clay extruders to get the general form, and then uses metal ribs and wooden modeling tools for finer details. Tang hand paints the blue and white patterns and airbrushes the robotic elements.

A single piece takes one to three months, though Tang usually works on more than one at a time. At their largest, the pieces can be up to 30 inches tall and 40 to 50 pounds.



*Manga Ormolu Ver. 4.0-X, 2016, 56cm*

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