



'Most objects are somehow vessels, pots. What else are they?'
Johannes Nagel

Johannes Nagel: Vessels, Perhaps 2010-2017

26 February - 29 April 2018

Gallery FUMI is pleased to unveil an intimate retrospective of work by Johannes Nagel, marking his second solo exhibition with the Gallery.

Presenting a picture of the artist's career at its most primal, the exhibition draws together a compelling body of work, that, straddling the line between sculpture and craft, reveals Nagel's singular command of his signature mediums - stoneware, ceramics and porcelain - while simultaneously pursuing the artist's lifelong investigation into the contemporary notion of vessel.

Deliberately questioning the widely accepted status of pottery as a functional, domestic and decorative craft, Nagel turns to clay as the privileged arena for his formal and conceptual explorations, rehearsing, through an eclectic array of vessels, the timeless debate of form vs. function, control vs. spontaneity, rigour vs. improvisation.

Executed in a variety of techniques, from wheel throwing and sand casting to painting, glazing and firing, the works bear the marks of their own making - hand-gouged by the artist, they expose an orchestrated archaeology of sculptural gesture, in which deep accretions of sand, debris and painterly impasto act as evidence of the creative process.

Imbued with thrilling dynamism, the vessels of the *New Jazz* series bespeak Nagel's fascination with jazz music, whose register of rhythmic fragmentation within tonal harmony finds a replete parallel in this corpus of works. Disrupted, torn and assembled, stacks of irregularly shaped discs are poised in an impossibly delicate balance. Skillfully saturating the nuanced palette of his earlier output with expressive brushstrokes of radiant hues dripping down their intensely worked texture, the large-scale vessels from the latest *Untitled* series (2017), further demonstrate the artist's preoccupation with gestural force.

Poignantly suspended between absolute destruction and wilful creation, and challenging the formal and conceptual restraints of their craft, the works in the exhibition offer a comprehensive visual manifestation of Nagel's aesthetics, one of freedom within structure.

Johannes Nagel studied ceramics and the University of Art and Design Burg Giebichenstein, Halle, Germany. Having featured in important group exhibitions, his work is in the collection of international institutions, such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK, Ariana Museum, Geneva, Switzerland, Keramikmuseum Westerwald, Höhr-Grenzhausen, and Keramion, Frechen, Germany.