

YOSSI MILO



For Immediate Release:

John Gill: *WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?*

March 13 – April 12, 2025

Artist's Reception: Thursday, March 13, 6-8PM

Yossi Milo is pleased to announce a solo presentation of new and recent dynamic ceramic works by John Gill, *WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?*, which opens to the public on Thursday, March 13, with an artist's reception from 6-8 PM, and will be on view through Saturday, April 12, 2025.

John Gill (b. 1949; Renton, WA) has been celebrated in the field of ceramics for over half a century, and has long staked his work on the vessel as a starting point, creating endless variations on vases, ewers, bottles, and platters. Gill embraces postmodern levity over discernible functionality, and the resulting works take utility only in name. In this pursuit, Gill focuses on building ceramic volume by joining together and manipulating innumerable clay slabs, and each work manifests in a joyful collision of color, texture, and raucous form.

Gill constructs these using a time-tested hand-building method, joining and molding flat shapes to make the angular and undulating body of each work. This instinct-driven approach comes as a negotiation between the artist's will and his medium. "I hate to just execute a piece," Gill states, "instead I ask the clay, *what do you want to be?*" Guided by pure intuition, the artist finds shape within elemental earth, which he then illuminates with an effervescent array of colors. In stages, each vessel is transformed from wet clay to once-fired bisqueware, which is glazed and fired again to reach completion. "I have to make every work twice," states Gill, "once when I build the vessel, and another time when I color it." Each of Gill's works belies the process of its making, seeming to burst into existence fully formed.

This presentation includes a grouping of monumental vases and covered jars, created over the past three years. These vessels are intricate inside and out, and architectural grandeur on a miniature scale is hidden away within their jubilant exteriors. Especially in his larger open forms, Gill approaches his work from every possible angle, rotating it as though in zero gravity and building it without a defined top or bottom. In the case of his jars, once they finally come down to Earth, the artist completes them with precise-fitting, highly ornate lids. Gill's closed forms create new private spaces and invoke a distinct utility within his lexicon of subverted purposes: to conceal. The inside of the jar becomes a secret, its unseen volume now enclosed.

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On the outside of each work, Gill stretches textures and color out onto space, blending art historical lineages with aplomb. The artist especially looks to painting for inspiration, and takes in his surroundings as a painter might to inform his use of light and color in three-dimensional space. Gill's ceramics synthesize the natural world through diverse schools of thought, employing sensibilities that range from Impressionist to Pop, from Fauvist to Abstract Expressionist. The rugged stepped forms on the outside of one of Gill's jars could be as easily traced in the carved staircase of an ancient temple as they could be in those of a painting by Marcel Duchamp; the wobbling, graceful curve of a vase's belly could be as inspired by a river basin as it could be by Stuart Davis's flattened painted forms. In constantly colliding angular and soft, vibrant and quiet, Gill's works walk a path that balances tradition and innovation to moving effect.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

John Gill's work has been widely exhibited in the United States and abroad, including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Pottery Workshop, Shanghai, China; and Kraushaar Gallery, New York, NY. The artist's work is held in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI; and Newark Museum, NJ, among others. In 2008, Gill was inducted into the International Academy of Ceramics in Geneva and was elected a Fellow at the American Crafts Council in 2014. In 2018, he received the James Renwick Alliance Distinguished Craft Educator Award. The artist lives and works in Alfred, NY.

For more information, please contact Jack Cassou at 212.414.0370 or jack@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com.

Image: Vase, 2023, 22 ½" x 22" x 15"