

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Ron Nagle

January 7 to February 20, 2010

Opening Reception
Thursday, January 7, 6-8 p.m.

Gallery hours are
Tuesday- Saturday, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
and Monday by appointment
Additional images available upon request.

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of sculpture by Ron Nagle. The San Francisco-based sculptor works in glazed earthenware to create evocative abstract works. Color and texture are dominant in his small pieces, most of which are no larger than six inches on a side. This is his first solo show at James Harris Gallery. Ron Nagle has been working in clay for fifty years. For this exhibition, Nagle shows a selection of small-scale sculptures that illustrate the progression of his ceramics. Inspired by the paintings by Giorgio Morandi, Nagle decided to focus on making cups; he has worked almost exclusively on variations of this form, often pushing the form to the point of abstraction.

In the 1990s, the cup form dominated Nagle's output. Two cups on view here display the artist's playful use of imagery: one wide-mouthed porcelain mug is decorated with a shadow form of a crab, created by two intertwined hands. The second cup shows a bird with a twig in its mouth. Both mugs have fat, curved handles that highlight the softness of the medium.

Also on view are two works from 2005. From the series *The Smallfry*, a work titled "Lez is Mo" is composed of stacked tiers and a wedge-like handle taken from handmade molds. The other titled "Boss Tanning" is from *The Wedgware* series and resembles an hourglass shape with handle-like appendages. All the works from this period are glazed in seductive glossy colors with a contrasting geometric block that destabilizes the sculptural form.

The three newest sculptures with nubby-textured surfaces, and pigmentation attained using an airbrush technique, have a dominant hue, with visible overlaying of alternate colors. Their soft organic shapes are suggestive and humorous. These three works demonstrate how Nagle's sculptures often blur the line between art and craft, and operate between painting and sculpture.

Nagle's work has been collected by museums the world over, including the Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, PA), Centre National des Arts Plastiques, (Paris, France), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, (New York, NY), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, (San Francisco, CA), Rhode Island School of Design, (Providence, RI), The Shigaraki Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art (Japan), and Victoria and Albert Museum, (London, England).