



Press Release

JOHN MASON: A SURVEY

July 7- August 26, 2017

Opening Day Talk: Friday, July 7
4:00 - 4:30PM John Mason

4:30 - 5:30PM Masahiro Hamashita
Honorary Professor Kobe College
Challenge and Provocation to <Aesthetics>

Opening Reception: Friday, July 7, 5:30 - 6:00PM

Discussion Talk: Saturday, July 15, 2:00 - 4:00PM
Chief Curator, Craft, National Museum of Modern Art
Masahiro Karasawa

x

Artist
Mutsuo Yanagihara

Sokyo Gallery proudly presents a first solo exhibition by John Mason, an American artist who liberated vessel forms from their function and created a context for non-vessel ceramic structures. The exhibition will overview more than 60 years of his contributions to the art of ceramics with a collection of his works from the 1950's Raku bowls to the most recent slab-built pieces. The exhibition will showcase thirty-three works from Mason's studio in Los Angeles.

John Mason was born in Nebraska in 1927 and grew up in a homestead ranch in the Nevada desert. He moved to Los Angeles to enroll at the Otis Art Institute, where he met Peter Voulkos, who inspired Mason in his transition away from potter's wheel to making sculptural forms. Mason and Voulkos worked side by side, building a studio together on Glendale Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles. The large kiln at this new studio and later at the new ceramics building at Otis enabled Mason to explore innovative techniques for making sculptures from clay and eventually gave birth to his first large-scale sculptural work in 1957. The creative activities of Mason, along with those of Voulkos and the group of young ceramists around Otis, incubated the first recognizable Los Angeles avant-garde and left an important mark in the art history of Southern California.

Mason's exploration in the ceramics medium has continued to evolve after Voulkos left Otis: Massive wall reliefs and statues frequently in the cross ("x") form in the 1960's show the artist's interest in structures and geometry; The 1970's sees more conceptual works, such as "Hudson River Series," built with industrial firebricks; and in the late 20th century Mason re-explores vessel forms with a different sense of geometry in complex surface patterns and pentagonal shapes. His most recent works are slab-constructed glazed clay sculptures that resemble figurative art. While Mason's works receive renewed appreciation in recent years from the art world, most notably the 2014 Whitney Biennale, Mason continues to work quietly to pursue his art.

Mason's work has been shown in museums across the United States, including one-person exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Pasadena Museum of Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Whitney Museum of American Art invited him to its Biennial in 1973 and 2014, and other group exhibitions in 1964, 1976 and 1981.

John Mason: A Survey is on view at 381-2 Motomachi, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto from July 7 to August 26, 2017, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00AM to 6:00PM.

For additional information, please contact:

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