

RETURN TO FORM

Jason Jacques Gallery



Morten Lobner Espersen

Opening January 5th

RETURN TO FORM

Jason Jacques Gallery is pleased to announce our fourth solo exhibition of work by the iconic Danish Ceramist, Morten Løbner Espersen, following his first solo museum exhibition outside of Denmark at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, and coinciding with his tour de force one-man-show at the CLAY Keramikmuseum.

“Some of the oldest fragments of human civilization are made in clay,” says Espersen, whose oeuvre hones in on classical forms from around the globe and takes them to fantastic extremes using color and texture.

Color and texture themselves become subjects in his work, which he carries to their own extremes through a combination of masterful glaze chemistry, technical precision in his wheel-throwing and hand-building, and the application of multiple firings that ensure an abundance of exuberant detail in his works—in the artist’s own words, “it’s not until the third or fourth firing of more layers that something really starts to happen.”

Back to archetypal classical forms—in his early career, Espersen’s oeuvre was defined by his interest in the vessel at its plainest: a cylinder, to which he refers simply as a Vacui.

Espersen followed his decade-long focus on the Vacui with the development of the Horror Vacui, a series focused on archaic Greek vessels first encountered around in the Geometric Period, c. 900 BCE. The term denotes, in Latin, the fear of empty space and refers to the ancient vessel’s heavily decorated surfaces filled with dense registers of geometric motifs.

In Espersen's *Horror Vacui*, there too is a form hidden beneath the ornament: an urn that hints at being an amphora, lodged within embellishments that seem to have lifted from its surface and taken on a life of their own.

Yet Espersen's taste extends beyond the Western classics, for he gives just as much focus to the moon jar, the traditional white porcelain vessel popular during Korea's Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). As Aileen Kwun so aptly discusses in a November 2022 article for the *New York Times*, "These days, the [moon jar] is finding new practitioners and admirers beyond the Korean Peninsula." Just as, throughout its history, the moon jar's irregularities and imperfections gave it its charm, Espersen uses the vessel's expansive surfaces as a canvas on which to explore irregularity and chance, framing flaws as indication that an object was made by a human being and not a machine.

"Ceramics is a lot like painting in the dark," says curator and author Glenn Adamson, referring to the surprise that comes with opening a kiln—it's a surprise that Espersen embraces. In all instances, Espersen maintains the respective vessel's essential components and recognizability while transforming the traditional form into something distinctly contemporary. He is facilitating a return to form.



Pink/White Torpedo

26.77h x 14.96w x 14.96d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Moon Jar

17.32h x 17.32w x 17.32d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Pale Green Horror Vacui Tilt

20.87h x 15.35w x 15.35d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Giant Moonjar

20.47h x 20.47w x 20.47d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Beigeblue

11.02h x 5.51w x 5.51d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Horror Vacui (blue/pink)

20.47h x 20.47w x 20.47d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Whitegrey

13.78h x 5.91w x 5.91d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



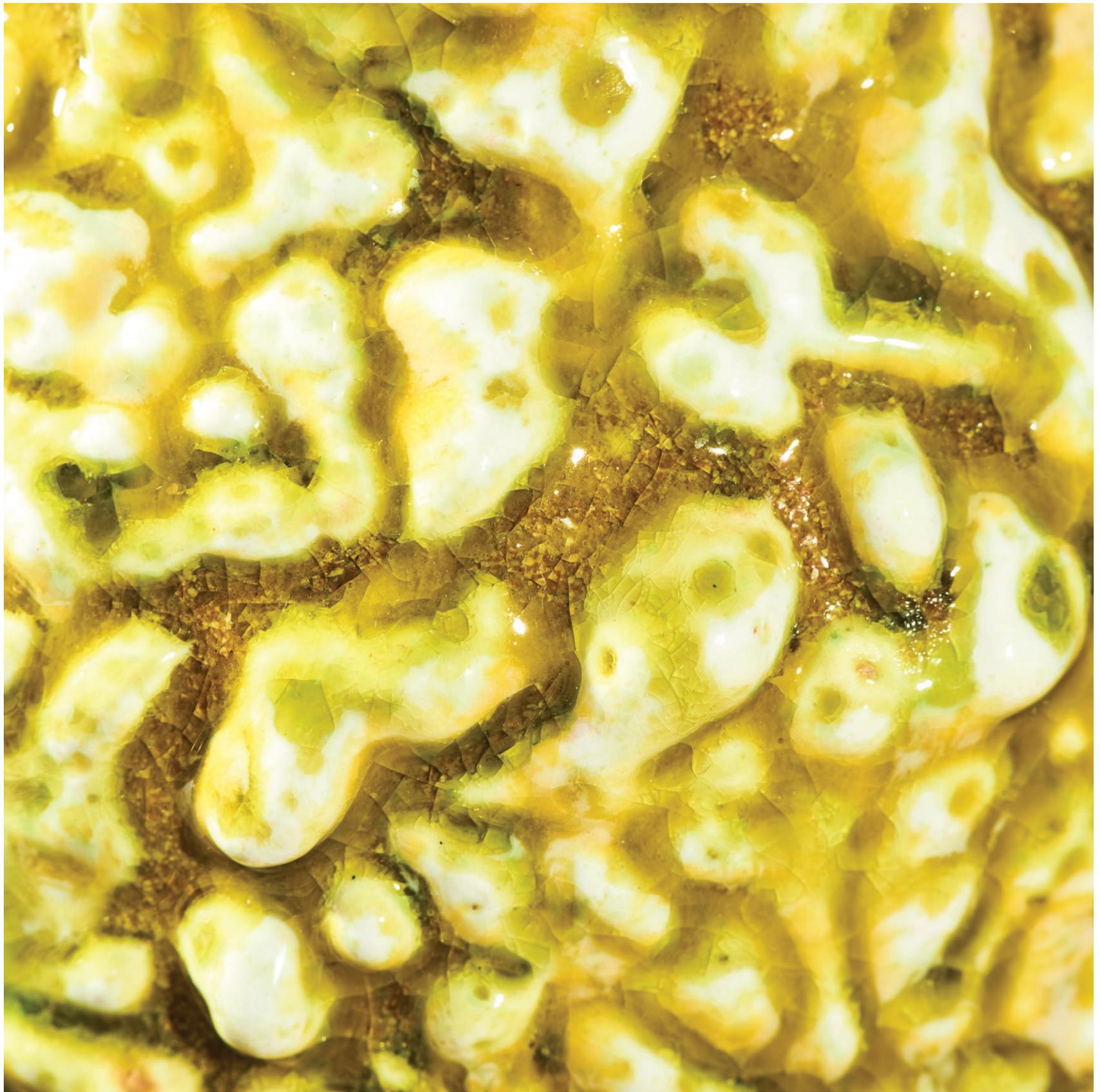
Yellow

11.81h x 5.51w x 5.51d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Black and White Halfmoonjar #1859

10.63h x 16.14w x 16.14d in

Glazed Stoneware



Price Upon Request

Grey Blue Torpedo

26.77h x 14.96w x 14.96d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Multicolour Torpedo

26.77h x 14.96w x 14.96d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

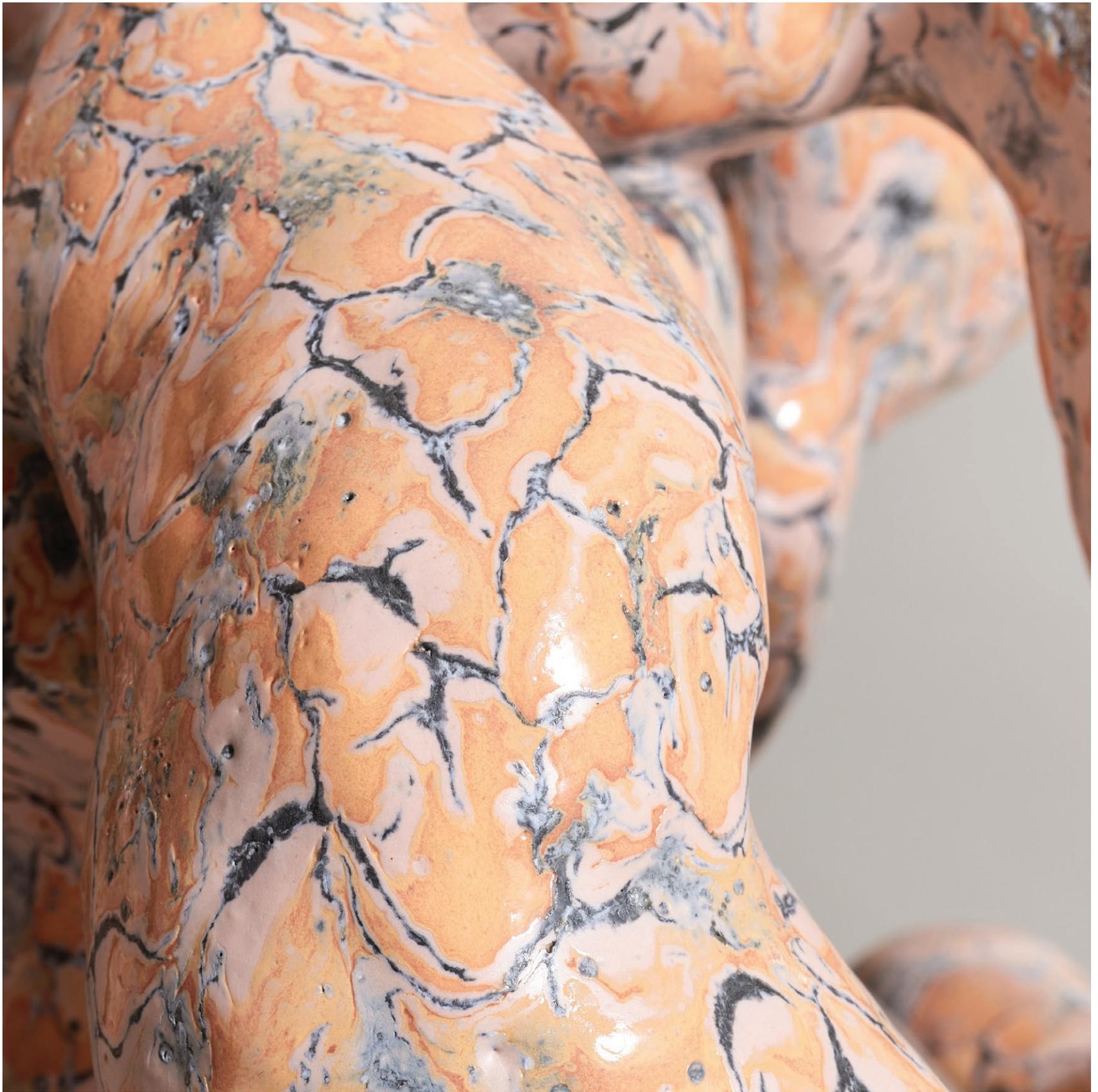
Orange Horror Vacui

24.80h x 21.26w x 21.26w in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Bomb Black Brown Red

9.45h x 11.42w x 11.42d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Pink/Blue Torpedo

26.77h x 14.96w x 14.96d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 1

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 4

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 8

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 7

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Glazed Pearl 10

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 5

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Glazed Pearl 3

6.69h x 7.09w x 7.09d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Limegreen Cylinder

7.09h x 8.66w x 8.66d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Oxblood

10.24h x 6.30w x 6.30 in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Moonjar #1892

18.50h x 14.57w x 14.57d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Red and Orange Horror

18.90h x 14.60w x 14.60d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Turquoise Torpedo

26.77h x 14.96w x 14.96d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Red and Yellow Horror

19.50h x 17.30w x 17.30d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Pale Yellow

13.78h x 5.12w x 15.12d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Pale Purple Horror

26h x 20.50w x 20.50d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Horror Vacui (pale blue/white)

20.47h x w in x 14.57d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Other World Vase #1040

9.50h x 5w x 5d in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

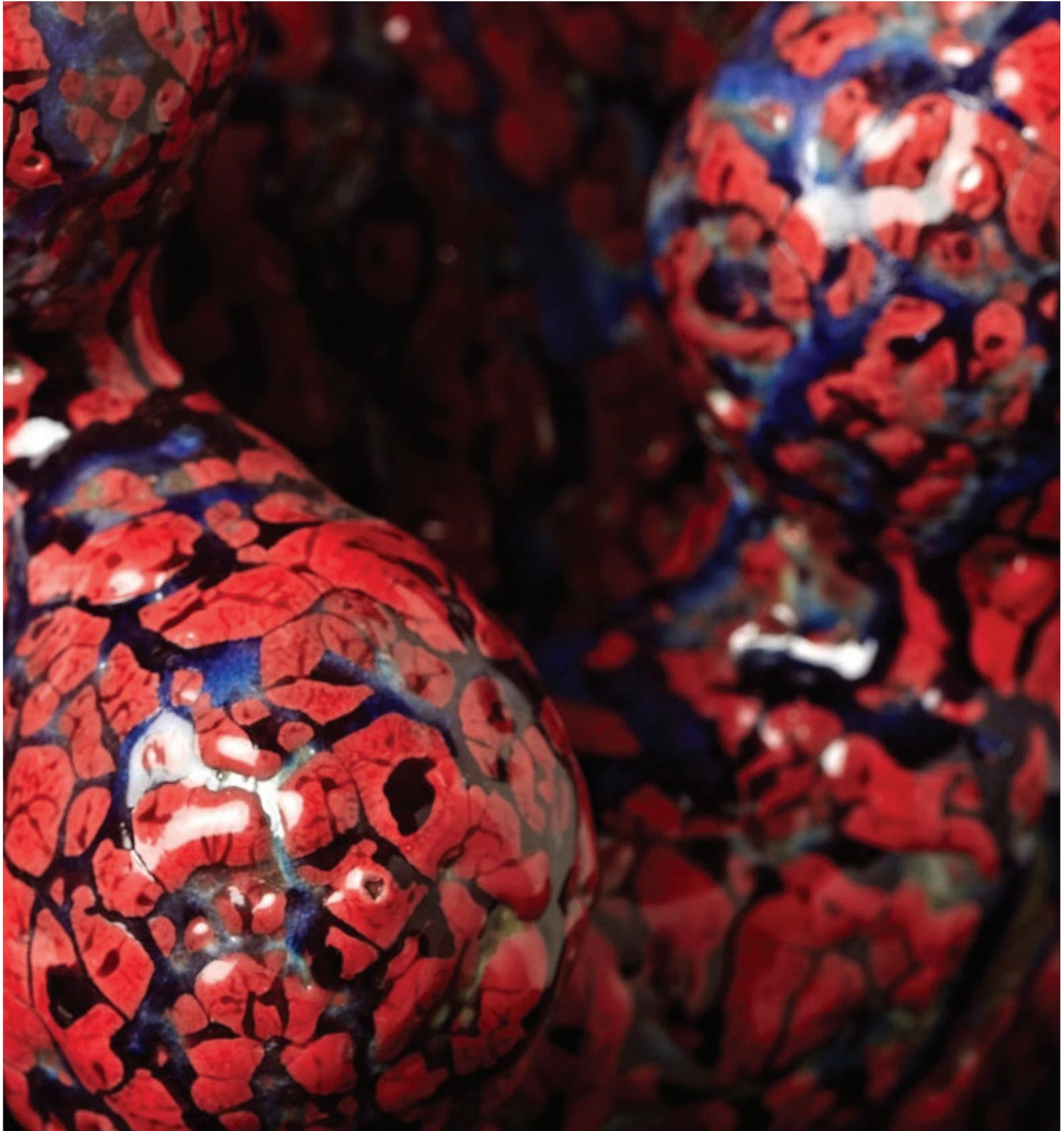
Red Horror

20.9h x 15.5w x 15.5d2



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



Stretch Turquoise Moonjar #1895

17.3h x 10.2w x 10.2d in

Glazed Stoneware



Price Upon Request

Roserubis Moonjar #1907

14.2h x 11.4w x 11.4d



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Green Moonjar #1903

12.2h x 11.4w x 11.4d in

Glazed Stoneware



Price Upon Request

Black and White Moonjar #1899

31.50h x 23.62w x 23.62w in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request

Blood Moon Jar #2

24h x 19w x 19w in



Glazed Stoneware

Price Upon Request



MORTEN LØBNER ESPERSEN

Born in Aalborg, Denmark in 1965

Lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark

Morten Løbner Espersen has brought a new energy to the tradition of ceramics through a 20-year exploration of his object of choice, the vessel. He focuses on the simplicity of the form through variations of this archetype that balance opposing principles: simple shapes and complex surfaces, or complex shapes and simple surfaces. Whether his vessel is of modest, cylindrical nature or a chaotic, writhing mass of layered glazes, Espersen strives to create a quality in glazing comparable to geological happenstance. Likened to the frothy, volcanic surfaces of Lucie Rie's stoneware, the organic and protruding forms of Axel Salto's "budding" vases, and a Patrick Nordstom brilliance in glazing, Espersen's clay forms exercise the full potential of his self-imposed neutral starting point.

Espersen is one of the most successful Danish ceramists of his generation. His work is currently held in major museum collections worldwide, including the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, National Museum in Stockholm, National Public Art Council in Sweden, and Design Museum in Copenhagen.

Jason Jacques Gallery is an American contemporary art gallery specializing in artists working in clay. Over its thirty year history, the gallery has both made its mark building museum collections of late 19th century European Art Pottery and become renowned for exhibiting some of the most exciting and influential international contemporary ceramic artists. Jason began his career in Europe three decades ago, combing through flea markets and antique shops for star pieces to send back to American dealers. He returned with a specialty in what he calls the Art Pottery Renaissance of the late-19th century— works by Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Ernest Chaplet, Clément Massier, Georges Hoentschel, and the like.

After an explosive work by Gareth Mason caught his eye in 2010, he launched a program in contemporary ceramics, the prime focus of the gallery today. By placing Kim Simonsson's vivid, mossy figures, Katsuyo Aoki's porcelain masterworks, and Beth Cavener's animalistic sculptures alongside the Japonist creations of Paul Jeanneney or the biomorphic inventions of Beate Kuhn, the gallery lends historical context to the contemporary talent on their roster.

Jason and his team now not only maintain a rigorous contemporary program, but work to foster new talent. The gallery's mission is bolstered by careful attention to the history of ceramics and commitment to maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the medium's rich past.

www.jasonjacques.com
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