



JOHANNES NAGEL

OPEN-ENDED



“What exactly is a vase? What defines a vessel? The form itself, with its rich historical background and flurry of contemporary interpretations, poses many open-ended questions.

Thus, we are thrilled to showcase recent works by Johannes Nagel— an artist dedicated to exploring the myriad ways of creating a vessel, not only dissecting the historical and modern meanings of the term “vase” but also deconstructing the very techniques and materials involved in crafting one, taking the use of slip and the painterly application of glaze to an entirely new level.

For years, Nagel has responded to the subtle, provocative questions posed by the historical idea of a “vase” by pushing through to further lines of inquiry. Rather than attempting to demonstrate what a “vase” is, he asks: What functions does a vase serve in today’s world? And what can it hold?

That is to say, Nagel is not only working with the formal qualities of the “vase”— he is working with its history and symbolic role in culture.

Through his exploration, Nagel employs a methodology that draws from twentieth-century art, criticism, and theory. His vases stand out not only for their broad strokes of color, but also for his prominent and visible signatures, a deliberate shift away from the traditionally discreet stamps and maker’s marks found on the undersides of pottery. Instead of closing in on themselves, Nagel’s vessels sometimes appear to have been sliced or split open, are quite rough around the extremities, and feature plenty of holes, for their interiors complement and compete with their exteriors— as vessels go, it’s beyond the literal idea of idea of containment.

Most curiously, and in spite of his proficiency at the potter’s wheel, Johannes Nagel makes most of his works by pouring clay slip into sand-casts which he sculpts and forms— or better yet, excavates— by hand. There is a great, cosmic irony here: before one of Nagel’s vessels comes to be, it is poured into a container, like water into a vase.

Yet, Nagel dismisses the vase’s traditional association with flowers; his work is made to contain something transcendent.





Checkers, 2022
Porcelain
28.35h x 12.99w x 12.99d in





Blue Moon, 2020
Porcelain





Silhouette # 42, 2023

Porcelain

22.83h x 11.42w x 11.42d in





Movement/Circles, 2022
Porcelain
25.98h x 18.50w x 16.14d in





Flat on Round, 2021
Porcelain
19.29h x 15.75w x 12.99d in





Half Cluster, 2021
Porcelain, Stoneware
26.77h x 22.44w x 16.14d in





Prop Vase, 2021
Porcelain
26.5h x 21.5w x 21.5d in





Silhouette # 40, 2023
Porcelain, pewter
23h x 12w x 12d in





Silhouette # 41, 2023
Porcelain
20h x 11w x 11d in





Silhouette #36, 2023
Porcelain, pewter
16.93h x 9.45w x 9.45d in





Silhouette #4 / White, 2021
Porcelain
19.29h x 13.39w x 13.39d in





Silhouette #16, 2022
Porcelain
20.47h x 11.02w x 11.02d in



