

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

NICOLE CHERUBINI

November 14 - December 22, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 14, 6-8pm



Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Nicole Cherubini. For her first solo show with the gallery, Cherubini places her large scale signature vessel-like sculptures in conversation with a new series of works cast from modernist chair shells. This striking juxtaposition addresses concepts of purpose, function and labor, while questioning the presence and absence of the viewer. The artist creates a social space of sort, where works stand as both symbol and signifier.

Working with clay for more than 20 years, Cherubini has created numerous vessel forms, re-configuring and building upon this fundamental shape. She reinterprets the functional and aesthetic qualities of these commonly used and historically rooted objects through scale, form and placement. The object and support become one through material use while clearly connecting utility with context. These works can also be considered as part of a larger feminist history. While the vessel form was used symbolically by female artists in the 1970s, Cherubini uses this reference and adds a broader look at the object's trajectory, occupying a space that spans the past 3000 years. With her masterful use of clay, she is also

claiming space by putting the unfinished—the unglazed—at the center, inviting us to look at the commonly unseen.

It is within this setting that Cherubini introduces the Eames chair sculptures, a form which is iconic of mid-century modernism and has been often replicated. It is here re-imagined in clay and uniquely embellished with a painterly application of colorful glaze and an array of ceramic shards. Cherubini's press molded chairs are displayed at varied heights, resting on bronze cylinders, cast legs and cubes of clay.

Both pots and chairs are unified in their textural surfaces, the result of the artist's recent incorporation of shards in her work. Here, she creates the broken instead of fixing it. She presses the shards into works in progress, layers them on top and uses them as structural support. The final touch, glazing, is not an end in itself. Glaze here is its own material. In a process-oriented manner, she makes deliberate decisions as where to apply it and where to allow the raw clay to be seen. The colors and textures purposely applied onto the raw clay are both painterly and sculptural decisions, adding materiality to the work instead of adorning it in a purely decorative sense.

Cherubini's intimate sculptural arrangements prompt us to ponder notion of purpose. Through her conglomerations of fragments, she pushes us to reconsider how things are made, what makes them whole, and most importantly, why they exist.

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Nicole Cherubini (b. 1970, Boston) lives and works between Brooklyn and Hudson, New York. She currently has two solo exhibitions on view: “Nicole Cherubini: Shaking the Trees” at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY and “stacked” at Marisa Newman Projects, New York, NY. She has presented other solo exhibitions at several institutions, including the University Art Museum at SUNY Albany; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Jersey City Museum, New Jersey; Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, New York; Pérez Art Museum Miami; and Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions at institutions including the Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Massachusetts; the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri; MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, New York; Museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano in Guadalajara, Mexico; the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts; the Rhode Island School of Design Museum in Providence, Rhode Island; the Rose Art Museum in Waltham, Massachusetts; the Sculpture Center in Long Island City, New York; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery in Saratoga Springs, New York; the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Permanenten: The West Norway Museum of Decorative Art in Bergen, Norway. In 2019, Cherubini was an artist in residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA.